

LEADER GUIDE
“Agape Feast” - A Time Of Celebration



PREPARATION BEFORE MEETING: *Ensure that you have enough bread/crackers (gluten free needed?) and juice (and cups if not using packaged elements) for the group.*

“To end our gathering today, we are going to share in communion together.” *[Pass out elements (gluten free bread & juice) around the table. After everyone has the elements, pray to invite Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts for this time of taking the Communion together, and then read or in your own words the brief teaching below.]*

There are a number of different names for this sacrament, including the “Agape Feast” or “Love Feast,” which is used only once in the Bible in Jude’s letter, but was used frequently in the early church. This name reminds us that we aren’t just administering a sacrament, but it is a time of celebration that includes food, drinks and fellowship!

At Jesus’ final Passover meal before He was crucified, Jesus reinterpreted the Passover celebration by introducing this sacrament. And to really appreciate this sacrament that celebrates the New Covenant, it is helpful to look back to the Old Covenant which required a sacrificial system. Before Jesus, the Israelite people made sacrifices which included two main elements... an altar and a table. The altar is the place for the blood ritual, which was characterized by sadness, guilt and penance. But the table, was where the sacrifice was enjoyed as a meal and was a festive celebration of what occurred on the altar.

Just like how the Passover meal celebrates the passover sacrifice of a lamb, and is a memorial characterized by joy and thanksgiving, we now have the Agape Feast which celebrates the sacrifice of Jesus, the lamb of God. The Agape Feast is a celebration of the freedom purchased and the abundant life that starts here and now, and lasts into eternity. At the Agape feast we are at the Table because the Son went to the Altar.

Author Philip Yancy describes the sacrament as follows: “Table is the time to celebrate. This table is different. It isn't where sinners find Christ, but where sons and daughters celebrate being found. Maybe someday instead of solemnly making our way to the tables, we should dance for joy, maybe we should sing every born-again song we know, maybe we should tell our homecoming stories, and laugh like people who no longer fear death, maybe we should ask if anyone wants seconds, and hold our little cups high to toast lost sinners found, and dead brothers and sisters alive.”

So, before we break the bread and drink the cup, would anyone like to briefly share their testimony of how and when they first made the decision to surrender to Jesus as their Lord and Savior? *[Allow time for people to share their testimonies, and if no one is willing to share, be ready to share your testimony]*

Today we give thanks to Jesus, our Savior, and break this bread which reminds us of His body that was broken for us and we eat the bread together in remembrance of Him. Now, let us break and eat the bread together.

1 Corinthians 11:24 says “In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.’ For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.”

At this time, we are going to toast our cups with one another in celebration of the New Covenant and Jesus’ future coming where we celebrate at another table. Today we look to the time when all of our brothers and sisters will sit together at the Lord’s table and share in the Great Banquet with our host... Jesus! Let’s toast the New Covenant and take our cups together.

[Close in prayer after toast.]