



Christian Formation
Episcopal Diocese of Texas

EUCCHARIST INSTRUCTION CURRICULUM

Introduction for Teachers

The Eucharist is the meal of the family of God. We are made members of this family at our baptism. No child should remember a time when they were excluded from the Lord's Table.

This course is designed to be used as instruction time at church and in the home as well. While at church the children will have an opportunity to examine closely the furnishing and layout of the church, the sacristy, the baptismal font, the altar area. They will learn the names of the sacred vessels, the sacred furniture and the meanings and symbolism of these items. They will be given the opportunity to ask questions, to handle, to move around while being respectful of this sacred place.

If you use *Godly Play* in your church, the children will be familiar with the furnishings and names and the theological aspects of Holy Communion. This curriculum suggests stories from *Godly Play* as an integral part of the instruction.

If you use *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* the same holds true. There is a designated program for Eucharist instruction in Catechesis, "I am the Vine."

Other Episcopal curricula such as *Episcopal Children's Curriculum* and *All Things New* also contain some instruction regarding the Eucharist. Non-denominational or other denominational curricula will not have such instruction. If using another denomination's curriculum in which the Eucharist is taught please be very careful. Their theology does not necessarily agree with ours and the practices of Holy Communion (i.e. quarterly, using grape juice and crackers and little plastic cups) certainly do not.

Our ministry is to teach our children what it means to be an Anglican Christian.

This curriculum will use some stories from both *Godly Play* and *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. If you do not use these curricula in your church, this might be a good way to introduce the curriculum. *Godly Play* stories materials are available from the diocesan Resource Libraries for use in this curriculum.

The material is designed to be used in several ways: as a 6 week session, with each session lasting a minimum of 1 hour; as a "Retreat" format with either 2 weeks of 3 hours per week or 1 week with a 4 hour schedule. It lends itself very well to a Lenten or weeknight program in which you could have a nearly 2 hour schedule. It could also be used as a rotation model curriculum, or as a Vacation Bible School curriculum. Various time schedules can be found on page 3. *Note: The one hour format is the most difficult. Careful time management will be required and some activities will need to be moved to the home time. Additional class time would have to be scheduled to include the church "tours" and sacristy "tours."*

The curriculum is modeled on the Eucharist format itself. We gather, we hear the Word of God, we respond to the Word, we offer our gifts, we celebrate and we are sent out. Each lesson is divided into the following sections:

- **Goals and What is Needed**
- **Preparing to Learn** – time to draw children into the circle. Modeling quiet prayer time when we enter church.

- **Setting the Worship Environment**
- **Introducing the Lesson** – you will briefly acquaint the children with the lesson for the day, perhaps by asking questions or telling a brief story.
- **The Lesson** – the lesson theme will be explored and examined. Storytelling, reading, role-playing will help get the message across.
- **Responding** – will give children the opportunity to use another learning style, either through arts and crafts, questions and answers, games, etc.
- **Celebrating** – coming together to share a snack, to pray and to enjoy being together.
- **Going forth** – the dismissal, modeling what we do in church at the end of the liturgy.
- **After the Session** - help in planning for teachers.

Because children learn with all their senses, we have included activities and instruction that will honor their different ways in which they learn. Try to include as many as possible. Bear in mind that these are suggestions. You may certainly have a better craft or activity. The curriculum needs to work for you, not you for it.

In every baptism we attend we stand and promise to do all to see that these persons are brought up in the faith of the church. This course is a great opportunity to involve the congregation in the teaching ministry. Some ideas include communicating through

your church's newsletter, letting the congregation know the classes are going on, and inviting them to pray for the children and teachers and families during this time. The clergy should bring this learning opportunity into their sermons or announcements. Some churches arrange to have an instructed Eucharist regularly in the life of the congregation. This would be a good time to schedule one. *The Discovery Series: A Christian Journey* published by the diocese has an excellent segment that is an instructed Eucharist. The participants' pages have the service and notes for you to photocopy.

If you wish to acknowledge the children and their families at the end of the course of study, use words such as "These children and their families have completed a course of study on the Holy Eucharist. We will honor them at a reception _____." Because we are made full members of the Body of Christ at our baptisms, we can receive communion any time after that. In the Episcopal Church we do not believe that children have to be a certain age before receiving or that they have to be confirmed before receiving. Many children will start receiving communion at a very early age and to call this course a "First Communion" class is confusing for them and in fact false. With a very transient population today, children coming into your congregation may have been receiving communion for quite some time. Others may not have yet to do so. Being careful in the titling of the class is honoring all concerned.

Additional Resources

Godly Play stories:

- Baptism
- Books of the Bible
- Circle of the Eucharist
- Last Supper
- Good Shepherd and World Communion

Catechesis stories used:

- The Light
- Books of the Bible

Other resources:

- The Book of Common Prayer
- The Bible

- *God Speaks to us in Water Stories* and *God Speaks to us in Feeding Stories*, Mary Ann Getty-Sullivan
- CandlePress materials, www.candlepress.com
- *Beulah Land* materials, Gretchen Pritchard, www.beulahenterprises.org
- Children's Bible
- Breakfast on the Beach – Seasons of the Spirit
- *Agatha's Featherbed*, Carmen Deedy
- *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*, Mem Fox
- *The Anglican Family Prayer Book*, Anne E. Kitch
- *Peanut Butter and Jelly Prayers*, Julie B. Sevig
- *The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education*, 3rd ed, Sharon Pearson

Suggested Time Schedules

1 hour session

Preparing to learn & set environment	5 minutes
Introducing the Lesson	10 minutes
The Lesson	15 minutes
Responding	15 minutes
Celebrating	10 minutes
Going forth	5 minutes

2 hour session

Preparing to learn & set the environment	5 minutes
Introducing the Lesson	20 minutes
The story	20 minutes
Responding	30 minutes
Celebrating	25 minutes
Going forth	5 minutes

Retreat session – 1 day (4 hours)

Preparing to learn & set environment	5 minutes
Introduction to Service of Word	30 minutes
Tour of church with stories	45 minutes
Break	10 minutes
Introduction to Holy Communion	30 minutes
The story and “tour”	45 minutes
Responding	40 minutes
Celebrating (might include lunch)	25 minutes
Going forth	10 minutes

Retreat session – 2 day (3 hours)

Day 1

Preparing to learn & set environment	5 minutes
Introduction to Service of Word	30 minutes
The Lesson	45 minutes
Break	10 minutes
Responding to the Word of God	35 minutes
“Tour”	35 minutes
Celebrating	15 minutes
Going forth	5 minutes

Day 2

Preparing to learn & set environment	5 minutes
Introduction to Holy Communion	30 minutes
The Lesson	45 minutes
Break	10 minutes
Responding	35 minutes
“Tour”	35 minutes
Celebrating	15 minutes
Going forth	5 minutes

Vacation Bible School:

Use the “Retreat/3 day” format as follows:

Day 1

The Family gathering in the Lord’s Name

Day 2

Hearing and responding to the Word of God –
Our Family Story

Day 3

We celebrate – the Eucharist, we go forth
(adjust the lessons to fit the length of your VBS)



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