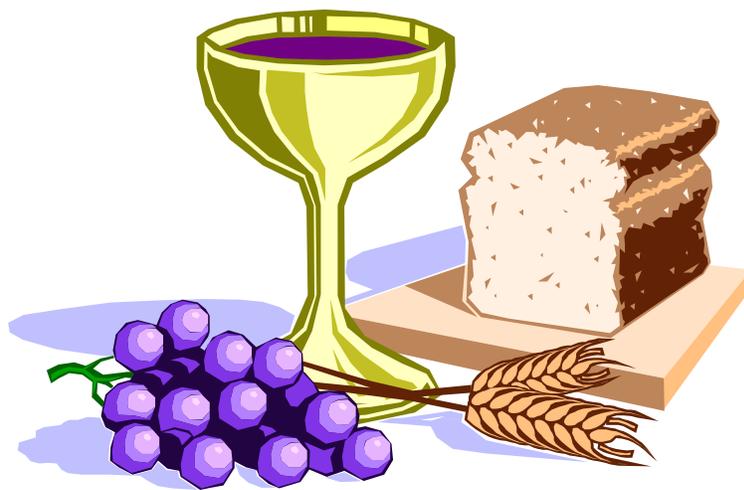


# COMMUNION INSTRUCTION

## AT-HOME STUDY PACKET



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# INTRODUCTION

## *To the Child:*

Congratulations! You are moving into an exciting new phase of your faith life, your walk with the Lord. When you were baptized, God made you His child through Christ Jesus, your Savior. Since that time, you have attended church and Sunday School, and you have learned a lot about God and Jesus. You have grown in your faith at home, saying prayers, reading the Bible. It is time for the next step.

Soon you will receive Holy Communion, in which Jesus gives us His body and blood as bread and wine to eat and drink for the forgiveness of your sins. Of course, your sins are already forgiven: in Baptism your sins are washed away, and in church we confess our sins to God, and then the pastor absolves (forgives) us in God's place. But having one more way of receiving God's forgiveness just shows how much God loves us and cares for us. We have the opportunity of receiving Communion every week at OSLC (though not at every service) so that we can know for sure that our sins are forgiven and that we have a right relationship with God through Jesus, our Savior. This is how our faith is strengthened.

You will be working through this packet of materials with a parent *before* attending the Communion class. It is important that you give serious attention to the what is contained in this packet. Like electricity, Holy Communion is very powerful, which means that it can be dangerous if misused. When you attend the Communion class together with your parent, we will discuss what you've learned in the packet and answer any questions you might still have, and we will do a "run-through" so that you know how to approach the Communion rail and receive the bread and wine.

Finally, remember that this is not the end of your growth in faith. When you are a little older, you will attend a couple of years of confirmation

classes toward your own confirmation, usually early in high school. Even that is not the end; the learning and growing continue throughout your life as you face many challenges with the strength and courage that come from the Lord.

## *To the Parent:*

Congratulations on bringing your child to this point in his or her walk with the Lord! You have been a tremendous influence on the faith life of your child. At church and Sunday School, we can assist, but the primary responsibility for passing on the faith lies with parents (see Deuteronomy 6:6-9); it must be this way, since they are with you every day, and they spend only one or two hours a week at OSLC.

*<sup>6</sup>These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. <sup>7</sup>Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup>Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup>Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6)*

In this packet of materials, you will be your child's guide as he or she learns about Communion from the Bible and from the catechism. Work on it together; don't just send them off to complete it alone. You do not need to be a theological expert; only be there to assist. Your child is supposed to be discovering the answers himself or herself; help them to find the answer rather than "spoon-feed" it to them. If a question which you do not feel qualified to answer does come up, respond honestly and say, "You know, that's a good question! I'm not sure. Let's ask Pastor about that."

# INSTRUCTIONS

Work through this entire packet together with your parent. You don't need to do it all at once, but you should do it in order. Sometimes there are Bible passages to look up; read them aloud to your parent from your own Bible, and your parent should sign their initials in the space provided. Then answer any questions that follow. You should be able to find the answers in the reading for each section.

## LAW AND GOSPEL

The Bible is God's Word to us. It tells us both what we should do and what God has done for us. When we look closely at God's Word, we see that some of it is "Law" and some of it is "Gospel."

The Law tells us what we are supposed to do. An example of the Law is the Ten Commandments, which tell us how we should act, speak, and even think toward God and other people. Jesus summed up the Ten Commandments in just two main commandments in Matthew 22:35-40. Paul said that the whole Law could be summed up in just one word in Romans 13:10.

When we don't do what the Law says, we sin. Sin separates us from God, who cannot tolerate sin. Sometimes we do something bad that we should not do; this is called a "sin of commission" (*commit*= "do"). Other times we fail to do something good that we should do; this is called a "sin of omission" (*omit*= "leave out"). Sins of commission and sins of omission both make God angry. We cannot come to God if we are dirty with sin.

God's answer is the Gospel. The word *Gospel* means "good news." The Gospel tells us what God has done for us. He sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Jesus fulfilled the Law, meaning that He never sinned; He did everything right and was perfect. Then He died on a cross for us, taking our punishment on Himself. He took our sin, and He gives us His righteousness (goodness).

The Gospel tells us about forgiveness. Forgiveness means that our sin is taken away. God is not angry at us anymore. We have a right relationship with Him. It is sort of like friends making up after a fight. It is more like God as our heavenly Father taking us back as His dear children.

Read Psalm 119:105. (Parent initial here: \_\_\_\_\_)

The Bible is also called God's \_\_\_\_\_.

Part of God's Word is the \_\_\_\_\_. It tells us what \_\_\_\_\_ are supposed to \_\_\_\_\_.

Read Romans 13:10. (Parent initial here: \_\_\_\_\_)

What one word sums up the whole Law? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Matthew 22:35–40. (Parent initial here: \_\_\_\_\_)

Jesus said that there are two main commandments. Write them below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

When we don't do what God commands us to do, we \_\_\_\_\_.

This results in \_\_\_\_\_ from God.

Read Romans 3:23. (Parent initial here: \_\_\_\_\_)

Have you sinned? \_\_\_\_\_

Which single word from Romans 3:23 lets you know that everyone has sinned? \_\_\_\_\_

*God's Answer*

The other part of God's Word is the \_\_\_\_\_, a word meaning "\_\_\_\_\_."

This tells us what \_\_\_\_\_ has done for \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the Law, and then He \_\_\_\_\_ on a \_\_\_\_\_ for us.

When our sin is taken away, that is called \_\_\_\_\_.

This results in a right \_\_\_\_\_ with God through \_\_\_\_\_.

## **MEANS OF GRACE**

John 3:16 tells us that Jesus died for the whole world. But how do we know we haven't been "lost in the shuffle"? How do I know Jesus died for *me*?

God comes to each of us individually through the *means of grace*. Think of these as the ways that God *delivers forgiveness*. Think of a house that has a kitchen sink with a faucet. A mile away is a large water tower with plenty of water. But how will the water get from the water tower to the faucet? There has to be a *pipe* that delivers the water. This gives a picture of the means of grace. Jesus has earned plenty of forgiveness for us (like it's being stored in the water tower); the means of grace are the pipes which deliver the forgiveness to us.

The first means of grace is the Word of God itself. Romans 10:17 tells us that hearing the message about Christ gives us faith to believe and trust the promise.

There are two other means of grace, which we call *sacraments*. We use the word *sacrament* to mean a sacred act which fits a three-part definition. First, it must be something Christ Himself instituted; that is, Jesus said to do it. Second, it uses a physical element, that is, something we can see and touch, like the water of Baptism or the bread and wine of Holy Communion. Finally, it delivers to us the forgiveness of sins that Jesus earned for us on the cross; we must never think that *we* are earning forgiveness by doing the sacrament as a “good work” — we are only receiving the promised forgiveness.

The first sacrament is Baptism, which uses water as its physical element. In Baptism, God connects us to Jesus' death and resurrection. He saves us, gives us a new birth, and makes us His children. Look up Romans 6:3–5, Titus 3:5, and 1 Peter 3:21.

The second sacrament is Holy Communion, which is also called the Lord's Supper, the Sacrament of the Altar, the Breaking of the Bread, or the Eucharist. Jesus gave this sacrament to His disciples at the Last Supper, on Maundy Thursday, just before He died on Friday. He was sharing the Passover meal with His disciples.

Read John 3:16. (Parent initial here: \_\_\_\_\_)

Jesus died for the \_\_\_\_\_ (John 3:16). How do I know He died for \_\_\_\_\_?

God comes to us individually through the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

One of these is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God itself. Through it, God gives us \_\_\_\_\_ (Rom. 10:17).

The other two are called \_\_\_\_\_.

What is the three-part definition?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

The first sacrament is called \_\_\_\_\_, which uses \_\_\_\_\_.

Romans 6:3–5 says that we were \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ (Jesus).

Titus 3:5 says that God \_\_\_\_\_ us through the \_\_\_\_\_ of rebirth.

1 Peter 3:21 says, “Baptism now \_\_\_\_\_ you.”

The other sacrament is called \_\_\_\_\_ . (That’s what this is all about!)

Some other names for it are: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Jesus gave this sacrament to His disciples at the \_\_\_\_\_, just before He \_\_\_\_\_.

## COMMUNION TEXTS

Whenever we celebrate Holy Communion, the pastor speaks the “Words of Institution,” which tell the story of when Jesus gave Communion to His disciples for the very first time. These words are found in four places in the Bible, including Matthew 26 and 1 Corinthians 11. We usually use a version which combines the words of the four versions, like this:

*Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the same night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same way also, He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you; this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”*

When Martin Luther wrote his “Small Catechism,” he included this simple definition of Holy Communion:

*What is the Sacrament of the Altar? Answer: It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.*

Read Matthew 26:26–28. (Parent initial here: \_\_\_\_\_)

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23–25. (Parent initial here: \_\_\_\_\_)

Fill in the blanks from the Words of Institution:

Our Lord \_\_\_\_\_ Christ, on the same \_\_\_\_\_ He was betrayed, \_\_\_\_\_ bread, and when He had given \_\_\_\_\_, He \_\_\_\_\_ it, gave it to the \_\_\_\_\_, and said, “Take, \_\_\_\_\_; this \_\_\_\_\_ My body, which is given for \_\_\_\_\_. Do this in \_\_\_\_\_ of Me.” In the same way also, He took the \_\_\_\_\_ after supper, and when He had \_\_\_\_\_ thanks, He gave it to them, \_\_\_\_\_, “Drink of it, \_\_\_\_\_ of you; this \_\_\_\_\_ My \_\_\_\_\_ of the new \_\_\_\_\_, which is shed for you for the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. Do this, as \_\_\_\_\_ as you \_\_\_\_\_ it, in remembrance of \_\_\_\_\_.”

Fill in the blanks from Luther’s definition of the Sacrament of the Altar:

“It is the true \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus Christ under the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, instituted by \_\_\_\_\_ Himself for us \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_.”

## **DIFFERENT VIEWS OF COMMUNION**

Different denominations (types of Christians) believe different things about Communion. We know that Jesus took bread and wine, and that He said they were His body and blood. This is difficult to understand, so people have tried to explain it.

Many Protestants (other than Lutherans) believe that when Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of Me,” He meant that it the bread and wine were not really His body and blood, but that we should remember His body and blood. So these Protestants (including Baptists, for example) believe that Communion is *only* bread and wine, and *not* Christ’s

body and blood. But Jesus did not say, “Remember My body and blood.” He said, “This is My body and blood.” He said, “Do this in remembrance of *Me*.” When we remember *Him*, we remember much more than just His body and blood; we remember all that He has done for us.

Imagine that two kids became best friends at a summer camp, but they lived hundreds of miles apart. As they were leaving at the end of camp, one give the other the hat they had worn the entire time and says, “Take this, and wear it; it’s my favorite hat. Do this to remember me.” Using the word “remember” doesn’t mean it’s not really a hat! But the hat reminds the friend of all the good times they had together at camp. Jesus gives us His body and blood as bread and wine in Holy Communion. Much more than just remembering “good times,” we receive the forgiveness of our sins.

Another explanation that people have tried to use is that the bread and wine are *changed into* Christ’s body and blood. This is called *transubstantiation*, and it is what Roman Catholics believe. They believe Jesus’ words when He says, “This is My body” and “This is My blood” — which is good! — but they believe that it can no longer be bread and wine if it is really Christ’s body and blood. So even though it looks, smells, and tastes like bread, they say it’s not bread, and even though it looks, smells, and tastes like wine, they say it’s not wine.

Now that could be true if God wanted it to be true. (God can do anything, after all!) But the reason we don’t believe in transubstantiation is not because it seems strange, but because the Bible tells us otherwise. 1 Corinthians 10:16 says that *bread* of Communion is a “participation” (or “sharing”) in the body of Christ. The bread is still bread, but enables us to share in Christ’s body.

This is what we believe as Lutherans. We call it “Real Presence.” Although the bread and wine remain bread and wine, Christ’s body and blood also are *really there*. We do not fully understand this; it is a *mystery*. But we believe it because God’s Word says it.

One helpful analogy is the money we use. Years ago, only gold and silver were considered to be money; a ten-dollar bill, for example, was not really money, but it was more of a promise that you could exchange for money (that is, gold or silver) at a bank. (This is how checks are used today.) But today, a dollar bill is really a dollar. It is a dollar because the government says it is a dollar. Now they did not have to *change* the paper into gold to make it into a dollar.

But the bigger problem with the Roman Catholic belief is that Christ’s body and blood are in Communion because they must be sacrificed again to take away the sins we have committed, which were committed after He died on the cross. But the Bible said that Jesus died “once for all” (Romans 6:10). His one-time sacrifice was enough for all sins: past, present, and future.

Because of differing beliefs, we typically do *not* take Communion in non-Lutheran churches. Some people think, “It’s just between me and God,” but that’s not true: there are a lot of other people there! “Communion” means sharing together, not only with the Lord, but with everyone gathered there. If those other people don’t believe Jesus’ words, or if they believe His death on the cross didn’t take away *all* sin, we can’t participate with them; that would be denying what we believe. We call it “close Communion” when we commune only with those who are close to us in our beliefs.

Many Protestants (other than Lutherans) believe that Communion is only \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and not Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Roman Catholics believe that the bread and wine are \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. This is called \_\_\_\_\_.

Lutherans believe in “R\_\_\_\_\_ P\_\_\_\_\_.”

Fill in the chart below, marking an X in a space if the group believes it is present in Communion:

	Bread and Wine	Body and Blood
Lutherans		
Other Protestants		
Roman Catholics		

Because of \_\_\_\_\_ beliefs, we typically \_\_\_\_\_ (do *or* don’t) commune at other churches.

**END OF PACKET**