

## A Parent's Guide to Talking to Children about The Lord's Table, or Communion

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 - *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.* <sup>(NIV)</sup>

Jesus never asked his disciples to remember his birth. But he did instruct them to remember his death and resurrection. He gave the Church two visible symbols (called 'ordinances') as reminders of his death. These two ordinances are: Baptism and the Lord's Table. Baptism pictures the beginning of our relationship with Jesus. The Lord's Table pictures the ongoing relationship we have together with Jesus.

### What is the Lord's Table? (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

On the night before Jesus died, he ate the Passover supper with the disciples. During that supper, he broke bread, passed it out and told them to eat it, as a symbol of his body. He also took the cup of wine and told them to drink it, remembering his blood shed on the cross for their sins. The early Christians recognized that Jesus was intending for them to do this as part of their gatherings, as a powerful way to remember what Jesus Christ provided for them on the cross. This celebration became known as the **Lord's Table** (remembering when Jesus first started it), or **Communion** (a sharing of something special with one another and Jesus).



1 Corinthians 11:27–30 - *So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup.*

*For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.* <sup>(NLT)</sup>

### Who can participate in the Lord's Table? (1 Corinthians 11:27-30)

If you begin reading this passage in vs. 17, you realize that Paul was writing to a church that was divided. They were getting together to have what we, now, would think of as a "potluck" supper - where they would take time to remember Jesus through the bread and the cup. However, instead of it being a celebration of their unity and communion with Jesus, it just demonstrated their disunity.

As Paul corrects them, he emphasizes two things:

1. Since Communion is a sharing of the common life we have in Jesus, it is designed for those who claim to be followers of Jesus.
2. Since it is an act that demonstrates unity as it is shared together, Paul taught the Corinthian church to avoid participating if they were not living in unity with God or one another.

NOTE: Don't let the word "unworthily" in verse 27, make you think you need to do something to be good enough, or "worthy" enough to participate. Paul is directing his words at those who were ignoring the meaning of what the celebration represents. To eat in an "unworthy" manner was to participate in a way that was inconsistent with what it was intended to mean. The celebration itself reminds us that the only reason we can eat together is because of what Jesus provided for us at the cross.

Paul encourages us to examine ourselves to make sure we are celebrating the Lord's Table the way it was intended. If we are deliberately avoiding unity with God or with someone else in the church community, then we should not participate since we would be hypocritically pretending there is unity. If we have a problem, we are refusing to resolve with someone in the church (or even in our own household), we should deal with that first then celebrate our unity together at the Table.

### How old do you need to be to participate?

The Bible doesn't give any age restrictions for the Lord's Table. The main assumption is that the people who share in the meal have trusted in Jesus to forgive their sins, making them members of God's family. Parents need discernment in speaking with their children about this. Some kids just think it would be fun to eat the cracker and drink the juice during church, without really knowing what it means. We also must be careful about making children feel like they will please their parents more if they say they are trusting in Jesus as their Saviour. This could be a good opportunity to talk to each child about what they understand about Jesus and how he deals with sin.



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If you have any further questions about this, please contact me.

Sincerely,

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