

LESSON 12

CIRCLE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: WHAT HAPPENS IN CHURCH EACH SUNDAY

- LITURGICAL ACTION
- CORE PRESENTATION

THE MATERIAL

- LOCATION: EASTER SHELVES
- PIECES: TRAY-SHAPED BASKET, 1 CARD PICTURING JESUS IN THE UPPER ROOM, 1 CARD PICTURING A READER IN THE SYNAGOGUE, SET OF 17 CARDS SHOWING THE MAJOR PARTS AND ACTS OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST
- UNDERLAY: GREEN CIRCLE

BACKGROUND

This presentation and material, another in the series of lessons developing themes in the Holy Eucharist, helps children pull together the sequence of liturgical actions and images from the Godly Play presentations they have seen and from their church's Sunday celebration. Adjust it, as necessary, to fit what happens in your church.

We lay out the lesson on a green circle, echoing the green used in the presentation of the Good Shepherd and World Communion. Its circular shape is important, because when the Holy Eucharist concludes, it is ready to begin again, waiting for us to take part. The gift of its way to make meaning is always there, inviting us to begin again.

The pieces laid out on the green circle are flat, two-dimensional pieces rather than the three-dimensional pieces the children have seen so far in this series. This lesson helps children take a step toward abstraction and the integration of the parts into the wholeness of the Eucharist.

NOTES ON THE MATERIAL

Find this material on the far left of the middle shelf of the Easter shelves, directly underneath the material for the Mystery of Easter. The material is a tray-shaped basket holding a green felt underlay and a set of wooden or foamcore cards.

As the lesson begins, the presentation retells the story of the Synagogue and the Upper Room, but this time, instead of using three-dimensional material, you put an orange card in the center of the green circle showing a line drawing of someone reading in the synagogue and then above it a yellow-gold card with a line drawing of Jesus and the Twelve in the upper room. These two cards measure 4" x 6-1/2".

You then lay out cards around the edge of the circle to show the major acts in the sequence of the Holy Eucharist. If necessary, make adjustments to the cards we suggest to match the practice of your congregation. Change any words of the story, too, to match what is actually said and done in your church.

The key card bears the title "The Holy Eucharist." This is an orange card that measures 5" x 7-1/2". The center of the card shows the picture of a golden cross. Two additional cards, each measuring 4" x 6-1/2", mark the two major divisions of the Holy Eucharist: "The Word of God" and "The Holy Communion." The Word of God card is orange with a drawing of an open Bible. The Holy Communion card is yellow-gold with a drawing of a host and chalice to represent the bread and wine.

We suggest eight orange cards, each 4" x 6-1/2", with the following labels for the Liturgy of the Word:

- Opening and the Collect of the Day
- The Lessons: The Old Testament—The Letters
- Lesson: the Gospel
- The Sermon
- The Nicene Creed
- The Prayers of the People
- Confession of Sin
- The Peace

We suggest six yellow-gold cards, each 4" x 6-1/2", with the following labels for the Liturgy of Holy Communion:

- Offertory
- The Great Thanksgiving
- Prayer of Consecration
- The Breaking of the Bread
- Communion
- Blessing and Dismissal

SPECIAL NOTES

Using in Church: Please note that extra sets of these cards make a wonderful way for children to follow and name what is going on in the liturgy of your church. For use during church, mount them on cardboard and laminate them. Punch holes in the cards and put a ring through them to fix the sequence for the children. They can then follow the action by flipping the cards.

MOVEMENTS

When the children are settled in the circle, go to the Easter shelves and bring the basket with its underlay and cards to the circle.

Take out the underlay as if it were the underlay for a parable. Leave it crumpled in the middle of the circle for a moment, and then smooth it out. It is the same color as the underlay for the parable of the Good Shepherd, but it is round, not irregular, in shape.

The children may or may not respond, helping to build a metaphor and connecting it to previous lessons. If they do respond, wonder with them for a few moments, but this does not need to go on as long as with a parable.

Then begin the story.

Place the card for the synagogue in the center of the underlay, facing the children.

WORDS

Watch where I go, so you will always know where to find this lesson.

I wonder what this could be.

After Jesus was baptized and had come back over the Jordan River from the desert, he went home to his village of Nazareth.

He went into the synagogue and read from the scroll of Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19).

Jesus rolled up the scroll, handed it to an attendant and sat down. He then said to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

The people of Jesus' village said something like, "This is not the Messiah, the Anointed One. He thinks he is God, but he is just Mary and Joseph's son."

They took Jesus to the edge of the village where there was a cliff. They wanted to throw him off, but he walked back through the crowd and into the hills.

MOVEMENTS

Place the card with Jesus and the Twelve in the center of the underlay, above the synagogue card, facing the children.

Place the Holy Eucharist card facing the children at the children's top of the circle (from the children's point of view), the point nearest you.

Point to the orange card of the synagogue already placed at the center of the underlay.

Place the card for "The Word of God" just to the left of the Holy Eucharist card as you face it.

Point to the yellow card of the upper room already placed at the center of the underlay.

Place the card for "The Holy Communion" near the children's bottom of the circle, the point farthest from you. Place it a little to your right of the midpoint of the circle you will soon lay out.

WORDS

Jesus then gathered the Twelve to help him. He did many wonderful things, but then he and the Twelve went to Jerusalem for the last time.

On Thursday evening of that last week, Jesus and the Twelve met in an upper room. After they had everything they wanted to eat and drink, Jesus did something very strange. He took a piece of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it. Then he said something like, "Whenever you do this and share the bread, I will be there."

They must have thought, "What do you mean? You *are* here."

He then took a cup of wine. He gave thanks to God for it and then said something like, "Whenever you share the cup of wine like this, I will be there." The Twelve did not understand, but they never forgot. Later they would understand.

This was how the Holy Eucharist began. It has two parts.

First there is the Liturgy of the Word of God.

The Word of God is when we read from the scriptures and hear the sermon.

The second part is the Holy Communion.

MOVEMENTS

Place the card for "The Peace" at the children's bottom of the circle. This brings the cards for the Word of God to an end.

Now you have come to the card for "The Holy Communion." The next set of cards will also be placed in clockwise fashion, from the card for "The Holy Communion" to the card for "The Holy Eucharist."

Place the card for the "Offertory."

Place the card for "The Great Thanksgiving."

Place the card for the "Prayer of Consecration."

Place the card for "The Breaking of Bread."

Place the card for "Communion."

WORDS

After we are forgiven, we can't help but want to be close to everyone. People turn to each other and say, "The peace of the Lord be always with you." People say back, "And also with you."

Look, now we change. The time of the readings and thinking about them is over. The prayers have been said. We now get ready to do something very different. We prepare for Holy Communion. It helps us go where words and thinking alone cannot take us.

People bring gifts of money and other things to the altar. Above all they bring the gifts of bread and wine.

The gifts are received. When everything is ready the priest begins the Great Thanksgiving: "The Lord be with you." This is a time to lift up our hearts, to give thanks and praise. What is beginning to happen is a great mystery.

We remember the Last Supper of Jesus and the Twelve and then gradually we are there and it is here.

The priest prays for the Holy Spirit to sanctify the bread and wine, to change them from their ordinary use to this special use. The priest also prays for us to be sanctified, so we will be able to faithfully receive this holy Sacrament and serve God in unity, constancy and peace, and at the last day to join with all the saints in the joy of God's eternal kingdom.

We then say together the Lord's Prayer and hear especially the part: "Give us this day our daily bread."

The celebrant holds the bread up so we can see it, and breaks it. Sometimes you can even hear it crack. We give thanks for Jesus being with us and the celebrant reminds us that the bread and wine are for us, gifts from God.

People come forward now to receive the holy bread and holy wine. Jesus is with us in the bread and wine and we are all together, all over the world, and with all who have lived and died in this huge family of families called the Church.

MOVEMENTS

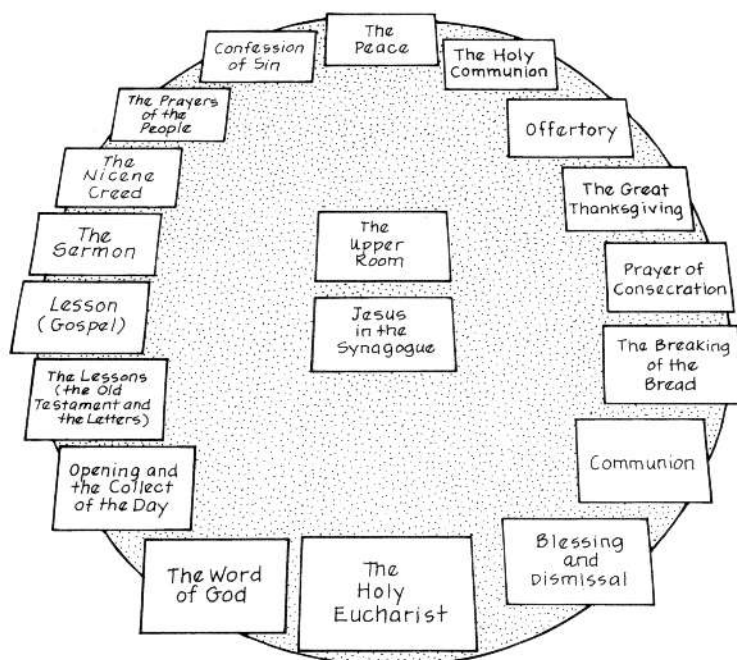
Place the card for the "Blessing and Dismissal."

WORDS

Everything is put away and we get ready to go out. The leader says something like, "Let us go forth in the name of Christ." And we always say, all together, "Thanks be to God!"

The Holy Eucharist is now ready to begin again

The green underlay now has cards all around its circumference. Sit back and enjoy the completed presentation for a moment or two.



THE COMPLETED CIRCLE (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

Move your hand around the circumference.

Now I wonder what part of the Holy Eucharist you like best?

I wonder what part is the most important part?

I wonder what part is especially for you?

I wonder if we could leave anything out and still have everything we need?

MOVEMENTS

When the wondering is finished, carefully replace the cards in the basket. As you replace the cards, name them once again. Don't hurry. Fold up the underlay and place it in the basket. Carry the basket with two hands and place it on the shelf.

Return to the circle.

WORDS

Here is the Holy Eucharist. Here is the part called the Word of God. Etc.

Now what work would you like to get out today?

