

Children & Communion

Preparation Material

Compiled by
The Go Team Advisers



DIocese OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

Introduction

Admission to Holy Communion before Confirmation

We are delighted that you have reached the point where you have explored admitting children to Holy Communion before Confirmation, sought permission and are now ready to prepare your children for admission.

We have put together a session to use with children, to prepare them for being admitted to Holy Communion. Use this resource as a 'Pick 'N' Mix' - take activities from each section and form a session that you think is suitable for your children. As with all resources, we suggest that you adapt the ideas accordingly for your group, as you know them and you know the ideas that will work and be most appropriate for those in your care.

These ideas and activities aim to be interactive and memorable, so that your children can have as full an understanding of Holy Communion as is appropriate to their life stage. These ideas have been adapted from a number of sources as referenced below, as well from the Go Team Advisers own ideas.

We hope you find this helpful and informative as you seek to prepare your children for this significant and exciting part of their faith journey.

Remember to keep a record of the children who you are admitting to Holy Communion and keep it updated. Present the children with certificates (available to download on the Diocesan website) on admitting them.



Acknowledgments and grateful thanks to: Premier Youth and Children's Work Magazine (November 2017), Get Messy! Magazine (January—April 2016) and Flame Creative Children's Ministry, whose resources have been used in collating this pack.

1: GATHERING: FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD!

Being that the objective of this session is to focus on a special meal that Jesus shared with his disciples, it seems only appropriate to allow your group to enjoy eating together. As with any session with children and young people that involves food, please ensure that you are aware of any allergies within your group and are sensitive to their dietary requirements.

Favourite meals!

Have some healthy snacks available for the children on their arrival.

Ask the children what they had for breakfast. Move onto asking, what is their favourite meal? Share a story about a meal you share regularly with family and/or friends to celebrate something, such as the last night of a holiday, New Year's Eve, or a birthday.

Following this, you may like to encourage the children to draw a picture of their favourite meal on a paper plate. Alternatively, have a range of foodie pictures from magazines available. Get them to cut out the foods they like and glue them onto a paper plate to represent a favourite meal.



Tasty Flatbread

A food related activity frequently grabs the attention of most children!

How about arranging for the children to make flatbreads? As stated above, check carefully for allergies and food intolerances in your group.

You will need: Wholemeal flour; jug of water; mixing bowls; rolling pins; scales; clean surface for rolling; non-stick frying pans; a hob or small camping stove (the ones that use gas cartridges are perfect); plates; butter, jam, Nutella or suitable 'toppings'.

Mix together 450g plain wholemeal flour and 250 ml water to make a good firm bread dough.

On a floured surface, encourage the children to roll a golf-ball-sized dough sphere into a thin flatbread, no more than 2-3 mm thick.

Allocate an adult to supervise the heating of the frying pan.

Cook the flatbread for 20-30 seconds on each side.

Once it has cooled a little, invite the children to eat it as it is or spread it with a topping.

You may like to ask the children why they have made flatbreads in this session? Ensure that you refer back to the flatbreads later in the session, when discussing the relevance of the bread in communion.

2: LEAD IN: MEANINGFUL MEALS

Special Meals

You will need: five pictures or items of food that celebrate or signify something (e.g. Birthday or Christmas cake, hot-cross bun, harvest loaf, Easter Egg, ensure that you include bread and non-alcoholic wine/red juice)

Hide the pictures/items around the room or outside if you have a suitable space available.

Encourage the children to find the hidden images/items.

With all items successfully found and the children gathered, discuss what each item made them remember. Leave the bread and wine until last.



Squashy grapes!

You will need: red grapes; sieves; bowls; disposable plastic gloves; beakers

Place a sieve over a bowl and load it up with grapes. Using your fingers (gloved if you plan to drink the juice), squash the grapes through the mesh to make grape juice. Pour the juice into beakers and share it around.

Encourage the children to talk about the colour of the juice. What does it remind you of? What can grapes be turned into? Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples to remember him by sharing red wine?

Potato Printing!

You will need: standard-sized potatoes, cut in half; cookie cutters (hearts, hands and feet), with shapes pre cut into potatoes; round ended knives; spray on or watered down fabric paint in various colours on paper plates; white sheet big enough to use as a tablecloth; shirts/aprons for children to wear, to keep paint off clothing!

If you would prefer the children to make individual pictures, use ready mix paint and print onto paper.

Using the fabric paint, encourage the children to stamp the prints on the sheet to form a beautiful group tablecloth. Ensure that all of the children in the group have contributed.

Talk about the images used (hearts, hands, feet) and how they may link to the Lord's Supper. Ask the children if there is anything unique to their family. Do they have family traits or special mealtime routines that use daily or on special occasions such as Birthday's and Christmas. What is special about being part of Jesus' family?

STEP IN: BIBLE STORY

There are many ways in which you can share the account of The Last Supper with children. Think about your group and the best medium in which to do so. Here are some options to choose from:

1. Godly Play—if you are familiar with this type of story telling, Godly Play offers an interactive approach, which allows children to 'wonder' about the story and consider how it applies to them. This maybe particularly helpful in helping the children understand the significance of sharing Holy Communion and may be a way in which the children can helpfully understand the different elements of the Holy Communion meal.

To access the Last Supper Godly play script, you will need 'The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Volume 4.'

2. Video—here are some video suggestions from YouTube that you may consider using:

Saddleback kids video—The Last Supper:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SigoALSS1R8>

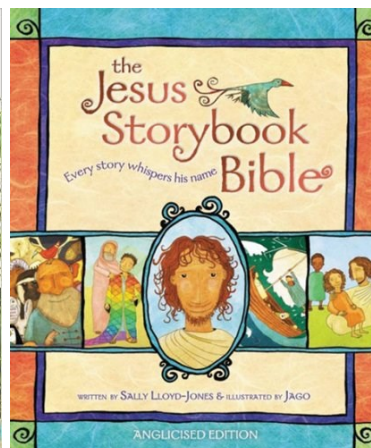
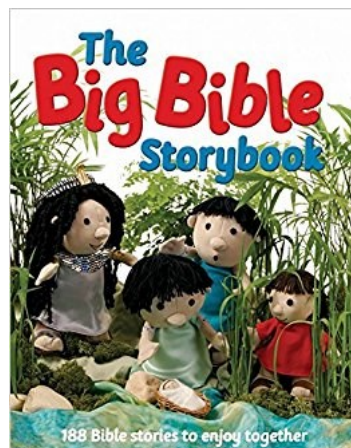
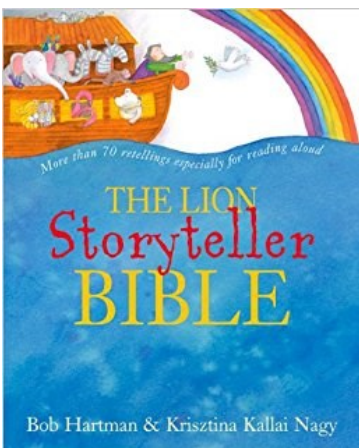
Jesus Storybook Bible video—The Servant King

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y76NEYcivpo>

3. Use a script such as that included in Appendix 1, from the Premier Youth and Children's work magazine.

4. Or you may wish to tell the children the story directly from a children's Bible. With such a multitude of choice, we recommend using one of the following versions with Key Stage 1 children:

- Lion Storyteller Bible, as used for Open the Book (page 136-137)
- The Big Bible Storybook (page 199 onwards)
- The Jesus Storybook Bible (page 286-293)
- Hands-on Bible—suitable for older children (page 970 or 994 or 1033 or 1059)



STEP IN: BIBLE STORY CONTINUED...

5. For older children (Key Stage 2) you may like to set up the last supper as per the photograph opposite and talk through the events of the Last Supper, how it came about and what each part means. Within this, be sure to share bread/matzo/pitta or whatever you deem to be appropriate and grape juice/blackcurrant squash together. By recreating the event itself, the children are likely to gain a far more thorough understanding of the meal and its significance in the Christian journey. Ensure you give the children plenty of opportunities to ask questions throughout the meal, to aid their understanding. After you have re-enacted and shared the meal together, it may be helpful to read an account of the Last Supper from the bible. Use a translation such as The Good News Bible or New Living Translation.



6. Use the Bible App for kids to tell the story—this will work better with a smaller group. <https://www.bible.com/kids> available on Apple App store, Google Play and Amazon Fire. The app is free and is now the most downloaded children's Bible app. On the app, the Story is called 'A Goodbye Meal'.

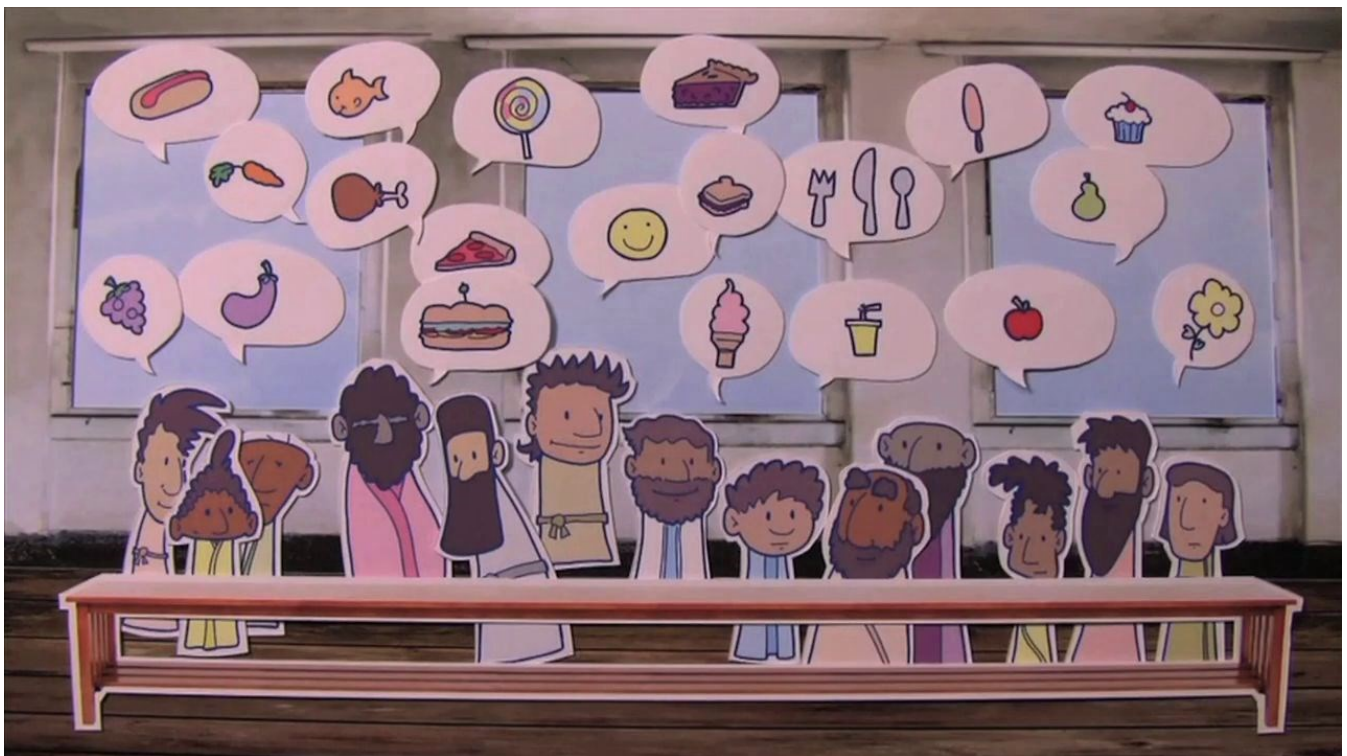


STEP ON: EXPLORING THE STORY

As this session is for preparing children for admission to Holy Communion, it is important that at some point in this session you engage in a conversation with the children as to what they are going to be partaking in and the significance of it.

Here are some questions to guide you in this conversation:

- What is your favourite part of the story?
- Is there anything that you do not like about the story?
- Is there anything that you do not understand or find confusing about the story?
- Why is this story called the Last Supper?
- What did Jesus mean about the bread and wine as his body and blood?
- Why do people still share the Last Supper/Holy Communion/Eucharist together today?
- Why do you think it is such an important and special meal?
- Why do Christians share this meal over and over again?
- Why do Christians believe it is so important?
- What does it mean to you, to be able to share in the Last Supper/Holy Communion/Eucharist?

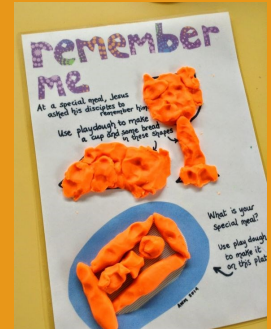


STEP OUT: RESPONSE

To help the children reflect on the story, you may like to have some of the following activities available to do. Whilst the children are engaging in the activities, take the opportunity to talk to them about what they are thinking about communion and their understanding of it:

1. Play-doh Mats

See appendix 2 for a photo-copiable print of the Last Supper Play-doh mat. You may like to laminate it once printed, to make it reusable. Either make your own play dough (<https://theimaginationtree.com/best-ever-no-cook-play-dough-recipe/>) or buy some pre-made. This activity will help the children reflect and will help them to understand what communion is.



2. 'Remember Me' Jigsaw:

See appendix 3 for a photo-copiable puzzle. You may like to laminate the jigsaw, before cutting it into 10 pieces. Encourage the children to put the puzzles together. Once they have done so ask them about the symbols they can see (bread, wine and heart) and the words. You may be surprised as to the conversations that arise as a result of an activity such as this.



3. Godly Play:

If you told the story using Godly Play or using props, you may like to make this equipment available to the children at this point, to give them an opportunity to re-enact the story for themselves.

4. Prayer Space:

You will need: bread, a cup, bowl, water and a towel if you would like to illustrate foot washing.

Include instructions such as:

Jesus showed how much he loved his friends by washing their feet and sharing a special meal with them.

Who are your friends? How would you help them? What would you share with them?

Share some of the bread and think about what you would do. Ask God to be with your friends.



STEP OUT: RESPONSE CONTINUED

5. Lego:

For some children, a great way for them to reflect on the story is to get creative, so why not give them the opportunity to build?

Provide a box of Lego and encourage the children to make a model that reflects the last supper. There is an example here of one made out of regular Lego characters and pieces.



6. Crafty ideas:

Like the idea above involving Lego, for some children, they are just creative. Provide paper, pens, glue, tissue paper, ribbons, stickers, craft sticks, pipe-cleaners, clean house-hold junk and give the children and opportunity to reflect in their own way. The only instruction you need to give the children, is to create something that reflects the Last Supper. You may be amazed at what the children come up with and the many amazing conversations that arise out or something so non-prescriptive.

7. Create a video:

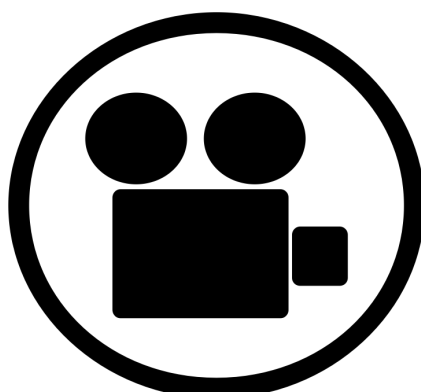
This maybe a particularly good way of engaging some of your older children.

Challenge them to produce a video of the Last Supper. You may like to say that it has to be a minimum of 1 minute in length, but no longer than 3 minutes. You are likely to discover that your children are a 'whizz' on their technological devices and will produce some incredible things, very quickly.

You may like to encourage the children to do this outside the session and then arrange another gathering where you screen them all.

If the children choose to feature friends in the video, please ensure you seek permissions and ensure they do not get posted onto social media sites without the relevant checks in place.

Videos can be made with voiceovers and children using Lego characters or models or they can make animations, or shadow puppets, they do not have to feature real life humans! Again, allow your children's creativity to flow.



WHAT NEXT?

Having completed these activities, you may wish to go through the order of a communion service with the children, prior to their being admitted. Appendix 4 contains a really helpful image of a wheel/clock that will help you to do this, as well being a useful visual aid to give to children when they are in a communion service. We strongly recommend that you carefully consider the liturgy used when children are present and partaking in communion, to ensure that the language is accessible for them. Please contact your relevant Go Team Adviser if you require support with this.

We also hope and pray that you will be investing in the discipleship of these children in the long-term, as they move through some of the most formative and challenging life stages, with the intention of preparing the children for confirmation in their teenage years. We hope that you will revisit the significance of sharing in Holy Communion with them regularly, so that the significance, wonder and appreciation of this special invitation to remember Jesus is not forgotten. We hope that you will find ways to encourage them and help them grow in their faith journey, as well as supporting their families as they love and support their children in their faith at home. Once again, if you would like any ideas or resources to support you in this, please contact your Go Team Adviser, who will be only too happy to help and point you in the direction of some helpful resources.



Appendix 1:

The Last Supper Story Script,

from Premier Youth and Children's Magazine, November 2017

You will need: a tablecloth; bunch of herbs; jug with water; bread basket with flatbreads; jug of red juice; cups

Explain that today's story is about a boy called Dan.

"I can't wait for our special supper this evening" said Dan, dancing about with excitement. "Not long now!" said Mum, as she chopped sweet smelling herbs. *Hand out a bunch of herbs to pass around and smell.*

Today was a celebration—it was Passover! Later on, Dan would sit down with his family to share a delicious meal. There would be roast lamb—oh, and that funny flatbread Mum made without any yeast. He felt hungry just thinking about it! *Ask the group what their favourite celebration meal is.*

Dan went outside. He climbed the stone steps that led up the side of the house, past the guest rooms and onto the flat roof. Down below, he spotted his brother coming back with a water jar filled to the brim. He was walking slowly so that he didn't spill any precious water. *Pass the jug around, challenging the children not spill it!*

Two men were following Dan's brother—Peter and John. He's met them the other day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a little donkey. What did they want, he wondered? Dan ran back down the steps and listened at the door.

"Jesus wants to know, where is the guest room that you are going to lend him and his friends for the Passover meal?" *Ask if the children can remember where the guest room was.*

"Come with me," Dan heard his Father say. Quickly he scampered back up the steps, dived into the guest room and hid under the long table.

Soon, Peter and John came in to get everything ready. They grinned when they saw Dan under the table.

"Come out and give us a hand!" they said. *Ask the children to help you lay out your 'meal' on the tablecloth.*

Later on, Dan had a wonderful celebration meal with his family. But the best part was when Dad told them the Passover story again! Dan loved to hear how God had rescued their ancestors from Egypt and taken them to a land of their own.

After dinner, Dan went to peep around the door of the guest room. Jesus was sitting between his disciples at the table. "My friends, I've been looking forward so much to eating this last supper with you," he said. Dan was puzzled. Was Jesus going away again so soon?

Jesus took the wine, thanked God for it, and shared it among his friends. *Pour some juice into everyone's cup.*

Then he took some bread, thanked God for it, broke it and gave it to them, saying: "This bread is like my body, which will be broken for you. Please do this to remember me." *Break some bread and give everyone a piece to eat.*

Next, Jesus took the wine and said: "This wine is like my blood, which will be poured out for you. Please do this to remember me." *Ask everyone to drink their 'wine'.*

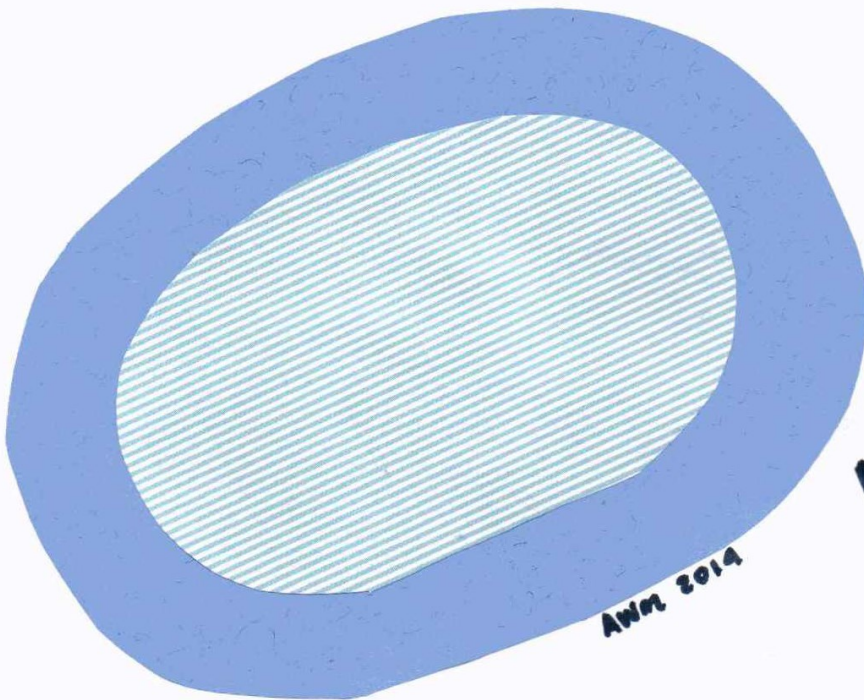
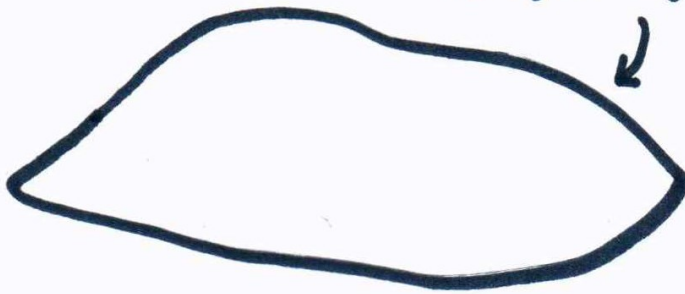
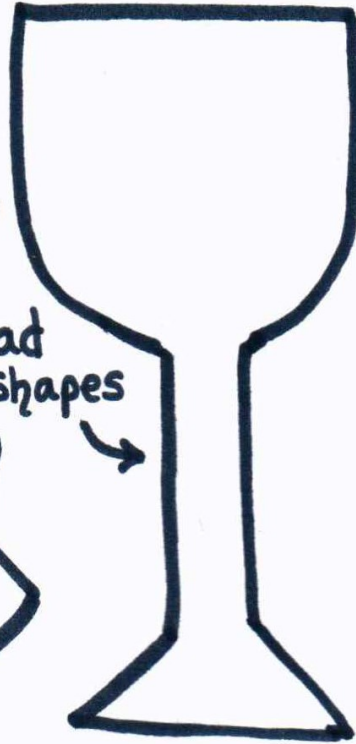
Dan thought Jesus looked very sad as he looked round at his friends. "One of you is going to hand me over to my enemies" he said.

Dan shivered. Surely nobody would want to hurt Jesus, would they? He went back to join his family, wondered what was going to happen next.

remember me

At a special meal, Jesus
asked his disciples to
remember him.

Use playdough to make
a cup and some bread
in these shapes



What is your
special meal?

Use play dough
to make it
on this plate.

April 2014



Appendix 4—Communion Wheel

