

LEADER GUIDE
"Eucharist" - A Time Of Gratitude



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 take 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 Eucharist together, and then read or in your own words the brief teaching below.]

In the Bible this sacrament is called a number of different names, and today we are going to focus on the name "Eucharist." The word "Eucharist" comes from the Greek word *Eucharisto* which means Thanksgiving or Thanksgiving Meal. Before drinking the wine, Jesus gave thanks. Before breaking the bread, Jesus gave thanks. The Eucharist is a time to remember all that we have to be thankful for!

Gratitude is a two step process. First, we acknowledge the goodness in our lives, and then we point that appreciation to God, who is the source of that goodness. So at the Eucharist, we both acknowledge all the blessings in our life, and then we express our thankfulness to God.

So, we are going to take a few minutes to go around and each answer the question: "Where is God's grace and goodness most evident in my life right now?" [After everyone has had time to share...] Now, we are going to take a few minutes to pray silently, and to thank God for all the blessings in our life. Be as specific as possible in your prayers. Please take a moment to talk to your Father and express your gratitude now.

[After providing at least 2-3 minutes for people to pray...] "On the night that He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Today we give thanks to Jesus, our Savior, who's body was broken for us. Now, let us eat the bread together.

In the same way, Jesus 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.'

At this time, we acknowledge and express our gratitude that Jesus' blood has made us parties to the New Covenant. And it is under this New Covenant that we each enjoy:

forgiveness and freedom from our sins,

friendship and peace with God,

the Spirit of God dwelling within us,

adoption rights as children of God including an inheritance,

and abundant life starting now and lasting in eternity.

Let's make a toast to the New Covenant and take our cups together!

[Close in prayer.]