



INTERGENERATIONAL CELEBRATIONS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Drawing based on the cover of *A Place for You* by Daniel Erlanger, published by Augsburg Fortress

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

Intergenerational (or all-age) worship takes seriously the idea that people of all ages worship together in the body of Christ. Worshipers — young, old and in-between can also be involved in planning worship, inviting people to worship, and leading worship.

Intergenerational worship is different from worship that is of, by, and for adults where the presence of children is tolerated but unintentional. Intergenerational worship is intentionally directed at the child in us all.

Intergenerational worship is also different from 'children's worship' in that it immerses children in a worshipping community where each worshiper's experience is enriched by the presence of people of several generations.

Intergenerational worship is worship: first and foremost an encounter with God.

Carefully planned intergenerational worship is child friendly in language and format. It involves several of the senses, plus elements of movement, surprise, fun and awe. It also involves the mind. But it is not simply a mental, educational exercise.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is a sacrament. For me, the essence of sacraments is that we can't understand the mysteries of God. God knows we can't understand. God provides us with tactile/experiential ways of encountering his mysteries. Any attempt on our part to explain the sacraments will be (to a large extent) counterproductive.

To a large extent, participation — as part of the body of Christ — is more important than comprehension. This is something children in church can teach the older people who may think that they can/do/should grasp it all mentally.

However, it is appropriate that in our celebrations of Holy Communion people have the opportunity to think about what happens and grow in their appreciation of God's grace. This resource is designed to help you provide meaning-rich experiences as well as to help people of all ages grow in understanding.

USING THIS RESOURCE

These notes have been prepared by the Resource Centre for Children's and Family Ministry of the Uniting Church (SA) to help congregations plan worship involving children and families. They are available free of charge to congregations to use in planning worship.

These notes provide a range of starting points for planning an intergenerational Celebration of Holy Communion. Some ideas can be slipped into the service with almost no disturbance of your regular worship pattern. Others will require a more drastic — possibly one-off — change to the way you generally do things.

Read through all the material. Discuss it with your planning team. You will not use all the ideas. Choose those that are appropriate in your situation.

PLANNING TEAM

To organise a truly intergenerational worship celebration, begin with an

intergenerational planning team. That means a team of at least three people, representing the oldest third, the middle third and the youngest third of the people who will be worshipping.

The youngest team member is invaluable in helping older people understand what words and symbols mean to younger worshippers and how children respond to rituals and other experiences.

The oldest team member can help others understand the rich tradition behind some of the things we do in worship.

The planning team works under the guidance of the minister or another person authorised to administer the sacrament.

The team must be familiar with the congregation's policy for inclusion of children in the sacrament — and consider how this policy impacts on plans for an intergenerational celebration.

The team will also need to be familiar with your congregation's regular pattern for a worship service with Holy Communion. The team, with the minister, decides the extent to which this pattern can be/should be altered to make it more intentionally intergenerational.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS

Two sections of *The Basis of Union* (1992 edition) are critical.

Sacraments (6)

The Uniting Church acknowledges that Christ has commanded his Church to proclaim the Gospel both in words and in the two visible acts of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Christ himself acts in and through everything that the Church does in obedience to his commandment.

It is Christ who by the gift of the Spirit confers

- the forgiveness,
- the fellowship,
- the new life
- and the freedom

which the proclamation and actions promise;

and it is Christ who

- awakens,
- purifies
- and advances

in people the faith and hope in which alone such benefits can be accepted.

Holy Communion (8)

The Uniting Church acknowledges that the continuing presence of Christ with his people is signified and sealed by Christ in the Lord's Supper or the Holy Communion, constantly repeated in the life of the Church.

In this sacrament of his broken body and outpoured blood,

the risen Lord feeds his baptized people on their way to the final inheritance of the Kingdom.

Thus, the people of God, through faith and the gift and power of the Holy Spirit,

- have communion with their Saviour,
- make their sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
- proclaim the Lord's death,
- grow together into Christ,
- are strengthened for their participation in the mission of Christ in the world
- and rejoice in the foretaste of the Kingdom which Christ will bring to consummation.

Jesus used food to teach, heal, build communities, transform lives, and break down walls of discrimination and oppression. — Len Sweet

Much more happens at a meal than satisfying hunger and quenching thirst. Around the table we become family, friends, community, yes, a body. — Henri Nouwen

STARTING POINT #1

A BIBLE STORY

The gospel story of a meal Jesus shared with his friends is an excellent starting point for planning an intergenerational meal with Jesus.

If you follow lectionary readings, you might choose to have a special celebration on a Sunday when such a story is indicated. If you do not follow the lectionary, you may choose such a story to use on the day of your Holy Communion celebration.

BIBLE MEALS WITH JESUS

Here are some examples of people having a meal with Jesus:

- The Last Supper
Matthew 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–23; John 13:21–30; I Corinthians 11:23–25
- A snack in a wheat field
Matthew 12:1; Mark 2:23; Luke 6:1
- Jesus feeds 5000
Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–14
- Jesus feeds 4000
Matthew 15:29–38; Mark 8:1–10
- At Levi's house
Matthew 9:9–14; Mark 2:13–17; Luke 5:27–32
- At Emmaus
Luke 24:13–35
- At a Pharisee's house
Luke 7:36–50
- Jairus's daughter
Luke 8:40–42, 49–55
- At another Pharisee's house
Luke 14:7–14
- A wedding feast John 2:1–11
- A picnic by the lake
John 21:1–17

JESUS' STORY ABOUT A MEAL

- The great banquet
Matthew 22:1–10; Luke 14:15–24

Please note that these are all New Testament stories. Old Testament stories are often cited in connection with Holy Communion, particularly the Passover and God's provision of manna and quails. As a starting point for an intergenerational meal

with Jesus it is better to use a meal in which Jesus was actually present.

A child-friendly approach requires planners to recognize that young children's thinking is very concrete. We ask them to stretch their imagination and understanding to make a connection between the Bible experience and their own experience. Keep the process as uncomplicated as possible.

STARTING WITH A STORY

The simplest way to use a story as a starting point is to read a story in the ordinary way you read a gospel story in an ordinary service.

Here are some ways of building on the reading.

- Use a child-friendly Bible translation.
- Invite children to come forward for the story reading and read expressively as you would read/tell a story to children.
- Read the story from a Bible storybook.
- Show an illustration (or a series of 'cartoon strip' illustrations) of the story as it is read. Someone in the congregation may draw the illustrations or source them on the Internet.
- Give children a picture of the story to colour-in.
- Different people read the narration and dialogue in the Bible story.
- Present a dramatized version of the story.
- Show a video clip with a dramatized version of the story.
- Have a costumed actor tell a first-person account of the story; the person might be interviewed about what it was like to have a meal with Jesus.

As much as possible involve people of various ages in any of these approaches.

BUILDING ON THE STORY

Here are some ideas for giving the story more impact on the service than just as 'one of the readings'.

- Decorate the church with illustrations of the story and draw people's attention to the illustrations.
- Before the worship session, have Sunday school or Bible study in which people become familiar with the story. They might also produce artwork (or music, dance, or other ideas) that can be incorporated into worship.
- Refer to the story as frequently as possible throughout the service.
- Use the story as the text for the sermon/message.
- Use the language of the story in the liturgy, eg 'Just as Jesus provided food for the 5000 people in the story, he provides special food for us in Holy Communion.'
- Invite families or other small groups in the congregation to discuss among themselves the relationship between the story and Holy Communion.

GOING THE WHOLE WAY

A story of Jesus' meal with his friends can become the framework for a special worship experience.

- Make your worship space into the setting for the story.
- Involve everyone in re-enacting the story in this setting.
- Make as smooth a segue as possible to the Holy Communion liturgy.

Here's an example.

Jesus at a Wedding at Cana

Hold the service in a hall, decorated for a wedding with party music playing.

Signs outside welcome people to 'The wedding of the year!'

A formally dressed host greets people as they arrive and gives each person a small plastic wine glass. Waiters (wearing aprons) circulate: one (or more) with snacks and one (or more) with a jug of grape juice.

The host can invite everyone to sing along with a festive song — or even join in a circle dance to a worship song with a dance rhythm, eg Jesus put this song into my heart.

The wine waiter (W) empties his jug (near the centre of the hall) and shouts: 'Oh, No,

No, no, no!' — hopefully getting everyone's attention.

The host (H) rushes over to him.

H: What's wrong?

W: The wine is finished.

H: All of it?

W: Yes, every drop. See.

Holds the empty jug up high upside down.

H: Isn't there more in the cooler.

W: It's finished.

H: Did you look?

W: Yes.

H: No more in the kitchen?

W: No.

H: This is a calamity. All these thirsty people, and no wine to drink! What am I going to do?

Costumed MARY, pulling costumed JESUS comes to the centre of the assembled group.

MARY: My son can help.

H: How, dear woman?

JESUS: (*gently*) Yes, 'dear woman', why me? My time has not yet come.

MARY *raises her hands in an exasperated, Jewish mother expression 'Oi!' and says to the host and waiter:* Do whatever he tells you to do.

JESUS *says quietly to the waiter:* Come with me. *They go outside.*

H: Let them go, folks. Let's keep this party going. Musicians, how about a song.

After an interval, the **WAITER** returns, with the jug filled with grape juice (or wine).

W: (shouting) Hey boss!

Goes to the host at the centre of the crowd.

(Apologetically) I was told to do whatever he told me. He told me to bring you this jug of water. Sorry, but that's what he told me. So, here, have some.

The waiter pours from the jug into the host's wine glass.

The HOST tastes it. Then, like a wine connoisseur, holds up the glass to see the colour, swirls it around and tastes it again.

H: Now that is an excellent drop! Not water. Not cheap wine that some people serve when the guests have had their fill. But a superb wine! What happened?

W: Hey, everybody, listen to this.
You know that water tank out by the shed? We went to the water tank and Jesus said: 'Fill the jug with water.'
So I did. (Shrugs)
And then *he* told me to bring it in here.
You saw what happened.
It's a miracle!
Who wants to try Jesus' wine?

H: Excuse me! Excuse me. Before anyone starts sampling the wine — it's time for our special meal. Will everyone please get a chair and arrange them in a circle around the serving table.

Host/worship leader *makes a transition from the story to the communion, eg* Long ago, Jesus attended a wedding and turned water into wine.

Jesus loved to go to parties and to have meals with his friends.

Just before he died, Jesus made a way for all of us today to have a 'Meal with Jesus'.

Move into a more formal version of the communion service, including as a minimum:

- The words of institution
- The distribution (by the Jesus actor)
- The thanksgiving
- The sending out.

Followed, if you wish, by a community meal.

Note: If you plan something as different from your normal practice as this suggestion, let people know ahead of time what they can expect. In this case, the 'warning' could be in the form of an invitation to the wedding.

CHERYL MAGRINI ARTICLES

Dr Magrini, who led seminars on Australia in 2007, has done extensive work on hospitality in the Bible and in children's ministry, with special reference to Holy Communion.

To draw on Dr Magrini's understanding of children and Holy Communion, Google 'Cheryl Magrini' or the title of one of these articles:

- How Should Parents And The Church Welcome Children To The Lord's Supper?
- Children And Communion - Should We Change The Words?
- Children's Interpretations Of Biblical Meal Stories: Ethnographic Intertextual Voicing As The Practice Of Hospitable Pedagogy



STARTING POINT #2

A COMMUNION SONG

A song or hymn that speaks about Holy Communion in poetic language is a good starting point for celebrating an intergenerational meal with Jesus.

CHOOSING SONGS

Most traditional communion hymns were written by adults for adults and contain references and imagery that is obscure to children (and some adults). Many modern communion songs present similar difficulties.

Steer clear of 'the blood of the lamb'. Young children don't necessarily equate blood (or 'broken body') with death. Nor do they need the confusion of two conflicting images: Jesus — the caring shepherd and Jesus — the sacrificial lamb.

The whole idea of sacrifice, unless it is a specific theme being explored in various ways in the service, may be better left marginal in an intergenerational celebration.

Other things that may seem quite simple, may be confusing to children, eg

- Breaking bread — Is it your practice to actually *break* bread? Do you actually use *bread* or something that children can recognise as bread?
- Gathering around the table — Do you actually gather around something that children will recognise as a table?

Songs using the vocabulary of the mystery: 'This is my body; this is my blood' can be included. Children may accept this more easily than adults. It's probably best not to try to explain it.

It is appropriate to select at least one traditional hymn — one that is cherished by older worshippers — as part of your worship or even as the controlling starting point for planning worship. Try to select one that has a minimum of 'stumbling blocks' and take the time to explain their significance.

COMMUNION SONGS

Here are some communion songs to consider using.

- According to thy gracious word (Montgomery) TAHB #436
- Always remember me (Ylvisaker, Israeli tune) ATOK #374
- Author of life divine (Wesley) TAHB #430
- Be known to us in breaking bread (Montgomery) TAHB 435
- Communion song (McGuire) ATA #170
- Come let us eat (Kwillia) ATA #179
- Come, risen Lord (Briggs) TAHB #442
- Do this in memory of me (Burland & Jacobs) AOVK #11
- Face to face (Mann) ATN #71
- Feed us now (Mann) ATN #79
- Given and shed for you (Ylvisaker) ATOK #378 — lots of images to explore
- Here, Lord, we take the broken bread (Pilcher) TAHB #446
- Holy, holy, holy (traditional 'Santo...' from Argentina) ATOK #381 — liturgy alternative
- In my love (McGregor) David McGregor's web site: www.togethertocelebrate.com.au
- Jesus, we thus obey (Wesley) TAHB #427
- Let us break bread together (Spiritual) TAHB #433
- Share this meal with me (Burland) AOVK #6
- Take and eat (Russell) AOVK #114
- The Table of God (O'Brien) AOVK #8
- These I lay down (Iona Community) ATOK #397 — confession
- To live like Jesus (Pudney) AOVK #160
- We give thanks (Watts) AOVK 105
- We live and love your word (Bates) AOVK #118

AOVK = *As One Voice for Kids*

ATN = *All Together Now*

ATA = *All Together Again*

ATOK = *All Together OK*

TAHB = *The Australian Hymn Book*

STARTING WITH THE SONG

Here are some ideas for using a song from our list or another communion song as the starting point for planning an intergenerational meal with Jesus.

- Use the same song several times in the same service — in different ways, eg sung by a 'performance' group or choir, instrumental only, sung by the whole congregation.
- Sing the song; then have instrumentalists play the tune quietly as worshipers model small balls of play dough into any shape that reflects their reaction to the words of the song. You may allow time for people to talk to one another about their sculpture and/or collect the sculptures (on trays) and put them on display for people to look at during the service.
- If you have dancers in your congregation, ask them to create and perform a liturgical dance to the song.
- If you have someone who knows Auslan, ask that person to sign the entire song and teach the congregation to sign a few key words from the song.
- Invite all worshipers to do 'actions' as appropriate in the song.
- Make two or three flags or streamers (possibly with a communion symbol on them). Flag wavers wave the flags while the song is sung.
- Pick two or three key concepts from the song and ask people of different ages to explain what those concepts mean for them.
- Several people can each explain what one verse of the song means for them.
- If the words of the song are displayed on a screen (or in a worship booklet) replace some of the words with symbols (like a rebus puzzle).
- If the song has a chorus or repeated lines, teach these to young children and cue them to join in that portion of the song.
- Play an instrumental version of the song as people arrive and during the distribution of communion.
- Use the language of the song wherever possible in all parts of the service.

DO-IT-YOURSELF SONG

Challenge congregational members (individually or as families) to compose their own communion song.

- Use the do-it-yourself song/s in worship.
- Interview the composer/s about the process of composing their song.

For example, the following verses can be sung to Old One Hundredth (traditional) or Avery and Marsh's Doxology with multiple amens or the 'Addams Family' theme.

1. Be present at our table, Lord
be here and everywhere adored;
these mercies bless, and grant that we
may always serve you faithfully.
2. As bread is broken and wine poured,
please help us to remember, Lord,
how on the cross you died for sin
and on the third day rose again.
3. You're present at this table, Lord,
we have your promise in your word.
We eat your body with the bread,
and drink your blood as you have said.
4. When we come to your table, Lord,
we're sure that we won't be ignored.
The heavenly meal that we take in
gives us forgiveness of all sin.
5. When we come to your table, Lord,
we come believing in your word.
You gave your life, you said, for us
and in your word we place our trust.
6. I come, invited by your Word,
to kneel before your altar, Lord.
Receive me then, and bid me stay
with you, the life, the truth, the way.
7. You call us to your table, Lord,
we come, obedient to your word,
till by your word and promise true
we'll feast in Paradise with you.

STARTING POINT #3

A COMMUNION SYMBOL



The most common symbols of Holy Communion are the elements themselves the bread and wine, wheat and grapes.

MAKING BREAD AND 'WINE'

Making the elements used in Holy Communion can be an enjoyable intergenerational experience that involves a number of senses. It can help worshipers understand that these are ordinary elements, made from ordinary products.

Be sure all participants wash their hands before and after working with food.

- Have grapes available so that, as people arrive at church, they can squeeze the grape juice. During the first part of the service, a volunteer can add the squeezed grape juice to your regular juice/wine so that there will be enough to use for communion.

The people who squeezed the juice can bring it to the altar at the start of communion.

JUICE RECIPE

Making grape juice can be a complicated process. But you can give a suggestion of the process by putting washed grapes through a mill (or smashing them with a mortar and pestle) to make pulp and then straining the pulp through a strainer or muslin cloth.

- Have flour and other ingredients available so people can make bread when they arrive at church. Use the recipe here or a recipe of your own choice. A volunteer will need to stay by the oven and to monitor the baking. Worshipers will smell the baking bread during the first part of the service.

The bakers who make the bread can bring it to the altar at the start of communion.

UNLEAVENED BREAD RECIPE

from *Biblical Times*

by Goodman, Marcus & Woolhandler

NEEDED

2 cups whole wheat flour
or 1 cup whole wheat flour
plus 1 cup barley flour

3/4 cup of water

olive oil

Oven, large mixing bowl, wooden spoon, baking sheets

METHOD

1. Combine flour and water thoroughly with wooden spoon.
2. Dust the top of this mixture with flour.
3. Divide onto 6 to 8 balls, rounding them with floured hands.
4. Oil a baking sheet with olive oil.
5. Place balls on baking sheet.
6. Press down each ball with hands to make a flat cracker (about 12 cm in diameter).
7. Prick with a fork, to prevent swelling.
8. Bake for 10 minutes in a hot preheated oven (250°).
9. Remove bread and serve soon if they are to be eaten soft.

USING VISUAL SYMBOLS

Pick one of the symbols on these pages or another communion symbol. Here are some ideas for using the symbol to enrich a celebration of a meal with Jesus.

- Make a banner or poster of the symbol to display in your worship area. A special craft group might prepare the banner or poster ahead of time; or you could have the materials ready so that people can make it at the start of worship.

- If you already have a Holy Communion banner in your worship area, move it to a more prominent location.
- Draw people's attention to your banner or poster at appropriate times during the worship.
- Make copies of it on a worship bulletin or colouring-in versions for children.
- Have a still life composed of grapes, wheat and a cross, or the communion vessels on display in the hall. For a large congregation you will need a number of stations with still life arrangements. As people arrive, provide them with sketch pads and pencils — or other artists materials — and encourage them to make their own drawing of the arrangement.
- Give each person a nametag with your communion symbol on it. This will give them a symbol to look at before the service and to take home with them afterward. It will also allow the person who distributes communion to speak to each person — young and old — by name.
- Challenge people to create their own communion symbol. They could form the symbol from pipe cleaners and glue them to card.
- If you use special communion ware, display it on a table at the entrance to the worship area so that people who usually see it from a distance or in a hurry can examine it more closely.

Whenever you use a symbol as a starting point for worship, be sure to refer to the symbol as often as possible during the service; and display the symbol as prominently as possible.

PICTURES AS SYMBOLS

Paintings and photographs can also be used as symbols.

Use photos of

- grape vines and wheat fields
- people from your own area working in grape vines or wheat fields
- people from your area making wine or bread
- people of your congregation preparing for holy communion
- people of your congregation receiving Holy Communion.

If you use a projector and screen, you might feature one photo as background for all your slides or show a slide show before worship or during the distribution.

Photos like these could also be used in a worship bulletin or enlarged and put on the walls of the worship area.

Paintings and other artistic representations of Holy Communion or Jesus' institution of Communion, or any Bible story of Jesus having a meal with people could be used in a similar way.

Someone has said: 'Great art doesn't need to be explained.' The same may well be true of communion symbols. However it doesn't hurt to draw people's attention to symbolic artwork in the worship area that they might overlook. And it doesn't hurt to refer to the symbols whenever appropriate in the service.

MAKING A MOSAIC POSTER

Here's one very effective way of making a communion symbol poster.

Use black card as background.

Draw the outline of a simple symbol on the card. Draw lines at least 1 cm wide.

Plan a colour scheme for the mosaic.

Cut pieces of coloured paper from old glossy magazines. Pieces can be roughly square about 1 cm size.

Separate the paper into boxes of pieces with related colours that you intend to use, eg yellows, reds, blues, greens. Variety of tones will add interest to your mosaic.

Glue the mosaic squares onto the outline of the symbol, leaving a bit of black showing around the mosaic pieces.

This can be done by people of all ages at the start of worship. If the finished product is a bit rough, that's OK, because the participation can be as important as the product.

If a 'crafty' group is preparing the poster, they may plan the coloured background in detail.

If you choose a more complex symbol like the one shown here, you might cut some shapes to represent parts of the picture, eg round purple grapes, tan heads of wheat.

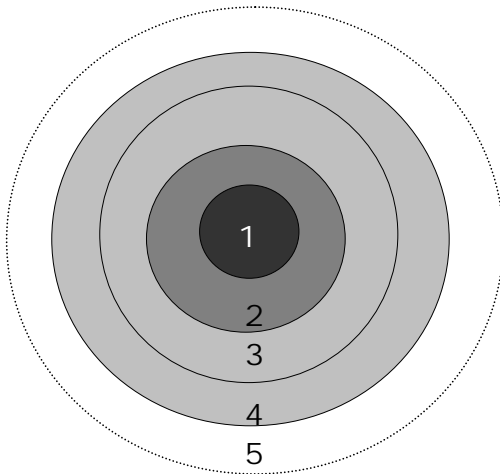


STARTING POINT #4

THE COMMUNION LITURGY

THE COMMUNION LITURGY

It may be helpful to think of the Holy Communion liturgy as a series of concentric circles.



1. At the centre is the actual 'Communion' — generally beginning with the minister speaking the words of institution and ending with the people giving thanks for the communion.

It is not appropriate to make serious alterations to this part of the service.

- It may be possible to change the way it is done to make it more accessible to children and families.
- It is possible to lift sections of this part of the service into other parts of the service and examine them through music, art or direct teaching.

2. In the next circle are parts of the service that are closely connected to the actual Communion and that are always part of Communion worship in your congregation. This may include things like a confession and absolution, a creed, the Lord's prayer.

It is possible to make some changes in the language of some of these parts as well as the way you do them and the sequence in which you do them.

3. In the third circle are other parts of the worship service that you will have whether

or not you celebrate Holy Communion at the service.

These can be selected and planned to intentionally relate to the communion celebration.

4. In the fourth circle are things that happen at your church before and after the service. These may include Sunday school/Bible study, and after-service fellowship.

Often these parts of the worship experience are overlooked in worship planning. They are, however, ideal places for building in experiences that will enhance the celebration of Holy Communion.

PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION

You can help people use the time before worship to prepare themselves to receive the sacrament of communion. One way to do this is to put the simple ABC questions on the screen or on a paper that you give to people when they arrive. Encourage people to think (or talk in families) about the questions.

A — I **admit** that I am not perfect, that I do things that disobey God and hurt other people and myself.

B — I **believe** that in Holy Communion God demonstrates that he loves me and forgives me.

C — I **commit** to trying to live as a person who is loved and forgiven by God.

5. The outer circle relates to people's lives in the home and the world outside of the church.

Worship planners have no control over what happens in this outer circle. However, it is their task to organise a worship experience through which God can touch people in a way that overflows into their lives beyond the 'church box' — and helps them to live as people who have really shared a meal with Jesus and experienced his love and forgiveness.

You may also give people some physical memento of the service and/or suggestions for further discussion, Bible reading and prayer at home.

TRADITIONAL LITURGY

Following are traditional parts of a Holy Communion liturgy. Your congregation may regularly use some or all of them. It might be a good exercise for your planning team to go through the parts that you use and see which fit into each level of our circle diagram.

(Prayers before the Service)

Call to worship

Greeting

Prayers of adoration and confession

Lord, have mercy,
Christ, have mercy,
Lord, have mercy.
*(Matthew 15:21-28, Matthew 17:14-18,
Matthew 20:29-34)*

Declaration of forgiveness

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
(1 Timothy 1:15)

or

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
(1 John 1:9)

Doxology

Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth...*(Luke 2:14)*

First reading

Psalm

Second reading

Gospel

Preaching of the word

Affirmation of faith — Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead; and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen. (Nicene Creed)

Offering

Notices and concerns of the church

Prayers of the people

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.
(Daniel 9:15-19)

The Peace

The peace of the Lord
be always with you.
And also with you

Setting of the table

Great prayer of thanksgiving (many alternatives)

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
It is right to give our thanks and praise.
(Psalm 107:8ff)

It is right that we should always offer thanks, O God,
because you have created and sustained us and all things

And so we praise you
with the faithful of every time and place,
joining with choirs of angels
and the whole creation
in the eternal hymn:

Holy, holy, holy
(Revelation 4:8)

Lord God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your
glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name
of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
*(Matthew 21:8-11; Mark 11:8-10; Luke
19:37-39, John 12:12-14)*

Narrative of Institution

Lord Jesus Christ
on the night when he was betrayed,
took bread,
and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and
gave it to his disciples and said:
'Take and eat;
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 supper
and when he had given thanks,
he gave it to them, and said:
'Drink of it, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant
which is shed for you
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.
*(Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26;
Luke 22:7-23; John 13:21-30;
1 Corinthians 11:23-25)*

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven hallowed be
your name, your kingdom come, your
will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. Forgive
us our sins as we forgive those who sin
against us. Save us from the time of
trial and deliver us from evil.
(Luke 11:2-4)

For the kingdom, the power, and the
glory are yours now and forever.
Amen.

The breaking of the bread

Lamb of God

Jesus lamb of God
have mercy on us.

Jesus bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.

Jesus redeemer of the world,
grant us peace.

The Communion

Take and eat, this is the body of Christ,
given for you.

Take and drink, this is the blood of
Christ, shed for you for the forgiveness
of sins. *(1 Corinthians 11:23-25)*

Prayer after communion

Word of Mission

Blessing

Dismissal

STARTING WITH THE LITURGY

The basic communion liturgy is at the
centre of every celebration of Holy
Communion. Here are some ways you can
approach your communion liturgy as a
starting point for an intergenerational
celebration of a meal with Jesus.

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

Children were given a place of honour at
the traditional Passover meal and often
led the adults in re-living the Passover
experience. You can borrow the Passover
tradition of having a child ask 'Why? —
Why do we do that at this special meal?'

To prepare a service featuring children's
questions, work through the entire service
with the youngest member of your
planning team, or with a group of children
and note their questions. A video of the
service would be a great way to do it.

Once you know what children are really
asking (a maximum of five or six questions
at any one service), compose simple, clear
answers. Test your responses on your young
advisors.

Then weave the questions and answers
into the liturgy — at the exact moment
when they are significant. You could do
this by having a child, or group of children
in the front row, interrupting and directing
the questions to the minister. Or you could
have a family group seated somewhere to
the side of the altar area with the child
asking questions and the parent/s or
grandparent/s responding to their
questions.

MINOR MODIFICATIONS

You might look at the entire service or
each element you use, and consider as a
planning team:

- Are there any stumbling blocks that prevent parts of the worshipping congregation from experiencing this part of the service?
- What is the simplest way we can remove the stumbling block? eg. reorganise use of space or clarify language.
- How can we make the intention of this part of the service more transparent for all worshipers? eg. with actions, illustrations, words.

BIBLE BASIS

A simple way of helping people appreciate the traditional wording of the liturgy is to recognize where it comes from in the Bible — the wording and the context in which we find the words. You might

- Look at just one item in one service, or go through them all in a service (or pre-worship Sunday school/Bible study).
- Give people printed service orders which show where to find the words.
- Ask each worshiper/family group to bring their own Bible and find and mark the Bible source with a communion symbol (during or before worship).
- As an 'aside' during the service, the minister can mention 'Do you know that those words come from a song written by King David.' Alternatively ask 'Who knows where those words come from?' with a team member or another person prepared to explain the Bible context.
- Use the Bible context of one of the parts of the liturgy as a Bible reading in the service and refer to the Bible reading when you get to the liturgy portion.
- Use the Bible context as the text for a sermon or children's address.

APPRECIATING THE PARTS

Another way of approaching these traditional worship elements is to pick just one to hold up and examine (or unpack) in a Holy Communion celebration.

You will probably do this before you get to the central communion part of the liturgy. Here are some possibilities.

LET US GIVE THANKS

This prayer is a magnificent piece of English prose. The total effect is more important than any individual part.

The idea of joining in praise and thanksgiving with people of all times and all places as well as with angels — that's awesome!

- If you regularly use this prayer in your worship and it has become commonplace, do something to lift it, eg. have the words read by a really good reader who can build the phrases one on another in a crescendo, with the final 'Holy, Holy Holy', sung by a musical group who can do it justice in volume and power.
- If you don't regularly use it, try inserting it into your service, as suggested above, or read by the entire congregation.
Palm Sunday would be a great time to do this.
- If you have someone who chants really well, use a chanted version of the thanksgiving.
- You may note a parallel between our giving thanks before we receive communion and Jesus' giving thanks before sharing the food with his disciples.
- If Jesus thanked his Father before eating, and we thank God before communion, it is also appropriate that we thank God before ordinary meals at home. This might lead to encouraging people to pray before meals at home and perhaps providing them with some prayer starters.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

This prayer that Jesus taught us traditionally comes at the start of the central Communion liturgy. The amazing thing is that the Communion that follows is an answer to the prayer in all its parts:

- Hallowed be your name — we keep God's name holy when we obey Him and receive the sacrament.

- Your kingdom come — Jesus brings God's kingdom right among us and to us in the sacrament.
- Your will be done — God's will is that all people are saved. In the sacrament we receive, in a special way, God's forgiveness by which we are saved.
- Give us our daily bread — In this sacrament God uses ordinary daily bread and gives us his extraordinary gift with it.
- Forgive us — God's forgiveness is the heart of what we receive in communion.
- Save us and deliver us — In Holy Communion we receive forgiveness and assurance that Jesus has delivered us from sin, death and the evil one.

You could explain one or more of these parallels as part of the service.

You could give each person (or family group) a copy of the Lord's Prayer and ask them to think about any ways God answers this prayer in Holy Communion.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The presiding minister can use

exaggerated gestures to make a clear visible statement of what happens.

DISTRIBUTION

We kneel because we are asking Jesus for a gift — not something we deserve.

If you regularly kneel to receive communion, do people understand why they kneel? Perhaps the presiding minister may explain briefly that we kneel as an indication that we are coming into the presence of someone far greater than ourselves — Jesus Christ.

To illustrate this, you could use a picture from a children's fairy tale book (or a video clip from a medieval story) that shows someone kneeling in front of a king.

If you do not regularly kneel, perhaps you could do it for a change, with an explanation.

A MODIFIED EUCHARIST

The Uniting Church South Australia web site has a modified Eucharist liturgy, designed to be more accessible to persons with intellectual disabilities, and by extension to all worshipers, including children.

www.sa.uca.org.au, click on 'Other Services', 'Disability Ministries', 'Liturgy'.

STARTING POINT #5

COMMUNION THEMES

Examining the themes of communion may fit more easily into a teaching setting than a worship setting. But it is worth considering how to make some of these concepts concrete and meaningful for all worshippers — in a worship setting.

THE GREAT THEMES

Some of the great themes that could be explored at a meal with Jesus are

- grace
- forgiveness
- fellowship
- new life
- freedom
- sacrifice
- remembrance
- faith
- hope.

It may be helpful to discuss one or more of these themes in your intergenerational planning team.

Good questions to start the discussion might be:

- Where have you experienced [forgiveness] in your life?
- Why do you think [grace] is important?
- Why do you think Jesus wants us to have [fellowship]?

Make note of the words people of different ages use to explain the themes. Incorporate those words — if they are helpful — into your worship celebration.

Note any explanations that are misleading or demonstrate misunderstanding or confusion. Work at clarifying these points within your group and consider how this clarification could be made in your worship celebration.

EXPLORING THEMES IN WORSHIP

Here are a few of ways of exploring the themes in worship.

- Use a Bible story that clearly represents the theme. Connect the story with communion.
- Use a personal story (testimony) that gives clear evidence of the theme in

people's lives. Connect that story with communion.

Create a role-play based on a personal story and perform it in the worship. Connect the play with communion.

Take a photo of the role-play (in rehearsal). Capture a moment that gives a graphic image of the theme. Use the photo wherever appropriate in the service.

- Watch for photos in the news (or other artwork) that can be used to illustrate the theme.
- Challenge people (perhaps in families or small groups) to identify the sound of [hope]. They may share that sound with the entire congregation.

If you ask people to identify sounds that they can make with their bodies or equipment readily at hand in the worship area, you might bring them all together in an impromptu symphony of [hope].

Use the sounds of [hope] in a prayer asking Jesus to give us [hope] or thanking him for giving us [hope].

- Challenge people (perhaps in families or small groups) to form a tableau of [sacrifice].

As they are arranged in their tableau, pray a prayer of thanks to Jesus for the [sacrifice] he made for us.

- Create banners featuring the key word of the theme. You might design a banner with a communion symbol and the theme word below it or surrounding it.

Refer to the banner when the theme is mentioned in the service.

- Challenge people (individuals, families or small groups) to create a simple, visual symbol for [faith].

They could draw these symbols on coloured paper to make mini-banners.

People bring their banners forward when they come for communion and place them at the altar.