



the grainery church

GOOD FRIDAY

Family Communion Guide

Here are some suggestions, which we hope will help you hold a family communion in your home so that everyone can join in, including your children. Please adapt as you wish, these are only suggestions!

Preparation

1. You will need some bread – a slice of bread or a roll will do - and fruit juice, (preferably red)! Cut up the bread and put it on a on a plate or board in the middle of the table. Set out cups for each person, and pour enough juice into a jug for each member of the family. Place the jug next to the bread.
2. A small bin liner, or opaque bag.
3. Some postcard sized pieces of paper to write, (or draw) on.
(Enough for 3 for each person)
4. Pens/pencils

When you're ready, gather your family around the table. I suggest you begin by explaining Good Friday and Communion in an age-appropriate way.

Good Friday

Today is Good Friday. It's the day we remember Jesus' death for us on the cross. It's called "Good" Friday, because even though what people did to Jesus was very terrible, Jesus chose to die. He did this so he could deal with everything that's evil and bad in the world, and so that we could be forgiven and become God's special friends. Jesus died for us – for you and me - because God loves us, and because Jesus wants to spend "forever" with us. Think of it like this, Jesus has decided that "heaven" – the new creation – would not be "heaven" without us! (You can read about what the bible has to say about the future and the "new creation" in the last book in the bible, Revelation 21:1-4).

This is why today is called "Good" Friday, because, although putting Jesus to death makes that first "Good Friday" the worst day in the history of the world, God turned it into the world's best day.

Communion

On the night before he died, Jesus held a special meal with his friends, the disciples. It's called a Passover Meal, and it was held every year by the people of Israel. The meal was a reminder of the first Passover, which you can read about this in Exodus 12. This was the meal the people of Israel ate when God rescued them, under the leadership of Moses, from slavery in Egypt.

But, there was something very different about this particular Passover meal Jesus celebrated with his friends. The meal was meant to be a reminder of how God rescued them from slavery in Egypt. But Jesus tells his disciples that he wants this meal to be about him, not about what happened in Egypt. And he has something very specific he has in mind. His death.

These are some of the words Jesus spoke that evening. (It's often referred to as The Last Supper). You can find these particular words in Luke's Gospel. (The gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke each contain accounts of the Last Supper - Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:14-23. You'll find that they each have a slightly different focus, but the central issue – that this supper is from now on to be centred around Jesus and his death - remains the same).

And he [Jesus] took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying: "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

What's Jesus talking about here? Let's look at both of these statements more carefully:

*And he [Jesus] took **bread**, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying: "This is **my body given for you**; do this in **remembrance of me**."*

*In the same way, after the supper he took **the cup**, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant in my blood**, which is **poured out for you**."*

*Notice, they are to do this, in remembrance, **NOT** of the rescue from Egypt, but, **in remembrance of me**.*

Bread

Jesus says that the bread represents his body. Jesus whole life has been given for us, and now he is going to die for us. That's what the expression **given for you** points to.

The cup (of wine)

This represents his "blood." Blood is a reference to (violent) death. In this case Jesus is referring to what's about to happen to him, that is, his death on the cross.

New Covenant

A "covenant" is an agreement or promise. A commitment, if you like. The phrase, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," may sound a little strange, but think of it like this. Imagine Jesus, surrounded by his friends the disciples. He's holding a cup of wine as he speaks these words, and remember, the background to this meal is God's rescue of the Israelites from Egypt. At that first Passover meal, God tells all the people of Israel, through Moses, to kill a lamb or a goat, but before cooking the meat, they are to smear the blood on their door posts. That night, will be a very dark night for Egypt, because, God says, all the first born males in Egypt will die. But God makes a promise, (a commitment or covenant) to the people of Israel. He tells them that "The Angel of Death" will "pass over" every household where the blood has been smeared on the doorposts. There will be no deaths amongst the people of Israel. (Exodus 12:21-23). At the Passover meal, the people of Israel, down through the centuries after Moses, remembered, not only how God had rescued them from slavery in Egypt, but also, that they were delivered from death, as well. (Exodus 12:23-30).

Once again, Jesus is radically reshaping the Passover meal. The cup of wine he's holding in his hands no longer looks back to what happened in Egypt, but to the death of Jesus.

Jesus is saying that God's greatest (and final) rescue mission – far greater than the rescue from Egypt – is through the death of Jesus. Jesus' death is God's his promise, his commitment (covenant) with us, that we are "saved"/rescued/forgiven through Jesus' death on the cross. You could say that the supper Jesus held with his disciples, was in fact, the first ever communion service, or Lord's Supper. (Some church traditions use terms like "eucharist" or "mass").

Depending on the age of your children, you might like to do some of this as a question and answer, for example:

- Why did Jesus die for us?
- Why do you think that first Good Friday was the best day?

If your children have questions, this might be a good moment to encourage them to ask their questions. (In my experience, children often ask questions that are difficult. So, please ask for help. Your Connect Group leader, or a member of the Grainery Leadership Team will be delighted to help you).

Communion

Bible verse

Perhaps ask a child to read this.

“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”

John 3:16

Prayer

An adult or older child to pray something along these lines

Father, thank you for today when we remember the Lord Jesus and his death for us. Please help us by your Holy Spirit to know how much you love us; to understand how much Jesus has done for us and to love you in return, with all our hearts. Amen.

OR

Almighty and most merciful Father, we remember with heartfelt gratitude the darkness and shame your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ endured for us at Calvary. Instil in us a deeper understanding of your mercy and grace, and renew our love and devotion to you. Through Jesus Christ, who is our only Mediator and Lord. Amen.

Prayers

I've suggested 3 different “kinds” of prayer. “Sorry,” “Thank you,” and “Please.” Again, please feel free to adapt as appropriate.

“Sorry” (Confession)

[Ask everyone think of something they'd like to ask God's forgiveness for, but not to tell anyone. This is between them and God, (unless of course, they want to tell someone). It could be something said or done, or something they know they should have done, but didn't; it could be other things, like taking God's love in Jesus for granted. After a moment, ask them to write, (or draw) this down on the paper. (But, not let anyone see it)! Then ask them to fold up the piece of paper and when they've done that, bring out the bin liner and get them to put their paper in the bag. Seal up the top of the bin liner, and, if possible, put it in the bin. (If

that involves going outside, you might want to do that later, and in the meantime, place the liner outside the room). The important thing is to show that the liner and its contents are taken away. Then make the point that this is what Jesus does with our sin. He takes it away! And once it's gone, it's gone forever!

At the end, pray a prayer thanking God that because of Jesus' death, we are forgiven.

“Thank you” and “Please”

Ask everyone to think of 1 thing they'd like to thank God for, and 1 thing they'd like to ask for. Get them to write it down, (or draw), and then share what they've written, (or drawn), beginning with the “thank you.” You know what will work best in your family, but if possible, encourage each one to pray. Eg. They could pray their own Thank you and please prayers, or you could share them around. For example, each person to pray someone else's “please” prayer.

You might like to conclude with everyone praying the Lord's prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Bible reading

(You will find some notes on this passage in the “Other Resources” section at the end)

You might like to give your family some background to this passage:

Following the Passover Meal, (Last Supper), Jesus and his disciples, (but not Judas, who had gone to inform the Authorities and betray Jesus), left for Gethsemane, a garden, overlooking the city of Jerusalem. It was in Gethsemane that Jesus was arrested. Following his arrest, most of the disciples fled. (You might like to read Mark's account in his gospel, from chapter 14:32). Having been put on trial, Jesus was condemned to death. Again, you can read about how the events unfolded in Mark's gospel. This is the final scene in Mark's account of the death of Jesus].

Have someone to read these verses:

²⁵ It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶ The written notice of the charge against him read: the king of the Jews. ²⁷ They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, “So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰ come down from the cross and save yourself!” ³¹ In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! ³² Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.” Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

³³ At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴ And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). ³⁵ When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.”

³⁶ Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,” he said.

³⁷ With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. ³⁸ The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”

Mark 15 (NIV)

Pour out a small amount of juice a into individual glasses.

Bible reading

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

1 John 4:10

Communion Prayer

(Adult) With this bread

[you might like to hold up the bread]

(All) We will remember Jesus.

(Adult) With this wine

[you might find it helpful to hold up the glass of juice]

(All) We will remember Jesus.

(Adult) Bread for his body, Wine for his blood. Jesus said: “Do this in remembrance of me.”

(All) We will remember Jesus.

[An adult to pray]

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, You gave your only Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for us.

He commanded us always to remember his precious death, until the day when he comes back.

On the night when Jesus was betrayed, he took bread,

[you might like to pick up the bread at this point]

gave you thanks and broke it.

He gave it to his disciples saying:

“Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

[you might like to tear the bread at this point]

In the same way, after supper, he took the cup and gave you thanks. He gave it to them, saying: “Drink this, all of you, this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Amen.

Share the bread and juice

Take and eat this, in remembrance that Christ died for you.

Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you,
and be thankful.

Prayer

Father, thank you for your love for us.

(All) Thank you Father.

Thank you for Jesus, and his death on the cross for us.

(All) Thank you Father.

Father, thank you that we are forgiven because Jesus died for us.

(All) Thank you Father.

Thank you that you have made us your sons and daughters, through
Jesus.

(All) Thank you, Father

Final Prayer

You might like to finish with someone praying this prayer by Richard of Chichester
(1197-1253)

Thanks be to you O Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given
us; for all the pains and insults which you have borne for us. O merciful
redeemer, friend and brother, may we know you more clearly, love you
more dearly, and follow you more nearly, now and for evermore. Amen.