

The Sacrament of First Holy Communion

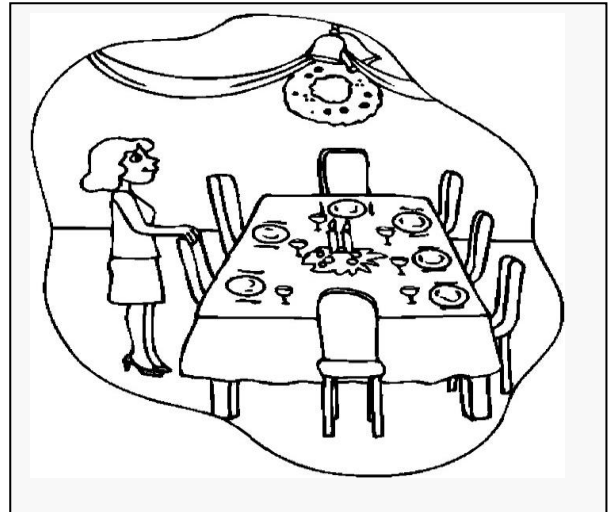


Preparation Booklet 4

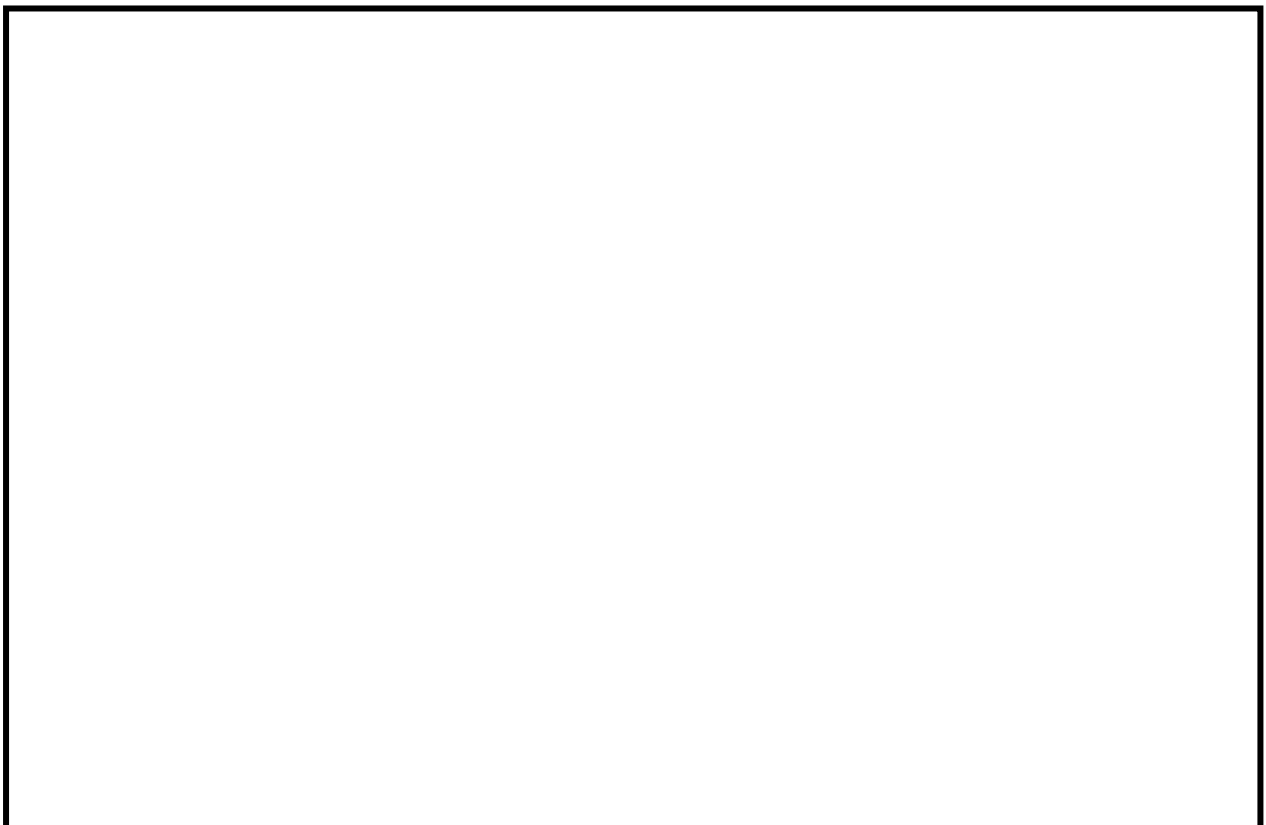
Sharing a Meal

Most people have three meals a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner. We often gather around a table to have meals at home with the family.

Sometimes we have special meals to celebrate events like birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, Easter and we sometimes go out to restaurants to share special meals too.



**Draw yourself around a table having a special meal with family/friends.
Think about what would be on the table to eat and drink.**



Jesus Shared Meals with his Friends

Meals were important events in Jesus' life too. In the New Testament, we can read about times when Jesus had meals with his friends and others. He ate at the house of his friends Martha and Mary. He ate a meal at the house of a

Pharisee named Simon.

Jesus also ate with sinners and tax collectors.

After his resurrection he shared a meal of fish on the shore with seven of his disciples.

Jesus often used meals as a setting to teach us important things and to show us who he was.



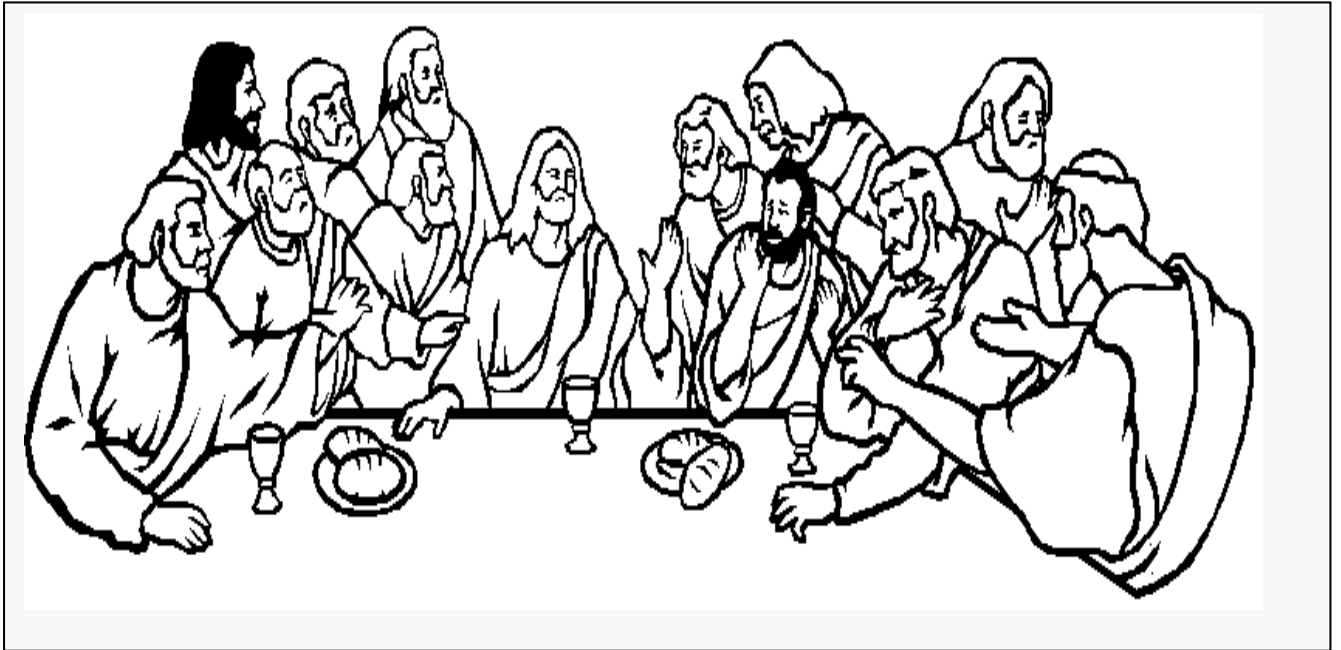
The last meal Jesus ever had with his apostles was during the Jewish celebration of Passover. It was on the night that Jesus was arrested, the night before he died on the cross.

Jesus knew that he was soon going to die. He loved us so much that he was ready to **SACRIFICE** himself by dying on the cross for us.

Jesus' disciples did not know that he was going to die. They expected the meal to be similar to other Passover meals that they had celebrated together. However, during this meal, Jesus said and did things that he hadn't said or done before.

We call this final meal with his friends The Last Supper.

The Last Supper (Luke 22:17-20)



In the evening, Jesus sat with his apostles. He said:

"I have dearly longed to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer. I tell you: I will not eat it again until the Kingdom of God has come about. "

And he took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to his disciples and said:

"Take this, all of you and eat it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you."

When supper was ended, he took the chalice. Again he gave thanks, gave the chalice to his disciples and said:

"Take this, all of you and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal Covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me."

“What did Jesus Mean?”

Jesus' disciples must have thought that Jesus' words and actions were strange - it was hard to understand the things he had said and done.

Easy to understand ...



Jesus knew that he was going to die, so he asked his disciples to “Do this in memory of me” so that they would remember him forever.

Think deeper ...



Jesus told his disciples that the bread and wine were his body and blood, and told them to eat and drink them. This means that the ordinary bread and wine had changed and become Jesus' own flesh and blood. Jesus did this through the power of God the Father.

When Jesus offers his disciples the bread (his body) and wine (his blood), he says that they will be **“given up for you”** and **“poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.”** These words mean that Jesus is offering himself as a sacrifice for the disciples and for the world.

Thank you,

Jesus,



for the gift of



YOURSELF.

First Holy Communion Preparation Booklet 4

Worksheet 1

Sharing a Meal

20 minutes

This sheet sets the scene for the Last Supper. Ask them how many meals they have a day, what they usually eat, what time they eat, etc. Then ask them to give examples of any special meals they have had at home or in restaurants.

What special occasion was it? Who was there?

The activity requires them to draw or write about a special meal that they took part in.

Worksheet 2

Jesus Shared Meals with his Friends

15 minutes

The aim of this sheet is also to set the scene for the Last Supper and to show that although Jesus often ate meals with friends and others, his Last Supper was an extraordinary meal at which a great event took place. The section at the end of the sheet tells us that Jesus knew he was soon going to die, and this is something which you should explore further alongside the theme of "sacrifice" which is written here in bold. God sent Jesus into the world to show us how to live, to be a good example, to show us who God is, to establish the Church, but crucially, he was sent to save us.

This last section on the Passover hints that Jesus used the Passover meal but gave it new meaning. The disciples were about to be bewildered by Jesus' words and actions.

Worksheet 3

The Last Supper

15 minutes

This sheet tells the story of the Last Supper. Read it slowly and stop at key points to explain them, including the following:

"which will be given up for you."

...for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

The Last Supper meal was the setting for Jesus to reveal that just as the Passover meal traditionally included a sacrificial lamb, Jesus himself was now the lamb that would be sacrificed; whose body would be "given up" for us and whose blood would be "poured out for us and for many for the forgiveness of sins" soon

after this supper. Even though the disciples might only have understood it in hindsight and after Christ's resurrection, Jesus offers himself to the disciples and to all mankind here at the Last Supper.

"Do this in memory of me."

Explain that in these words, Jesus is referring to the whole event of the Last Supper, including the changing of the bread and wine into his flesh and blood and the offering of Jesus as a sacrifice to save us.

The word "memory" can be quite weak in English and merely signify a vague remembrance. The words and actions of Jesus at the last supper will not just be a memory; Christ's offering as the sacrificial lamb will be relived at every Mass; the presence of Jesus will be the Real Presence - Jesus will actually be there on the altar at every Mass.

Emphasise Jesus' own words in bold to the children. (You could ask the children to repeat them when you go over the story again).

Tell them to really listen for these words next time they go to Mass. Explain that the priest says the same words that Jesus said at the Last Supper. Inform them that the Last Supper was actually the first ever Mass!

Emphasise again that the apostles did not really understand what Jesus meant when he said "This is my body/this is my blood," but that they came to understand it later after Jesus had been crucified and had risen from the dead. Like the apostles, it will take them some time to understand, and they will understand more and more as they get older.

Worksheet 4

What did Jesus Mean?

15 minutes

The aim of the Easy to Understand/Think Deeper tool is to underline the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the fact that Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice during the Last Supper.

The children will have been told by many that they will receive Jesus when they make their First Holy Communion but "receive Jesus" needs to be explained to them so that they understand for themselves what this means - that it really is his flesh and blood that they receive.

You should remind them of Booklet 2 (re-read the relevant section with them if you have time) where they explored John 6's reference to Jesus' words, "I am the Bread of Life." This Bread (Jesus) is life-giving and feeds our soul. When we receive Jesus in the Eucharist we are nourished physically and spiritually. Jesus is truly within us. Jesus *offers* the bread and cup to his disciples. This is much more than the offer of simple food and drink; he is offering *himself* as a sacrifice and telling them the way in which he will soon die. This is heavy stuff but children will pick up the main points if the text is explained appropriately for their range of ages.

Worksheet 5 Thank you, God, for the gift of yourself. **15 minutes**

This is a simple colouring in sheet whose words underline Jesus' gift of himself to us in the Eucharist.

Emphasise how special their First Holy Communion is - they are about to receive Jesus and this is a very great privilege.