



TRAIL MARKER NINE

First Communion

SESSION 1



Introduction

The First Communion Faith Trail marker encourages children and parents to grow in their understanding and appreciation of the sacrament of Holy Communion. In this first of three sessions we will look at the history of this meal. We will see how Jesus took the Passover meal and transformed it into a celebration of forgiveness and life that Jesus has won for us.

Things to do

- Organise name tags
- Print copies of Appendix 1 *Caring Conversations* and cut out the cards (one card per table group)
- Print copies of Appendix 2 *M&M's Game* (one per group)
- Prepare for the Seder Meal – see Appendix 5
- Print copies of Appendix 6 *Passover to Lord's Supper* handout (one per student)
- Print out Appendix 8 *Holy Communion is Receiving* worksheet (one per student)
- Print out Appendix 9 *Homework Interview Questions* (one per student)
- Print out Bible text sheets – Appendix 3, 4 and 7 (one per student) or have Bibles available for all

Things you need

- Copies of handouts
- M&Ms
- Food and decorations for the Seder Supper

Session Outline

1. Welcome & Warm-up
2. Naming the Faith Trail marker
3. Equipping: From Passover to The Lord's Supper
4. Homework Task
5. End of Session Prayer and Blessing

Welcome and Warm Up

As parents and children arrive, have some suitable music playing and invite them to write a nametag for themselves and have them sit down together at a table.

Give to each table a *Caring Conversations* card (Appendix 1). As more people arrive, encourage them to talk with people around them.

Caring Conversations:

- One thing I would like to learn about Holy Communion is...
- Holy Communion is important to me because...



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M&M's® game

Provide a small bowl of M&M's® for each small group/table. Invite each member of the group to take one or two M&M's® (but not to eat them). Each person then shares something about themselves according to the colour of their M&M®. Hand out the instructions (Appendix 2).



GREEN: Tell something about your family

RED: Tell something about your interests or a favourite hobby

BLUE: Tell something about your work place or school

BROWN: Tell about someone you like to spend time with

ORANGE: Tell about something you like to eat

YELLOW: Tell about something that makes you happy

Naming: TRAIL MARKER NINE: Preparing for Holy Communion

'Holy Communion is the real body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, given with bread and wine for us Christians to eat and drink. It was begun by Jesus himself.'

– Martin Luther (Small Catechism)

OPENING PRAYER

Write words of prayer on whiteboard or PowerPoint slide, (optional: teach the actions that go with the prayer).

Jesus, you are with us as we gather in your name.

Open our eyes to see you here. (point to eyes)

Open our ears to hear your voice. (cup hands behind ears)

Open our hearts to recognise that you are with us. (cross hands over heart)

Open our lips to tell your story. (bring hands to lips)

Open our hands to share your love. (hold hands out in welcome)

Amen.



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Equipping

BIBLE TIME

Read the Bible Verse: Matthew 26:26-28. See Appendix 3.

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you.” ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Have a conversation about the reading by responding to the following:

- A word that jumped out at me when I heard it read was...
- This verse reminds me of...
- What do you think the disciples were thinking when Jesus spoke like this?

When Jesus spoke these words he was celebrating a special meal with his disciples as part of a special festival called the Passover. Let's go back and see what we can learn about the Passover meal.

Equipping

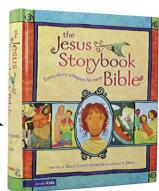
WHAT IS THE PASSOVER?

Talk about how the Israelites once lived as slaves in Egypt, but God promised to set them free. God sent Moses to set God's people free from slavery in Egypt.

Optional: Watch the video from **The Bible Project: Exodus 1-18** to gain an overview of the history behind the first Passover meal. It is a good idea to preview this video to make sure it is suitable for your audience.
<https://thebibleproject.com/videos/torah-exodus-1/>

Read the instructions God gave for the Passover meal: **Exodus 12:1-11** (see Appendix 4)

¹ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ² ‘This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. ³ Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. ⁴ If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbour, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. ⁵ The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. ⁶ Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. ⁷ Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the door-frames of the houses where they eat the lambs. ⁸ That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. ⁹ Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire – with the head, legs and internal organs. ¹⁰ Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. ¹¹ This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD’s Passover.



or read the similar account in the **Jesus Storybook Bible** – page 84 ‘God to the Rescue’

Ever since, once a year, the Israelites would celebrate the Passover and remember the saving act of God that set their ancestors free from slavery in Egypt. Jesus was celebrating the Passover with his disciples on the night before he died. Still today the Jewish people celebrate the feast of Passover. They do so by sharing a family meal called the Seder. The menu hasn't changed in 3300 years!



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Equipping

A TASTE OF THE SEDER MEAL

Taste the elements of a Seder meal and learn about some of the ritual and tradition behind it. See Appendix 5 for preparation instructions. Hand out Appendix 6 and lead the group through the Seder meal.

It was while Jesus was celebrating this Passover meal with his disciples that our Lord Jesus broke bread and lifted the cup, celebrating the ‘First Communion’ with his disciples.

Read: Mark 14: 12-17, 22-26 (see Appendix 7)

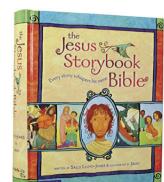
¹² It was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That was the time to sacrifice the Passover lamb. Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover meal?"

¹³ So he sent out two of his disciples. He told them, "Go into the city. A man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴ He will enter a house. Say to its owner, 'The Teacher asks, 'Where is my guest room? Where can I eat the Passover meal with my disciples?''" ¹⁵ He will show you a large upstairs room. It will have furniture and will be ready. Prepare for us to eat there." ¹⁶ The disciples left and went into the city. They found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover meal. ¹⁷ When evening came, Jesus arrived with the 12 disciples.

²² While they were eating, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to his disciples and said, "Take it. This is my body." ²³ Then he took a cup. He gave thanks and handed it to them. All of them drank from it. ²⁴ "This is my blood of the covenant," he said to them. "It is poured out for many. ²⁵ What I'm about to tell you is true. I won't drink wine with you again until the day I drink it in God's kingdom." ²⁶ Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

or read a similar account from the **Jesus Story Book Bible – The Servant King** page 286

Watch the video from **The Bible Project: Luke 19-23** <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/luke-ch-19-23/> and see where Jesus' celebrating of the Passover fits with his life story.



Here is an alternative video that might be more suitable to use with young participants:
God's Story: Passover: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bK8Ye93JFOQ>

Equipping

JESUS CHANGED THE PASSOVER FOR US

Jesus changed the meal that once reminded the Israelites of how God set them free from slavery, into a meal by which we now remember how Jesus sets us free from sin and death by his dying on the cross.

Jesus is our Passover lamb – In John 1:29 John the Baptist sees Jesus coming towards him and John says: ‘Look, the **Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world! Jesus came to be the sacrifice to take away the sin of the world. Jesus died for us.

Over 3000 years ago, God saved the children of Israel from slavery by having them put the blood of a spotless lamb on their wooden doorposts. 2000 years ago, the blood of another spotless lamb covered a wooden cross for you.



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Equipping

EATING JESUS' MEAL TODAY

Today Jesus calls you to take and eat the bread and the wine – his body and blood – in remembrance of his loving sacrifice.

Still today we celebrate the meal Jesus began: The Pastor says

*Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed,
took bread, and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, and said,
Take and eat; this is † my body, which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.*

*In the same way he took the cup, after the supper,
and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said,
Drink of it, all of you; this is † my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.*

(These words of institution are based upon: Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20, and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

We receive this meal often because we believe that through this meal Jesus gives us forgiveness of sins and life with God now and forever.

WORKSHEET

Hand out the worksheet (Appendix 8) for children to complete with their parents.

Wrap Up

HOMEWORK TASK

Homework – Interview Congregation Member or Grandparent

Handout Appendix 9: Interview Questions.

Explain the homework task – Invite participants to use this sheet when interviewing their grandparents or a person from the congregation. They will be invited to share some of the answers in the next session.

PRAYER AND BLESSING

Closing Prayer

Lead a prayer for the children and parents as they prepare for their first communion,
...acknowledging God's love and how he has always kept his promise to rescue his people of old.
...give thanks for Jesus coming to rescue us and to set us free from sin and death.
...ask the Holy Spirit to help us trust in God's promise to forgive us and give us life with him forever.

Blessing

Bless one another with words like: "May you know that Christ has set you free, your sins are forgiven"