



# STORIES **AND** RITUALS

## LESSON 28

### **Stories & Rituals: The Bible in Broad Strokes**

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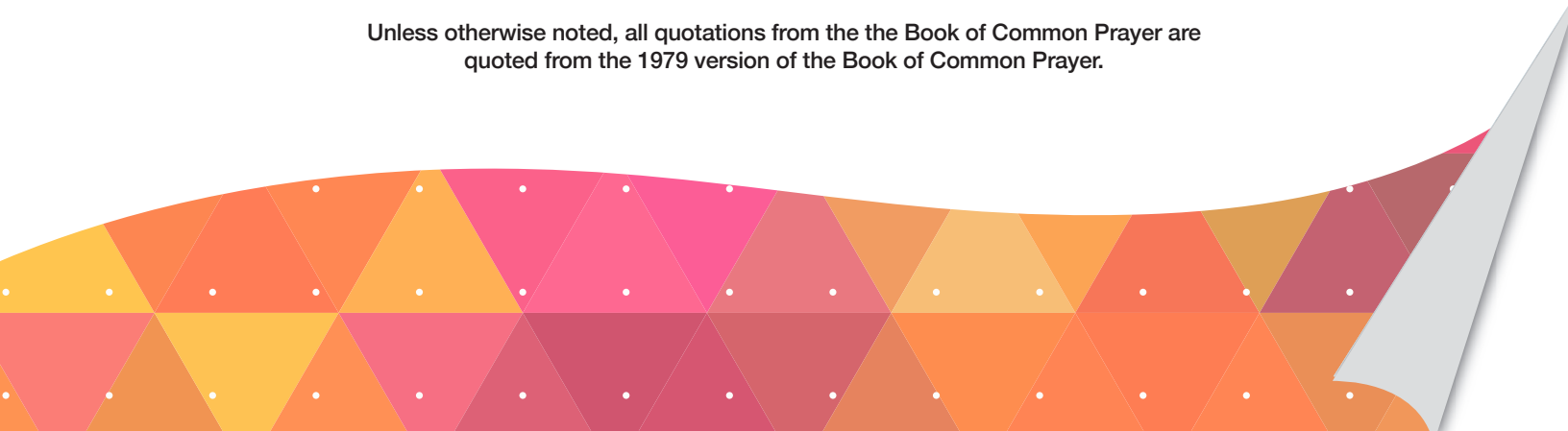
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# The Last Supper

**Texts: Luke 22:7-23**

**Big Idea: We are all invited to share a meal at the Lord's Table.**

## Lesson Objectives

### Participants will:

1. Recognize the role trust plays in the way God invites all people to share at the Lord's Table.
2. Identify the ways God makes sure everyone has a place at the table in a re-telling of the story of the Last Supper.
3. Demonstrate God's invitation to the Lord's Table in their lives by sharing an Agape Meal.

### ACTIVITY (TIME)

Dive In (10 minutes)  
**Group Check-In**

Community Builder (15 minutes)  
**Upper Room Invitation**

The Story (15 minutes)  
**The Last Supper**

The Ritual (15 minutes)  
**Agape Meal**

Dig Deeper (10 minutes)  
**There is a Place for You. Yes, You!**

Wrap it Up (5 minutes)  
**Closing Prayer**

### MATERIALS NEEDED

• Nothing

• Paper • Envelopes • Pens  
• Scissors • Large sheet of paper  
• Jar of water  
• Copy of Lesson Sheet 28.1

• Copy of Lesson Sheet 28.2

• Copy of Lesson Sheet 28.3  
• Bread • Juice • Napkins  
• Small cups  
• A well-known hymn or other song

• Paper • Envelopes  
• Pens • Optional: Stamps

• Nothing

# LESSON OVERVIEW



## What's the Story?

Today's story is from Luke 22:7-23. This is the story of the last meal Jesus has with his disciples, which the Church calls The Last Supper. The Last Supper takes place during the Jewish festival of Passover. Passover remembers and celebrates with God freed the Israelites from Egypt under the care of Moses. The Passover meal is very special to the Jewish community, even today. It would have also been very special to Jesus and his disciples.

The story has three main parts: the disciples prepare for the Passover meal, Jesus presents the Passover meal in a new and special way, and Jesus says one of the disciples will betray him. Foreshadowing—presenting the idea that something will happen in the future—is present in all three of these parts.

As Christians, we know the future Jesus is foreshadowing in this story. But sometimes it is helpful to remember that the disciples didn't quite understand what Jesus meant about not eating or drinking a Passover meal again. They couldn't imagine that someone would betray their teacher and friend.



## What's the "Big Idea?"

Today's story explores the big idea that *we are all invited to share a meal at the Lord's Table*. Despite all of the things the disciples could not see, know, or even guess, Jesus still invites them all to the table; even the disciples he knew would betray him. It is the same for us, too. Jesus invites anyone and everyone to gather in a special way to remember him, including you and me. We are all invited to share a meal at the Lord's Table.



## What's the Symbol?

The symbol for this lesson is a table with plenty of room for everyone. During the lesson the table will go from big and empty to big and full. The table will fill with people, with bread and finally with singing and more invitations, inviting more people to the Lord's Table.



## What's the Ritual?

The Ritual is an Agape Meal, also known as a Love Feast. The Agape Meal is a very old ritual from the early church. It is a basic and simple meal early Christians shared after worshipping together. The Agape Meal is intentionally a time of remembrance and recalling of the meals Jesus had with his disciples throughout his ministry. The Agape Meal is not a sacrament, and it is not trying to be. It's an intentional space that, over time, has come to mark the celebration of Christian fellowship.



## Setting Up Your Space

Set up your main lesson space to be "the Upper Room." Set up a table large enough for every member of the group to have a place. Set up chairs around the table and the supplies needed for the ritual. You can get as creative as you want or are able to with this space. If you are using the Community Builder and Dig Deeper activities, prep all materials needed.

## DIVE IN (10 MINUTES)

### Group Check-In

#### Materials:

- Nothing

Note: If you are doing the Community Builder activity, you should gather your group in a location away from your normal meeting space. Ideally, this should be in the place where you will begin the Community Builder activity.

#### During the session:

- Open your session with a quick prayer. Use this one or a prayer of your own:  
**Holy Lord, open our eyes, ears, and hearts to see your love and faithfulness in the world around us. Help us see your love for us in your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**
- Let's start our time together by sharing some of the great and not-so-great things that have happened to us this week. What were the high points and low points of your week? Go around the group and invite everyone to share.

## COMMUNITY BUILDER (15 MINUTES)

### Upper Room Invitation

#### Materials:

- Paper • Envelopes • Pens • Scissors • Jar of water • Large sheet of paper
- Copy of Lesson Sheet 28.1

#### Before the session:

- Make a copy of Lesson Sheet 28.1. Cut apart and fill out the clue cards as needed, using the directions below. Place clue cards in envelopes.
- **Clue #1:** Identify a space in the building that is either very full or busy. Use the clue card below and write in the name of this room. This place should have Clue #2 somewhere very obvious in the room.
- **Clue #2:** Place a jar of water somewhere in the room. Set Clue #3 under or near the jar.
- **Clue #3:** This clue should list another leader's name who, for this story, is the owner of the house (this should be prearranged prior to the start of the lesson). That leader will have the final clue.
- **Clue #4:** The final clue will be a word scramble. On the clue card, write the location of the Upper Room, with scrambled letters. The group must unscramble the word, and that word will be the name of the final stop: the Upper Room!
- If you have a large group, you may wish to split the group into teams. Make a set of clue cards for each team.
- Write the verse from Luke 22:13 on a large sheet of paper.

### During the session:

- Today we're talking about the Last Supper, the special meal Jesus shared with his disciples. This meal took place in what we call "the Upper Room." Before we get to the Last Supper, we have to make our way to the Upper Room!
- Explain that a special room has been prepared for our group, just like a special room was prepared for Jesus and his disciples. To find the room, the group will need to work together. **We're going to do a community challenge that centers on trust. In the opening part of today's story, Jesus gives the disciples some instructions, and they have to trust him in order to figure out how to get ready for the Last Supper and find the Upper Room. Trust is a really important part of our life with God, but we also have to trust each other.**
- The group leader will be in charge of figuring out each clue, so it may be good to identify a leader for each clue. **As a group, you'll be receiving the same clues that the disciples got from Jesus, and—if you trust one another and work together—they'll bring you to the Upper Room.**
- If you can, have an adult leader go with the group to make sure they stay within the assigned time limit for the activity. See you in the Upper Room!
- While the group completes the activity, head to your Upper Room and make sure the space is set up: table with enough space for everyone to have a chair, enough chairs for all youth and leaders, and bread and juice for the Agape Meal. Then, place paper along with markers/pens on the table. In the middle of the table, place the sheet of paper with Luke 22:13.
- Greet participants as they arrive. **Welcome to the Upper Room! Grab a chair and take a seat at the Lord's Table.** When everyone is seated, invite each group member to make a place mat. **Take a piece of paper and write your name in the middle, showing that we each have a place at the Lord's Table.**
- If time permits, talk about how the community builder went. **What was easy? What was hard? How did trust work in their group?**



# THE STORY

## (15 MINUTES)

# The Last Supper

### Materials:

- Copy of Lesson Sheet 28.2

### Before the session:

- Make a copy of Lesson Sheet 28.2
- Practice reading through the story several times so you are familiar with it.

### During the session:

- Tell the story on Lesson Sheet 28.2
- After the story, ask: **What is this story telling us about God?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: God helps us figure things out; God is present with us, in big celebrations and in everyday things, like food and drink; God knows and says things we don't always understand; God did something special through Jesus; God can show up in surprising ways; God doesn't turn away anyone from Jesus, even when someone does something wrong, like Judas betraying Jesus; etc.]*
- **What is this story telling us about humanity?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: We are seeking after God, we don't always understand God, we can spend time with God in a lot of different ways and with different people, etc.]*
- **What is this story telling us about the world?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: The world may not understand our rituals for worshipping God; the world's expectations for how God works may look different than how God chooses to work in the world; the world works hard to know everything, but sometimes we just have to trust God; etc.]*
- **The Last Supper was a very special meal for Jesus' disciples. They might not have even understood just how special! It's also a special meal for Jesus because, just like his other ministries and miracles, he makes it clear that everyone is welcome at the Lord's Table. Even when we don't fully understand how we got there or what it all means. What does it feel like to be invited to the Lord's Table? What would it feel like to welcome anyone and everyone we know to the Table? What would it feel like to be at the Table with Jesus?**



# THE RITUAL

## (15 MINUTES)

# Agape Meal

### Materials:

- Copy of Lesson Sheet 28.3
- Bread of some kind, with a basket or plate that is easy to pass
- Juice of some kind, in a pitcher or other container that is easy to pass
- Napkins
- Small cups
- A well-known hymn or other song

*A note about setting up your space:* It is always better to have multiple tables pushed together and have too much room than have a larger than expected crowd and have to squeeze. The most important part of the story is that everyone has a place at the Lord's Table, and the space should reflect that.

### Before the session:

- Make copies of Lesson Sheet 28.3.
- Practice reading through the liturgy several times so that you are familiar with it.
- Set up your table for the Agape Meal.

### During the session:

- With everyone seated at the table, explain a little bit about the Agape Meal: **The Agape Meal is a very old ritual from the early church. It is a basic and simple meal early Christians shared after worshipping together. The Agape Meal is different than when we celebrate Communion. It is intentionally a time of remembrance and recalling of the meals Jesus had with his disciples throughout his ministry. When we celebrate an Agape Meal, we also remember and recall God in our own lives. We remember God's love, we remember our memories with and love for our community, and we remember the beauty and deliciousness of creation through food and drink.**
- Take out or point out the bread and juice. **Tonight we'll enjoy some bread and some juice. This looks a lot like Communion, but the Agape Meal is not a sacrament, and it is not trying to be. It's an intentional space that, over time, has come to mark the celebration of Christian fellowship. The Agape Meal celebrates the time we get to spend together.**
- Explain that you're going to do a short Agape Meal liturgy. Assign each part to participants, as works best with your group. Explain that the bread and juice will look different than on Sundays. **When it's time to take the bread, you'll take a piece and then say a time when you felt welcomed somewhere. Then, when you pour some of the juice into your cup, hold up your cup and say something or someone you're grateful for in your life.**
- Go through the Agape Meal liturgy on Lesson Sheet 28.3.
- At the end, spend some time discussing this ritual with your group. Ask the following questions:

## THE RITUAL - CONTINUED

- **What was it like to share this meal together?** *[Answers will vary.]*
- **What were some of the things that stick out to you about feeling welcome?** *[Answers will vary.]*
- **What are some things you heard people say they're grateful for?** *[Answers will vary.]*
- **What does welcome and gratitude have to do with our life with God?** *[Answers will vary.]*
- Include some questions or thoughts about community. **Today, we've worked really hard as a community: You had to figure out clues together to get here, and we've listened to stories together. Each person helped another person get the food and bread they needed for this meal. We each shared something about ourselves. It makes God happy that each and every person is here at this table. What does it feel like to know you have a place here? That you're a part of a community that loves you?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: happy, welcomed, special, etc.]*
- To end the ritual, sing a song together. It can be a simple hymn or song you print or a song your group knows well. At the end of the song, bring the group back together.
- Close with a prayer: **God, thank you for inviting each of us to your table. Not just to share our lives with you, but with each other.**



## DIG DEEPER (10 MINUTES)

# There is a Place for You. Yes, You!

### Materials:

- Paper
- Pens
- Envelopes
- Stamps (optional)

### During the session:

- Move the group to thinking about more ways to show that God invites everyone to the Lord's Table. **We all know the disciples, including what makes them really great and what makes them not so great. We mostly know that Jesus picked them and loved them, even when they messed up. But, in Jesus' time, a lot of people thought Jesus picked some unlikely people to share his ministry and meals with. But we know God invites everyone to the Lord's Table. Think for a few minutes: Who are some people who might not feel welcome in the world today? Maybe you're thinking of something from the news, maybe you're thinking of someone in your school. Why are they treated that way?** Ask participants to share their thoughts and experiences.
- **How would Jesus treat the people we've talked about?** *[Answers will vary.]*
- **What could you do to make more people feel welcomed and invited?** *[Answers will vary.]*
- Pass around the paper and pens. Invite participants to write their own invitation to someone who may not know they're welcomed and loved by God.
- If desired, have participants address an envelope for their invitation, and mail them.

## WRAP IT UP (5 MINUTES)

### Closing Prayer

Invite the group to share any prayer concerns or requests they may have for the week. Close your time together in prayer. Use the following or pray your own prayer:

Infinite and intimate God;  
We share in this life with you in many ways,  
Including in special meals together.  
Help us to remember that you invite and welcome each of us.  
Help us to invite and welcome everyone we meet.  
That, together, we can all draw closer to your love,  
Made known to us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

# Lesson Sheet 28.1

## Community Builder Clues

Invitation to the Upper Room

Jesus replied, “**When you go into the city...**” (Luke 22:10a)

*Clue #1:*

**SHH!!! Do not read this aloud!**

You can't say the name of the room listed on this card.  
Instead, you will guide the rest of your group there. They must keep their eyes closed, and they can only get there based on the instructions you give to them.

Now, help your group travel safely to:

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Invitation to the Upper Room

Jesus replied, “**When you go into the city, a man carrying a water jar will meet you.  
Follow him to the house he enters.**” (Luke 22:10)

*Clue #2:*

**SHH!!! Do not read this aloud!**

There's an item in this room that your group needs to find the next clue. Only YOU know that that item is.

Help the rest of your group figure out what item holds the next clue.

But, here's the catch: You cannot tell them what the item is.

You can use “I Spy” clues or “Charades” rules to act out what the item is.

REMEMBER: YOU CANNOT SAY ANY OF THE WORDS LISTED BELOW OUT LOUD:

Help your group find:

**A JAR OF WATER**

### Invitation to the Upper Room

Jesus replied, "When you go into the city, a man carrying a water jar will meet you. Follow him to the house he enters. **Say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher says to you, "Where is the guestroom where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?"'**" (Luke 22:10-11)

*Clue #3*

**SHH!!! Do not read this aloud!**

A member of the parish has been asked to play the part of the "owner of the house."

The person's name is listed below. You have two options:

Play Charades: Act out the person's name until the group guesses who it is.

Follow the Leader: Guide the rest of the group to where the person is located, but follow the rules from Clue #1:

You can tell them where you are going and they have to keep their eyes closed while you give directions.

**The Owner of the House is:**

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**And the owner can be found in:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Invitation to the Upper Room

Jesus replied, "When you go into the city, a man carrying a water jar will meet you. Follow him to the house he enters. Say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher says to you, "Where is the guestroom where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' **He will show you a large upstairs room, already furnished. Make preparations there.**" (Luke 22:10-12)

*Clue #4 (Final Clue)*

**The Upper Room's location is below, but the words are scrambled.**

Unscramble to find out where you need to go. Guess with the owner of the house, and the owner can tell you when you've guessed correctly.

Once you figure it out, head to the Upper Room!

**UNSCRAMBLE:**

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# Lesson Sheet 28.2

## The Last Supper

A story from the Gospel according to Luke:

The Day of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John with this task: "Go and prepare for us to eat the Passover meal." They said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare it?"

Jesus replied, "When you go into the city, a man carrying a water jar will meet you. Follow him to the house he enters. Say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher says to you, "Where is the guestroom where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?"' He will show you a large upstairs room, already furnished. Make preparations there." They went and found everything just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

When the time came, Jesus took his place at the table, and the apostles joined him. He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. I tell you, I won't eat it until it is fulfilled in God's kingdom." After taking a cup and giving thanks, he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. I tell you that from now on I won't drink from the fruit of the vine until God's kingdom has come." After taking the bread and giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "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 meal and said, "This cup is the new covenant by my blood, which is poured out for you.

"But look! My betrayer is with me; his hand is on this table. The Human One goes just as it has been determined. But how terrible it is for that person who betrays him." They began to argue among themselves about which of them it could possibly be who would do this.

*Reading taken from Luke 22:7-23, as told in the Common English Bible.*

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# Lesson Sheet 28.3

## Agape Meal Liturgy

This Agape Meal liturgy is adapted from The United Methodist Book of Worship.

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### I. PRAYERS

*One or more persons may pray aloud, the others responding with **Amen, Hallelujah, Praise the Lord,** or other responses as the Spirit moves, or one of the following or another prayer or table grace may be spoken or sung:*

Be present at our table, Lord;  
Be here and everywhere adored;  
Thy creatures bless, and grant that we  
May feast in paradise with Thee. (JOHN CENICK)

*The following prayer by Charles Wesley was written especially for the Love Feast and recommended for use at all Love Feasts by both John and Charles Wesley.*

Father of earth and heaven,  
Thy hungry children feed,  
Thy grace be to our spirits given,  
That true immortal bread.  
Grant us and all our race  
In Jesus Christ to prove  
The sweetness of thy pardoning grace,  
The manna of thy love.

### II. SCRIPTURE *Suggested lessons:*

Psalms 145:8–21	God's abounding love
1 Corinthians 13	The gift of love
2 Corinthians 9:6–15	Our generous sharing glorifies God.
Philippians 2:5–11	God's self-emptying in Christ Jesus
1 John 4:7–21	God is love.
Matthew 22:34–40	Love of God and neighbor
Luke 9:12–17	Feeding the five thousand
Luke 14:16–24	Parable of the great dinner
John 6:25–35	Jesus the Bread of Life



### **III. ADDRESS OR PERSONAL WITNESS TO THE SCRIPTURE**

One or more persons may give a personal witness to the scripture.



### **IV. PASSING OF THE BREAD**

*The bread is passed from person to person. Each person may be invited in passing the bread to quote a scripture verse. The leader may receive last and close with a few words, a short prayer, or an invitation to new commitment to Christ and a holy life.*



### **V. CIRCULATION OF THE LOVING CUP**



### **VI. TESTIMONIES, PRAYERS, SINGING**



### **VII. CLOSING EXHORTATION**