



S2.Lesson 25: Sacraments – Passover (intro to Communion)

Middle School Lesson Plans

Supplies Needed: Journals; Handout; tv or laptop to show movie clip (movie clip link is available at rfour.org/curriculum.html); A ball of yarn per student; 3 foam balls; A pair of scissors

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.
- This week we're going to talk about the Passover story.
- The Passover story is about how the Israelites were freed from slavery.
- Before we do anything, we're going to watch a brief clip of someone getting stuck.

WATCH "Walking Across Egypt" Movie Clip

ASK

- Older rocking chairs have interchangeable cushions and if you take the cushion out, then there's nothing but a hole in the middle of the chair. What was the woman doing that was keeping her from paying attention to the chair? (watching the tv – she was distracted)
- Once the woman was stuck, could she get out on her own? (No, she needed help)

TELL

- The Passover story is how the Israelites were set free from slavery.
- They were stuck in Egypt for hundreds of years.
- Then God called Moses to set the Israelites free.
- Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, said no.
- Then ensued 9 plagues to convince Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.
- Pharaoh still said no.
- We're going to read about the 10th plague and what happens next.

Exodus 12:21-40 – the Message

21 Moses assembled all the elders of Israel. He said, "Select a lamb for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. 22 Take a bunch of hyssop (an aromatic herb) and dip it in the bowl of the lamb's blood and smear it on the lintel (top of the doorframe) and on the two doorposts. No one is to leave the house until morning. 23 God will pass through to strike Egypt down. When he sees the blood on the lintel and the two door posts, God will pass over the doorway; he won't let the destroyer enter your house to strike you down with ruin. 24 "Keep this word. It's the law for you and your children, forever. 25 When you enter the land which God will give you as he promised, keep doing this. 26 And when your children say to you, 'Why are we doing this?' 27 tell them: 'It's the Passover-sacrifice to God who passed over the homes of the Israelites in Egypt when he hit Egypt with death but rescued us.'" The people bowed and worshiped. 28 The Israelites then went and did what God had commanded Moses and Aaron. They did it all.

29 At midnight God struck every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sits on his throne, right down to the firstborn of the prisoner locked up in jail. Also the firstborn of the animals.

30 Pharaoh got up that night, he and all his servants and everyone else in Egypt - what wild wailing and lament in Egypt! There wasn't a house in which someone wasn't dead. 31 Pharaoh called in Moses and Aaron that very night and said, "Get out of here and be done with you - you and your Israelites! Go worship God on your own terms. 32 And yes, take your sheep and cattle as you've insisted, but go. And bless me."

33 The Egyptians couldn't wait to get rid of them; they pushed them to hurry up, saying, "We're all as good as dead." 34 The people grabbed their bread dough before it had risen, bundled their bread bowls in their cloaks and threw them over their shoulders. 35 The Israelites had already done what Moses had told them; they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold things and clothing. 36 God saw to it that the Egyptians liked the people and so readily gave them what they asked for. Oh yes! They picked those Egyptians clean. 37 The Israelites moved on from Rameses to Succoth, about 600,000 on foot, besides their dependents. 38 There was also a crowd of riffraff tagging along, not to mention the large flocks and herds of livestock. 39 They baked unraised cakes with the bread dough they had brought out of Egypt; it hadn't raised - they'd been rushed out of Egypt and hadn't time to fix food for the journey. 40 The Israelites had lived in Egypt 430 years.

ASK

- In verse 29, what was the 10th plague?
- In verse 22, how what were the Israelites supposed to do in order to avoid the 10th plague?
- In verse 23, what would God's destroyer do when it saw the blood on a doorway? (Passover)
- What was Pharaoh's response to this 10th plague? (to let the Israelites go)
- In verse 39, what kind of cakes did they bake? (ones that didn't rise – there was no yeast in them because it bakes quicker, lasts longer, but does not taste as good)
- How long had the Israelites been in Egypt? (430 years. That's a long time)

TELL

There's a number of things to note in this story.

1. There is a direct correlation between death and freedom in this story. The death of the firstborn child in every Egyptian family leads to the emancipation of the Israelites. The death of lambs and the displayed blood of the lambs keeps the firstborn Israelite children alive.

2. Freedom isn't free. Everything has a cost. The Egyptians lost cheap labor and children. The Israelites lost lambs and their homes. Even though their homes were slave quarters, it was all they knew...for FOUR hundred years! This is not a smooth transition, but an abrupt change. Even though the Israelites are going to be excited, they are also going to be afraid and hesitant and confused/resistant/contradictory.
3. This part of the story portrays an interventionist God, a God who physically interacts with the people, a God who swoops down and kills children and livestock. This portrayal of God is more usual in the earlier sections of the Old Testament. But if you look at the entirety of the Old and New Testament, you see a God who most often empowers humans. Like Moses. If God is just going to intervene, why have people be part of the story at all? This story, though, is not about how God interacts with us, but a story that speaks to God's desire for us, that we be free – God would even let blood be shed for our freedom...as scary as that sounds...
4. What are the Israelites supposed to do with their freedom? In verse 31, as Pharaoh says, "Go and worship on your own terms." God desires freedom for the Israelites, but not so they can just do whatever they want. But so that they can receive God's healing power and then be God's light to the world.
5. Isn't this unfair to the Egyptians? Shouldn't just Pharaoh's oldest be killed? Why should the whole nation be punished? (The best way to think about this is to think about pollution. A town could be full of innocent people, but if the factory at the middle of the town keeps polluting the water, then everyone's going to get sick. Even if the rest of Egypt was innocent (and they weren't), the factory of Pharaoh was polluting the entire country.)

EXPLAIN ACTIVITY

- We need to get into a circle.
- I'm going to give each of you a ball of yarn. Once everyone has a ball of yarn, take the end of it and hold it in one hand, now take the ball and wrap the yarn around your waist one time.
- Once you've done that, then I want you to take your ball of yarn and throw it UNDERHAND, to someone else in the circle.
- Make sure the person you are throwing to is looking at you and that they know that you are throwing the yarn to them. This means you can't all throw your ball of yarn at the same time!!!
- If I see you throwing a ball of yarn overhand you will be told to sit down and you will not participate in the rest of this activity. Is this understood? (Wait for a yes from everyone).
- Okay, once you catch a ball of yarn, wrap it one time around your waist and then throw the ball of yarn UNDERHAND to someone else in the circle. Then throw the ball of yarn to another person and so on. Keep doing this until I tell you to stop.
- Any questions?
- Okay, begin!

NOTE: Teacher(s) do not participate in the circle. If someone throws the yarn and misses their target, there will need to be free hands to pick up the yarn and hand it back.

DO ACTIVITY (for about 5 minutes)

TELL

- OK, everyone stop throwing yarn. But otherwise stay as you are.

- I need a volunteer. (choose a volunteer)
- I need to you walk away from the circle.
- What happens when one person tries to walk away? (everyone else goes along with him/her)
- I need another volunteer.
- Take your hand and the yarn in front of you.
- What does everyone feel when the person does that?

If there's time

- I'm going to put a large foam ball on the web of yarn and see if y'all can move it around the web without touching the ball with your hands.
- How easy is it to move the ball where you want to?
- Now I'm going to put three foam balls on the web.
- The three people who can hold a foam ball in their hands wins.

TELL

- If you think of the yarn as decisions and choices that you have made, you can see how you are pretty tied up with the people around you.
- In fact, you're so tied up that it is pretty tough to separate yourself.
- The story of Passover says, even when we feel hopelessly entangled and stuck, freedom is still possible.
- What we have to do is keep seeking God's help and direction, and God will show us a way out.
- The way out might involve some destruction. But freedom isn't free, right? So God might say, you know, why don't you use some scissors?

(pass out scissors)

Next week, we'll talk about how Communion, The Lords' Supper and Passover all fit together.

CLOSING PRAYER