



Introduction

Unit 11: Sacrament of Communion

For a complete overview of the *Worship for Life Resource Collection*, including the 13 units as well as the lessons and enhancement pages, please refer to the *Worship for Life Leader's Guide*.

Introduction to the Worship for Life Resource Collection

Worship for Life is a collection of multidimensional materials designed to help children, as well as youth and adults, explore and experience various aspects of Christian worship. The resource collection includes a Leader's Guide and 13 units – one on the broad theme of worship and 12 on the components of a service of worship, including Call to Worship, Invocation, Music, Confession/Assurance, Creeds, Prayer, Scripture, Proclamation, Sacrament of Baptism, Sacrament of Communion, Offering, and Benediction. The collection also includes the *Worship for Life Music CD* with recordings of the songs from the 13 units, based on the lessons for Music: Song.

Introduction to Unit 11: Sacrament of Communion

Unit 11 is designed to help the participants be assured of God's forgiving grace and realize that they must first accept Christ's sacrificial act of love for each believer. The lessons in this unit use Architecture, Art, Banners/Textiles, Clown/Mime, Computer, Creative Writing, Culinary, Dance/Gesture/Movement, Drama, Games, Music, Photography, Puppetry, and Storytelling to teach the subject. Each lesson uses a consistent format of:

- **Passage** – provides the Scripture that serves as the basis for the lesson
- **Purpose** – states the theme for the lesson and the technique employed
- **Preparation** – lists all materials needed for the lesson as well as guidelines for advance preparation
- **Procedure** – outlines the three parts of the lesson
 - **Engage** – supplies the leader with the context for the lesson and a way to engage the participants in the learning experience
 - **Explore** – presents the instruction, activities, and practice for the lesson



- **Empower** –concludes the lesson and challenges the participants to apply their learning to life
- **Possibilities** – gives possible adaptations for children younger than kindergarten and older than fifth grade
- **Participation** – suggests ways to apply the outcome of the learning in an actual service of worship

In addition to the lessons, Unit 11 provides four Enhancement pages – Congregation’s Page, Parent’s Page, Pastor’s Page, and Teacher’s Page – and a section containing a Historical Overview of Worship and a Theological Background/Reflection on Worship (pp. 117-144). Finally, Unit 11 contains indices with a comprehensive listing of music, Scripture, and themes.

Preparation for Unit 11: Sacrament of Communion

- Review the *Worship for Life Leader’s Guide* for a complete overview of using this unit, the lessons, and the enhancement pages.
- Read Framework (pp. 5-6) to understand the overarching theme, Scripture passage, and goals that undergird this section of the resource collection.
- Read Overview (pp. 6-7) for background information on the theme of Sacrament of Communion.
- Review Historical Overview of Worship and Theological Background/Reflection on Worship (pp. 117-144)

Framework

Theme – Sacrament of Communion: Remembering the Gift

In order for Christians to be assured of God’s forgiving grace, they – whether children or adults – must first accept Christ’s sacrificial act of love for each believer.

Scripture

“Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’ Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’” Luke 22:17-20



Goals

Each participant will use varied methods to discover that the Sacrament of Communion renews us to love God with “all your heart, all your soul, and all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9), and – as Jesus added – “all your mind” (Matthew 22:37-39). Through methods employing multiple intelligences strategies, participants will:

- **Heart (Emotional):** Experience the acceptance of God’s grace as a personal commitment at God’s family table, offering a tangible symbol of love and forgiveness that integrates the emotions with the other senses.
- **Soul (Spiritual):** Elevate the ordinary rhythms of life by celebrating Christ’s victory as the central focus of Christian worship.
- **Might (Physical):** Experience the rituals and forms of celebration within worship that embody the message of God’s gift of grace to every believer.
- **Mind (Intellectual):** Understand the particular language and the theological underpinnings found in both Old Testament prophecies and New Testament fulfillments of God’s promised plan of salvation for humankind within the historic and universal church.

Overview

“If you, then, are the Body and members of Christ, your mystery is laid on the table, your mystery you receive” (Augustine of Hippo, ca. 415 AD).

The sharing of food plays an important role in the ministry of Jesus. All four of the Gospels record the story of Jesus feeding the multitude of several thousand with a few loaves and fish; and, in the Gospel of John, Jesus’ first miracle is to turn water into wine at a wedding in Cana. He ate with religious leaders such as Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50), and he ate with known sinners such as Zacchaeus (Luke 19: 1-10). Indeed, one of Jesus’ central images for the realm of God is that it is like a great banquet to which all are invited.

According to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul (in 1 Corinthians 11), Jesus ate a final meal with the disciples on the eve of his crucifixion, during which he blessed bread and wine and spoke important words that identified this food with his own body and blood. For centuries Christians have looked to this story as Jesus’ institution of our ritual of the Sacrament of Communion. However, as we note above, this story of Jesus’ Last Supper is only one of many significant meals that Jesus shared with his followers. Furthermore, even this was not Jesus’ “last” supper because both Luke and John give accounts of Jesus eating with his disciples after his resurrection from the dead.

Throughout history, Christians have found several key meanings in our ritual of the Sacrament of Communion. It is an experience of the presence of Christ, who continues to meet us at this holy meal.



Contributor

L. Edward Phillips

It is a rite of thanksgiving, which is the literal meaning of the term “Eucharist,” during which we acknowledge the gift of life – which food always signifies – that comes from God. It is a remembrance of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus through which these events that happened so long ago become alive for us in the present. As we recall the life of Christ, communion becomes an act of sacrifice during which we offer ourselves to God as God has so graciously offered Christ to us, for to know Christ is to offer ourselves to him. The Sacrament of Communion also enacts our regular anticipation of the heavenly banquet – God’s table to which all are called in peace – as we look forward to the completion of Christ’s work of reconciliation for all the earth.

Finally, one of the most significant meanings of the Sacrament of Communion is that it unites all Christians everywhere into the one community. As Saint Paul declares, “Because there is one loaf, we who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:17). Reflecting on this truth, Saint Augustine observes in the sermon quoted above that when we share in the Sacrament of Communion through a profound mystery we receive our identity as the body of Christ. That is to say, we receive the bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ for the world: symbolically representing that we become what we eat. Thus, through the Sacrament of Communion, we are one body with Christians in every corner of the globe and throughout all time. This is an amazing gift that brings with it tremendous responsibility.