

CHRISTMAS
Communion
AT HOME



NORTHPARK
Community Church

NorthparkChurch.org

For online communion resources, go to
www.NorthparkChurch.org/communion

BACKGROUND

Communion has been a God-designed ritual from the very beginning of the church. Jesus instructs the disciples and us to remember what He did on the cross in the most common elements of a simple meal: bread and drink (fruit of the vine). You are about to celebrate communion at home.

But isn't communion something to be done only at church?

The Bible is our manual for living and addresses this issue. Before Jesus' death on the cross, only specially authorized priests, who were ceremonially cleansed from the tribe of Levi, were allowed to handle the sacrificial elements. Only they could approach God safely. But what Jesus did on the cross when he paid the price for all our sins, making us righteous – without sin, past, present and future – makes us acceptable to approach God directly (see 1 Peter 2:4-10).

So, the short answer is that Jesus has made it appropriate to celebrate communion wherever we gather (see Matthew 18:20).

PREPARATION

- Decide the setting for communion. You may decide that the dinner table is most suitable or sitting around a coffee table is more comfortable for your family or group. Wherever you are, make it a distraction-free time!
- Have the bread (crackers) and grape juice ready.
- If you choose to have others read the scriptures, you may wish to assign them ahead of time so that younger participants can practice and get help with any unfamiliar words.
- As a part of your Christmas celebration, it would be especially meaningful to begin communion by reading the account of Jesus' birth (see Luke 1:26 – 2:20 included at the back of this booklet).

COMMUNION

VIDEO OPTION WITH PASTOR BOB:

www.NorthparkChurch.org/communion

Pastor Bob will lead your family through communion, just play the video for your group.

LEADING COMMUNION ON YOUR OWN:

Here are suggested readings and instructions for leading your group in communion.

If you choose, begin with a reading of the Christmas story from the Bible (there is a copy at the back of this booklet).

LEADER: Read (or say in your own words)

God wants us to remember and think about what He did for us when he sent his son Jesus to earth so that He could die for us on the cross. Jesus told his followers that every time they ate bread and drank wine (or grape juice in our case,) they were to think of the bread as His body which was broken by being beaten and nailed to the cross; and to think of the grape juice or wine as His blood being poured out of his body for us. Jesus was paying the penalty for your sins and mine so that we would not have to pay that penalty ourselves. Because of Jesus' death on the cross God looks on us and does not see our mess ups, but instead sees Jesus' perfect, sinless life. God has done that for us.

We are going to eat a cracker and drink some juice in remembrance of what Jesus did **for us** - dying a terrible death on a cross that he did not deserve.

SCRIPTURE READING: Mark 14:22-26 (NIV)

²² While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."²³ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.²⁴ "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. ²⁵ "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."²⁶ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Provide each person with a cup of juice and cracker.

LEADER:

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." [1 Corinthians 11:23-24]

"Let us all eat the bread (cracker) together."

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." [1 Corinthians 11:25]

"Let us drink the cup together."

FAMILY MEMBER READS THE CLOSING PRAYER:

Father God,

We thank you for loving us so much and for the gift of your son Christ Jesus. Thank you for sending Him to die on a cruel cross and pay the penalty for our sins of the past, our sins of today, and even our sins for tomorrow. Thank you that we can have a friendship with you. And we thank you that nothing in the universe can separate us from your love. Thank you for communion that reminds us of your love. Amen

RESOURCE:

COMMUNION SCRIPTURES

1 Peter 2:4-10 (NIV)

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”

⁸ and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Matthew 18:20 (NIV)

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

Matthew 26:26-28 (NIV)

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 14:22-26 (NIV)

²² While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

²³ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

²⁴ "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. ²⁵ "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." ²⁶ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (NIV)

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Luke 1: 26 – 38 (NLT)

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. ²⁸Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

²⁹Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. ³⁰"Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

³⁴Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

³⁵The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. ³⁶What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. ³⁷For the word of God will never fail."

³⁸Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

Luke 2:1-20 (NLT)

The Birth of Jesus

2 At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. ²{This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.} ³All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. ⁴And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's

ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. ⁵He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant.

⁶And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. ⁷She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

The Shepherds and Angels

⁸That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! ¹²And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

¹³Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

¹⁵When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. ¹⁷After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. ¹⁸All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, ¹⁹but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. ²⁰The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.



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