

TEACHER GUIDE

TELL Bible Pathway

Part 1

Lesson 23



What is Holy Communion? | tellnetwork.org

Lesson Goal: The goal of this class is to answer this question: “What is Holy Communion?”

Pre-Lesson Preparation: Read Matthew 26:17-30.

Live Class Greet those who are listening to the class.

Prayer Asks for God’s blessings, focusing on the theme of the lesson, and effectively ending the greeting time and calling the lesson to order. The following prayer can be used:

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for your great mercy on us. You constantly give us the forgiveness of sins. We thank you for the gift of Holy Communion, a special demonstration that the forgiveness of sins is a personal gift. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Introduce The Course

- a. Explain the purpose of the course.
- b. Ask all to show respect for the teacher and other students by writing appropriate questions and comments on the Facebook Live chat.
- c. Explain that the **TELL** method is a teaching style with the goal of telling others what you’ve learned. The letters **T-E-L-L** represent four sections of study: **T** for Think, **E** for Evaluate, **L** for Learn and **L** for Lead.

Think: A powerful introduction that gets you thinking about an interesting topic, or question

Think about this: What is the significance of the timing of the institution of Holy Communion? What makes Holy Communion a sacrament? We will try to answer these questions as we evaluate the Bible story that we read in Mark 26:17-30.

Evaluate (brings more meaning and context to the lesson)

1. Who are the characters in the story? *Jesus and his disciples*
2. What are the objects in the story? Table, bowl, bread, cup, fruit of the vine (wine)

3. Where did the story take place? *In Jerusalem in what is traditionally known as “The Upper Room”*
4. When did this story happen? *The night before Jesus was to be crucified, the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, also known as Passover*
5. What is the problem? *The disciples had overwhelming uncertainty of the future, especially with the realization of Judas’ betrayal.*
6. What happened in the story? *Jesus and his disciples gathered together to celebrate the Passover. He told them that one of them would betray him, and Judas was identified as the betrayer. He then instituted Holy Communion by blessing the bread and wine at the table and giving it to them.*
7. Is the problem solved? *Yes. Even though the disciples were beginning to understand the reality of his impending death, Jesus in his wisdom was able to comfort them with the reminder of God’s forgiveness through sacrificial blood. He uses this reminder to comfort us as well.*

Learn (identify that sin is the problem and only God has the answer)

1. What is the main theme of the lesson? *Holy Communion is a special gift from God. In it he offers the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation.*
2. What sin does this lesson teach you to confess? *The devil constantly tries to fill us with uncertainty. This lesson teaches us to confess our sins of doubt and worry.*
3. Where do you see the love of God in the lesson? *God’s love is shown in the words of institution when Jesus specifically states that his body and blood are given for the forgiveness of all sins.*
4. What does God teach you to do in the lesson? *Celebrate Holy Communion regularly. God uses this sacrament as a means of grace and as a reminder of God’s promises.*

Lead (share this with a group of your brothers and sisters in Christ)

1. What would be a good situation in which to share this message? *This is good to share with someone who does not know what Holy Communion is or does not know the significance in regularly partaking in it.*

Additional questions (add depth to the lesson)

1. What gift do we receive through Holy Communion? *The forgiveness of sins*
2. What four elements do we receive in Holy Communion? *Bread, wine, Jesus’ blood, and Jesus’ body*
3. How often does God want us to celebrate Holy Communion? *The phrase, “Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me,” indicates that Jesus’ institution of Holy*

Communion was not a onetime occurrence, but something that he wanted his followers to celebrate regularly.

4. What does the term “Real Presence” refer to?

The body and blood of Christ are truly present in, with, and under the earthly elements of bread and wine (this is traditionally a Lutheran belief).

5. What do other churches teach in regard to the Lord’s Supper?

Roman Catholic Church

- “Unbloody” sacrifice
- Priest changes elements
- Masses on behalf of others
- Forgiveness imparted to unbelievers (“ex opera operata”)

Most Protestant churches

- “This is my body...this is my blood” = “This represents my body...this represents my blood”
- Memorial meal
- No forgiveness is imparted

Lesson Wrap-Up

1. Ask the key question: What is Holy Communion? *Allow time for various answers, and make sure that everyone is very clear about why Holy Communion is significant, the comfort and grace that is administered to us through it, and why it is important to do it regularly.*

Closing End with a prayer thanking God for the people he has brought together to learn about him and his Word, or with a blessing for the group.

Extra information for the teacher: Topics that may come up during the class

Grape Juice – Some people insist that Jesus used grape juice during the first Holy Communion. This assumption is not based on facts. Jesus instituted Holy Communion during Passover, which normally fell in the month of March or April. The first grapes ripened a number of months later (the first ones during July or August). Unfermented grape juice would not have lasted from the previous harvest; it needed to be processed into wine. Jesus undeniably used wine for Holy Communion. He used the phrase, “the fruit of the vine,” which likely paralleled an ancient Jewish wine blessing.¹ Some consider the phrase “the fruit of the vine” to be inclusive enough to allow for the use of grape juice in contemporary celebration. The text strongly suggests that wine should be used, and we want to follow Jesus’ instructions closely to maintain the integrity of the sacrament. Nevertheless, under extreme circumstances (for example, the sensitivity of some people recovering from alcoholism), grape juice may be used.² The important question to ask is this: “Why do they not want to use alcoholic wine?” If the answer is

that they think drinking *any* amount of alcohol is a sin, then the teacher will want to address that.

The Roman Catholic Church – “The Catholic church believes that only priests ordained by bishops in communion with the Pope or in the apostolic succession have the power to consecrate the bread and wine so that they become body and blood of Christ and that nothing of the substance of the bread and wine remains, only body and blood. They also believe that the elements remain Christ’s body and blood even after the mass is over. The elements can be reserved in a special place. The elements can be bowed to and prayed to. They believe the mass is a sacrifice. They also curse everyone who does not accept this view (Council of Trent, Sixth Session, Canon 12). We believe that, together with the bread and wine, Christ’s body and blood are truly present, however, this does not depend on papal ordination but on Christ’s institution. We do not accept the adoration (worship) of the host, nor do we believe that a sacrifice takes place. We stick just to what the Words of Institution say.”³

A Figure of Speech – “During his ministry Jesus certainly used figures of speech such as similes (Luke 17:24), metaphors (Luke 13:32) and parables (Luke 13:18-21). When it comes to Jesus’ words of institution, understanding the context will determine how to interpret the meaning of his words. There is nothing in the *immediate context* that tells us to understand his words in a figurative way. He is speaking words meant to be taken literally.

The *wider context* of the Bible confirms this. In 1 Corinthians 10:16 the apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, asks: ‘Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?’ His questions anticipate and expect the answer “yes.” So, yes, there is a participation, a communion, between the cup of thanksgiving—the wine—and the blood of Christ, and there is a participation between the bread and the body of Christ. Jesus’ body and blood are present when we receive the bread and wine in the sacrament. In the next chapter of that same letter, the apostle speaks of the real presence of Jesus’ body and blood in the sacrament when he writes: ‘So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord’ (1 Corinthians 11:27). That verse highlights very clearly the four items present in the sacrament: the bread and wine, and Jesus’ body and blood.”⁴

The People’s Bible – Consider reading the commentary on this section from *The People’s Bible: Matthew* in your preparation for teaching this lesson.

1., 2. Fredrich, “The Lord Jesus Institutes Holy Communion,”
 3. Taken from <https://wels.net/faq/transubstantiation> WELS Q + A section.
 4. <https://wels.net/faq/figures-of-speech-and-the-lords-supper>.

