

# Christianity

What do you already know about communion?

Make some notes on a mind-map before you carry on. Watch 'The Last Supper' video on the website if you want some reminders of what you learned before Easter.





## **Why do Christians share communion?**

To understand that communion is linked to the Passover meal.

# Communion

Communion is a special meal of bread and wine that Christians take. It links back to the final meal that Jesus had with his friends before he died.



## The Last Supper

<sup>12</sup> On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go to prepare the Passover meal for you?"

<sup>13</sup> So Jesus sent two of them into Jerusalem with these instructions: "As you go into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. <sup>14</sup> At the house he enters, say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' <sup>15</sup> He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal." <sup>16</sup> So the two disciples went into the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.

<sup>17</sup> In the evening Jesus arrived with the Twelve. <sup>18</sup> As they were at the table<sup>[c]</sup> eating, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, one of you eating with me here will betray me."

<sup>19</sup> Greatly distressed, each one asked in turn, "Am I the one?"

<sup>20</sup> He replied, "It is one of you twelve who is eating from this bowl with me. <sup>21</sup> For the Son of Man<sup>[d]</sup> must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays him. It would be far better for that man if he had never been born!"

<sup>22</sup> As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take it, for this is my body."

<sup>23</sup> And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. <sup>24</sup> And he said to them, "This is my blood, which confirms the covenant<sup>[e]</sup> between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice for many. <sup>25</sup> I tell you the truth, I will not drink wine again until the day I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."



# The Passover Festival

Communion also links right back to an event that happened in the Old Testament of the Bible: Passover. Jews still celebrate Passover today. Let's read the story of Passover so we can see how it links to The Lord's Supper and Communion.

Before you carry on looking at the slides, watch the Loom video of 'God to the Rescue'.

Over 3,000 years ago, a group of Jewish people called the Israelites were being kept in slavery by the ruler of Egypt called Pharaoh.

A man called Moses went to see Pharaoh many times to ask him to let them go, but Pharaoh refused.



GETTY IMAGES

Pharaoh would not let the Jewish people free from slavery

Moses told him that if he did not release them, God would make terrible things called *plagues* happen to the Egyptians.

But Pharaoh did not listen, so the plagues came.

These ten plagues included the River Nile turning to blood, frogs covering the land, insect infestations, animals dying, Egyptians getting skin diseases, the sun stopping shining and the first-born child in Egyptian families being killed by an angel.

God is said to have told Moses to tell the Israelites to paint lamb's blood on their doorposts. This way, the angel would know that Jewish people lived there. It would *pass over* that house and not kill the first-born child.

This is where the name *Passover* comes from.



The Israelites were told that if they painted their doorposts with lamb's blood, then their first-born child would not be killed by the angel



For the last plague, even Pharaoh's own son was killed. He summoned Moses and told him to take the Israelites out of Egypt immediately.

Finally, after 200 years of slavery, the Jewish people were free.

The festival of Passover was being celebrated on the day that Jesus and his friends gathered for the Last (or Lord's) Supper.

Can you identify how the story of Passover links with what Jesus said and did and with Christians taking communion now?

In the story of the Passover, the Israelites were saved by the blood of a lamb. One of the names for Jesus is the Lamb of God - why do you think this is?

Christians believe that Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice and that we are free because of his body and blood. When Christians take communion, they eat some bread and drink some wine. These are **symbols** of Jesus' body and blood and are a way of remembering the sacrifice that Jesus made.

As Jews celebrate and remember their freedom at Passover, Christians celebrate and remember their freedom through taking communion.



Pause here whilst you look at Task 2. The next section will help you with Tasks 3 and 4.



# Communion

Communion is a special meal of bread and wine that Christians take.



## **The Eucharist**

The *Eucharist*, which is also called the *Holy Communion*, *Mass*, the *Lord's Supper* or the *Divine Liturgy*, is a sacrament accepted by almost all Christians.

Christians don't say that they 'do' or 'carry out' the Eucharist; they *celebrate* it. In some churches, the person who takes the leading role in the ceremony is called the *celebrant*.

# What is Holy Communion?

Holy Communion, (also called the Lord's Supper or The Eucharist) is a ritual or sacrament practiced in most denominations of Christianity.

Holy Communion is a re-enactment of the Last Supper, the final meal that Jesus Christ shared with his disciples before his arrest, and crucifixion.

Giving his disciples bread and wine during the meal, Jesus commanded his followers to “do this in memory of me” while referring to the bread as “my body” and the wine as “my blood”.

Through this celebration, Christians remember Christ's sacrifice of himself on the cross, by partaking in the Body of Christ, the bread; and the Blood of Christ, the wine.

# Holy Communion Practice and Customs

## Bible Readings

The prayers and readings during Holy Communion remind people of Christ's final meal and the solemn words and actions of someone standing at the edge of death.

## Preparation of the Table

Bread and wine are placed on the table at the front of the congregation.

## The Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer, recounts God's love for humanity. It helps the congregation remember the supper Christ held with his disciples before his death and that for the Spirit of God to become present.

## The Breaking of the bread

Jesus said: "I am the bread of life." Bread is broken in remembrance of Him.

## Receiving Communion

The people taking part drink a sip of wine (or grape juice) and eat a small piece of bread/cracker, both are **consecrated**.

**Consecrate** - Make something sacred; to dedicate it to a religious purpose.



Here are some words  
that are said in many  
Church of England  
communion services.

The Lord is here.

*All* His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

*All* We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*All* It is right to give thanks and praise.

*The president praises God for his mighty acts and all respond*

*All* Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.

We break this bread  
to share in the body of Christ.

**All** Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.

*The president says one of these invitations to communion*

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink  
in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

**All** Most merciful Lord,  
your love compels us to come in.  
Our hands were unclean,  
our hearts were unprepared;  
we were not fit  
even to eat the crumbs from under your table.  
But you, Lord, are the God of our salvation,  
and share your bread with sinners.  
So cleanse and feed us  
with the precious body and blood of your Son,  
that he may live in us and we in him;  
and that we, with the whole company of Christ,  
may sit and eat in your kingdom.  
Amen.

Now head back to the task sheet to look at Tasks 3 and 4.