



S2.Lesson 26: Sacraments – The Lord’s Supper (Communion)

Middle School Lesson Plans

Supplies Needed: Journals; Handout; a pack of playing cards with a joker (from that pack of playing cards make a "new deck" that has as many cards in it as there are people in the class - and make sure that one of those cards is the Joker card. If you don't have a joker, just use all the number cards except for one card - make that a face card and change the directions accordingly)

OPENING PRAYER

TELL

- We started a new session last week, and, it is also our last session for the school year!
- This session is about the sacraments in the Protestant Church.
- In general, a sacrament is something considered to be sacred or have a special significance. In Christianity, it means a rite that is considered to have been established by Jesus Christ to bring grace (i.e. gifts of God) to those participating in or receiving it.
- There are two sacraments in the United Church of Christ. Baptism and Communion.
- Today, we'll be talking about Communion.
- To really talk about communion, we have to talk about two stories. Jesus's last supper with his disciples before he is arrested. And the dinner they are celebrating, which is Passover.
- Last week we talked about Passover and this week, we're going to talk about Jesus' last supper with his disciples.
- Let's read that story now...

MT 26 NRSV

17 On the first day of the Unleavened Bread festivities, the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" 18 He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.' " 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal. 20 When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; 21 and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." 22 And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" 23 He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." 25 Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus replied, "You have said so."

26 Then while they were still eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." 30 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

ASK

- So in verse 17, what meal is being prepared? (The Passover)
- Last week we discussed the story of the Passover. What do you remember about the story of Passover? (The Israelites were enslaved in Egypt. Moses was telling Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. Pharaoh kept saying no. Plagues were sent to change Pharaoh's mind. The last plague, the 10th plague, was when the God's destroyer killed the first born in every household. The Israelites were spared if they had killed a lamb and put its blood on the doorposts. The angel of death "passed-over" the houses with lamb blood. Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go. Passover is the celebration of the Israelites being freed from slavery).
- During the meal in verse 21, what does Jesus tell his disciples? (that one of them will betray Jesus)
- Does Jesus know who will betray him? (yes)
- Who? (Judas)
- Does Jesus tell Judas to leave? (No)
- Is this how you would handle the situation?

TELL

- Betrayal is when someone who is a friend or even someone who is just friendly to us then acts against that friendship/friendliness. At its worst, betrayal is when a friend joins our enemies.
- It is difficult to tell if Judas knows that Jesus will be killed by the Pharisees. However, it seems very unlikely that Judas wanted Jesus dead (as shown by his suicide later on).
- But Jesus knows what's going to happen.
- We're going to do an activity now that portrays betrayal by having one of us try to "kill" the rest of us by using a friendly gesture.
- Here's how the activity works:

EXPLAIN "Assassin" Activity

- Everyone sits in a circle
- [Count how many are in the group. Count out one playing card per person.]
- In the playing cards that are counted out, included is one joker.
- I'm now passing out one card to each person.
- Look at your card, but do not tell or show anyone your card
- If you have the joker card, then you are "The Assassin!"
- The game is played by everyone in the circle looking at each other, in the eyes.
- The role of the assassin is to eliminate as many players as possible without getting caught.
- The assassin does this by winking at individuals in the group.
- If you get winked at, let a few moments pass and then say, "I'm dead."
- Feel free to be dramatic about it (scream; fall of your chair, etc).
- Players who have been eliminated keep their heads lowered.
- Each person in the group (who is alive) has one chance to name the assassin.
- If you think you know who it is, you say, "Can I get a witness?"
- If there's someone who is willing to back you up, you then say who it is.
- If you are right, we start the game over.
- If you are wrong, you are eliminated - though the witness is not.

DO Assassin Activity

Note: After two rounds of winking, alternate the activity by keeping everything the same, except have everyone stand up, walk around and shake hands. The assassin will eliminate players by squeezing (twice and somewhat hard) during the handshake. Players whose hands are squeezed wait for a moment (or 10) and then fall to the floor.

TELL

- So even though that's a fun game for us, betrayal in and of itself is an awful thing. Imagine how Jesus must feel...and yet, Jesus does not kick Judas out.
- Instead, Jesus INCLUDES Judas in the next part of the story.

ASK/TELL

- After this conversation about betrayal, Jesus then proceeds to say words that we now use during communion. But before we talk about communion, what four things does Jesus do that we see him do in the feeding of the 5000 story? (Takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, gives it)
- The things Jesus says about the bread (my body broken for you, take and eat) strongly relates to the Passover story. What bodies in the Passover story were broken? (firstborns and the lamb)
- What did the breaking of the bodies allow for? (freedom of the Israelites)
- Then Jesus says the wine is like his blood, take and drink. Ok, first...YUCK! Second, what role does blood have in the Passover story? (blood of the lamb is what spares the Israelites firstborns from dying)
 - So Jesus is saying his death is going to 1. Set us free and 2. Spare us the greater cost of freedom as seen in the Passover story: The lamb dies so that the Israelites can live.
- In verse 28, what does Jesus say his blood is poured out for? (forgiveness of sins)
 - Sin can function like a captor – Forgiveness frees us from this captivity. Jesus is saying his blood can set us free from our ways of living without God. But we have to receive this forgiveness. Judas does not receive this forgiveness and later on kills himself due to his torment over betraying Jesus...
- In the Passover story, what were the Israelites supposed to do with their freedom? (worship God; go to the promised land)
- So if we're set free from our ways of living separate from God, what do you think we're supposed to do with our freedom? (worship God; live in the Kingdom of God)
- The Passover meal was a yearly celebration that reminded the Israelites about how God set them free from slavery.
- What do we celebrate and remember, then, when we participate in Communion? (we remember the sacrifice Jesus made so that we would be free from our ways of living separate from God, would worship God and would live in the Kingdom of God)

If this is the last class, share some reflections of the year and offer thanksgiving to God for the students. Also, have the students take their journals home at this time.

CLOSING PRAYER