

COMMUNION INSTRUCTIONS FOR GROUPS

We believe that the context of a community group is a great place for communion (or The Lord's Supper) to happen. The following paragraphs are meant to give you some guidelines to make this a meaningful celebration within your group. Please feel free to contact your Group Coach with any questions.

What will you need to do Before Group?

- You will want to purchase a loaf of bread (unsliced) or Saltine crackers. The bread used by Jesus was unleavened bread because it was a Passover meal (more like a Saltine than a loaf of bread). We don't think it is wrong to use a normal loaf of bread. It is up to you. If you use the loaf – you can pass the loaf. If you serve pieces of cracker – you will want to put the pieces on a plate or tray.
- You will want to get some small cups (Dixie cups could be perfect). We wouldn't suggest you use large cups as the small amount of juice in a large cup might look strange and you don't want to serve too much. People might feel obligated to drink all the contents.
- You will want to get some grape juice to serve. Although some churches use wine, we will continue our policy of no alcohol in community groups. In our culture some people have a conviction against alcohol and others choose not to drink because of an alcoholic past (their own or a family member). Therefore, we believe serving alcohol, as part of communion, isn't sensitive or wise.
- You will likely want to prepare everything ahead of time. The bread can be placed on a plate or tray and the juice in small cups.

What will you need to do During Group?

- Give a brief instruction on what you are doing and why. This would also be a reminder of when people may want to abstain from participating. Affirm that this is acceptable and admired.
- Distribute the bread and juice
- Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 together and then drink the juice and eat the bread as each are mentioned in the text.

GREAT COMMUNION REMINDERS

What is Communion (The Lord's Supper)?

It is the regular remembrance and celebration of the Lord's sacrificial death. The breaking and eating of bread represents Christ's body being broken on the cross. The drinking from the cup represents the shedding of Christ's blood whereby we are forgiven. (Matthew 26:26–28; 1 Corinthians 11:23–24)

What is the purpose of Communion?

The primary purpose of communion is to take time to remember all that the Lord accomplished for us through his death and resurrection. It is a time to worship and give thanks for the forgiveness of our sins and the new life and relationship that we have in Jesus Christ. This time of remembrance was initiated by Jesus just before His death. Because we tend to be forgetful people, Old Testament believers were regularly called to remember the faithfulness of God through various memorials. In the New Testament and today, Jesus wants us to remember His love and forgiveness of our sins in this way.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: 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." 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." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Who can take Communion?

Any person who has believed in Jesus Christ and have asked Him to be the leader of their life and forgiver of their sins may take communion. This means it is possible that some members of your group may not want to participate. This will likely provide you with the best opportunity to have a purposeful, evangelistic discussion with anyone in your group who you know is not a believer. Other reasons to abstain include believers with a sin issue that they don't want to deal with or any believer that's not ready to focus on Jesus' death and resurrection (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). Again, we think this will provide you with an opportunity for purposeful discussions that will help you to disciple those in your group that may choose to not participate.

Who can serve (give, facilitate, administer or officiate) Communion?

Biblically speaking, any believer is able to serve or facilitate communion. Strategically, we think that one of the Community Group Leaders would be the best person to lead in communion. This is a great opportunity for the leaders to model servant leadership in the same way that Jesus served His disciples. However there may be other members who are equally able to lead and serve in this celebration. This is left to the leader's discernment and discretion.

Conclusion

If you have any other questions about communion or its celebration in your group, please contact your Group Coach.