



Holy Communion

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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.

History

The Last Supper appears in the New Testament Bible writing of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Paul the Apostle, however, gives the earliest recorded description of Jesus' Last Supper:

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me'.

In the three hundred years after Jesus' crucifixion, Christian practices and beliefs regarding the Communion became part of Christian worship. At first, they spread through word of mouth, but within a generation, the practice of Communion and its role as a sacrament was established.

The Last Supper

VIDEO

The Last Supper was held on the evening of preparation for the Jewish Passover, a very holy time in the Jewish religion. It was a gathering for Christ and His disciples one last time before His arrest and crucifixion by the Roman army.



Leonardo Da Vinci painted this mural of The Last Supper in 1498.

Jesus arranged the dinner by instructing His disciples where to host it and His twelve disciples were with Him during and after the meal.

During the event, Jesus makes the prediction that Peter will deny knowing Him three times before the rooster crows that morning; this became true.

Jesus also predicts that one disciple, Judas, will betray Him; this also became true.

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Holy Communion Practice and Customs

Different churches have different ways of celebrating Holy Communion.

In the Catholic Church it is the Mass, in the Free Church it is the Holy Communion or Last Supper and in the Church of England it is often referred to as the Eucharist.

There are three main Christian views regarding the bread and the wine during the Holy Communion:

1. The bread and the wine change completely into the actual body and blood of Christ. This change is known as Transubstantiation.
2. Christ's presence appears spiritually, through the bread and wine.
3. The bread and the wine are symbols representing Christ's body and blood, in remembrance of his sacrifice.



In the Catholic Church, the wine becomes the blood of Jesus.

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.



Task: Create a fact file or short information video (if you have the equipment to record it) about Holy Communion making sure it answers the questions below.

- I wonder, what is **Holy Communion**?
- Why do **Christians share bread and wine**?
- What does the **wine and bread symbolise**?

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