

CELEBRATING COMMUNION IN GROUP

WHAT DO I NEED?

- A loaf of unsliced bread
- Grape juice in a wide cup or juice glass
- A willing group

WHAT DO I DO?

1. Provide your group with some context by reading a passage of Scripture about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. These are good options:

Psalm 22

Isaiah 53

Mark 15:21–29

John 19

1 Corinthians 15:1–8

Galatians 2:16–21

Ephesians 2:1–10

Philippians 2:1–11

2. Pass the bread around and ask each member to tear off a small piece.
3. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.
4. Pass the cup of juice around and have everyone dip the bread into the cup.
5. After everyone has taken communion, encourage each member to spend a few minutes in prayer and reflection.
6. When Jesus' followers first celebrated communion, they probably shared a meal and told stories about the things Jesus had done while he was with them and the things he had done since his ascension. If you want, you can open the floor for members of your group to share things that Jesus has done in their lives.

LEADER FAQ

Talk with your group about celebrating communion at least a week before you do so. They'll probably have some questions. Helpful guidelines for navigating the three most common questions follow.

Your Groups Director can help you with any issues that aren't covered here.

WHAT IS COMMUNION?

Communion is an opportunity for followers of Jesus to remember and celebrate what he has done for them through his death and resurrection. The communion bread and wine (or juice) represent Jesus' broken body and shed blood. They're reminders that we are forgiven through his sacrifice. First Corinthians 11:17–32 says that believers should approach communion thoughtfully, examining themselves before eating the bread and drinking the juice.

WHO SHOULD CELEBRATE COMMUNION?

Opinions among Christians vary on the question of whether nonbelievers can participate in communion. Some believe that communion should be available only for those who follow Jesus. Others believe that Jesus invites *all* to his table. Allow your group members to decide for themselves whether they'll celebrate communion. Nonbelievers may or may not want to participate. Either way, communion may be an opportunity to share with them what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus.

You may also have believers from traditional church backgrounds who aren't comfortable celebrating communion in a group environment. That's okay.

When discussing this with your group, be sensitive to those who don't want to do it. You could ask if they would be comfortable observing a moment of silence while the others in your group celebrate communion.

WHERE SHOULD COMMUNION BE CELEBRATED?

While some of the more formal Christian denominations believe that communion should ideally be celebrated in a church and only administered by a priest, minister, or pastor, we believe it's entirely appropriate to celebrate it in homes and other places. In fact, we believe God invites us to celebrate it anywhere we want and as often as we want.

We also believe that you don't have to be an ordained pastor to serve communion. Strategically, a Community Group leader, co-leader, or apprentice is the best person to serve communion. It's a great opportunity to demonstrate servant leadership.

If members of your group disagree, that's okay. Remember, you are not responsible for convincing them to celebrate communion if they don't want to.