

Holy Thursday Meal

- ❖ *You are invited to have a special meal in your home on Holy Thursday as we remember & celebrate Jesus' Last Supper with His Disciples.*
- ❖ *You can have this meal alone, with your family. There is no right or wrong way to celebrate this meal.*
- ❖ *If you are celebrating this alone, or the meal host, spend some time to read through the pages before beginning. An optional hand/foot washing activity can be included, or left out of your Holy Thursday meal time.*

History Information:

A Passover (Seder) meal is traditionally held on Thursday or Friday evening before Easter. An actual Seder meal is rich with tradition, much preparation is made, and many detailed steps are followed. It is an important time for Jewish families to remember God's covenant (promises) to His people throughout the ages.

This Holy Thursday Meal is a simplified and adapted meal for the Christian home inspired by the traditional Passover/Seder meal. In celebrating this meal we are remembering a tradition begun by God and celebrated by Jesus himself.

The idea of this meal is to have a joyful and reflective time of Jesus' last meal with His disciples. There is no right or wrong way to celebrate this meal. The idea is to fill your home with the remembrance and celebration of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus.

Setup Before the Meal:

Set the Table:

Have candles on the table. Use rustic or elegant dishes (you decide). Use table linens or a bare table (you decide). One suggestion would be to have a more "rustic feeling" meal on this night and have a more "formal/elegant or celebratory feeling" meal on Easter Sunday for contrast.

Prepare Food:

Roasted lamb, unleavened bread (or Matzah), boiled eggs, bitter herbs (horseradish), Charoset (see recipe below), salt water in a bowl, parsley, and red grape juice or wine to drink. Place all the food on a platter, or in the center of the table.

Charoset Recipe:

3 chopped apples, 1 sliced banana, 2/3 cup plain yogurt, 1/3 cup chopped walnuts, dash cinnamon, 1-2 tsp. sugar or honey, 1 tsp vanilla. Mix all together. ***NOTE: If you need to be NUT-FREE for this meal you can leave out the walnuts. You can also Google recipes!***

(OPTIONAL) Prepare Hand or Foot Washing:

Large bowl with warm water & towel

(OPTIONAL ACTIVITY)

Hand or Foot Washing

IMPORTANT NOTE: *This can be a powerful time of receiving the gift of service from one another and giving the gift of service through the symbology of hand or foot washing. Jesus modeled this for us at the Last Supper when He washed the Disciple's feet and told them to serve others as He had served them. However, this could feel uncomfortable and be a source of giggles in some settings. Think about whether or not this would be a helpful and meaningful time for your meal gathering. If it would not be those things feel free to skip over this part! (You might find washing each other's hands might bring less giggles than foot washing.)*

Invite everyone to be seated at the table. Bring the bowl of warm water & towel over to the table and say something like this:

“We are going to remember how Jesus showed us the importance of serving one another. During the Last Supper, Jesus took on the role of a servant and washed each one of the Disciple's feet out of love for them and to show them how we are to serve others with our lives.”

Ask someone to light a candle on the table. Ask another person to read these Bible verses as everyone sits in quiet reflection listening:

John 13:1-7 (CEV): It was before Passover, and Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and to return to the Father. He had always loved His followers in this world, and He loved them to the very end. Even before the evening meal started, the devil had made Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, decide to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that he had come from God and would go back to God. He also knew that the Father had given Him complete power. So during the meal Jesus got up, removed his outer garment, and wrapped a towel around his waist. He put some water into a large bowl. Then He began washing His disciples' feet and drying them with the towel He was wearing.

But when He came to Simon Peter, that disciple asked, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus answered, “You don't really know what I am doing, but later you will understand.”

“You will never wash my feet!” Peter replied.

“If I don’t wash you,” Jesus told him, “you don’t really belong to Me.”

Peter said, “Lord, don’t wash just my feet. Wash my hands and my head.” Jesus answered, “People who have bathed and are clean all over need to wash just their feet. And you, my disciples, are clean, except for one of you.” Jesus knew who would betray him. That is why He said, “except for one of you.”

After Jesus had washed His disciples' feet and had put His outer garment back on, He sat down again. Then He said: "Do you understand what I have done? You call Me your Teacher and Lord, and you should, because that is who I am. And if your Lord and Teacher has washed your feet, you should do the same for each other. I have set the example, and you should do for each other exactly what I have done for you. I tell you for certain that servants are not greater than their master, and messengers are not greater than the one who sent them. You know these things, and God will bless you, if you do them."

Either take turns washing each other’s feet or hands (wash the person’s feet or hands next to you, pass them the bowl to them & have them wash the person’s feet next to them and so forth around the table) OR have the host wash everyone’s feet or hands around the table.

As you wash someone’s feet or hands, look them in the eyes and say,
“It is my honor to serve you out of the love that Jesus has shown me.”

End the hand or foot washing time by saying:

“Thank you, Jesus, for showing us how to serve one another in love. Help us to serve others as You have served us.”

Optional Reflection:

You can spend some time to talk about this activity together if you like. These questions can help.

1. In one word describe how you felt having your feet/hands washed? Why do you think you felt that way?
2. In one word describe how you felt (or would feel) washing someone else’s feet.
3. Imagine Jesus being here tonight and washing your feet. (Pause & imagine that in silence for a moment or two.) In one word, describe how that makes you feel.
4. Think of what “foot washing” is a symbol for today in your life. In one word, say what you are feeling invited to do as that act of service in your life right now.

The Meal

Light the Candles: Ask someone light the candles on the table. As they do that say:

“These candles representing Jesus, who is the light of the World.”

Read: Isaiah 53: 3-12 (CEV): Ask someone to read these verses:

**The Lord decided His servant
would suffer as a sacrifice
to take away the sin
and guilt of others.
Now the servant will live
to see His own descendants.
He did everything
the Lord had planned.**

**By suffering, the servant
will learn the true meaning
of obeying the Lord.
Although He is innocent,
He will take the punishment
for the sins of others,
so that many of them
will no longer be guilty.
The Lord will reward Him
with honor and power
for sacrificing His life.
Others thought He was a sinner,
but He suffered for our sins
and asked God to forgive us.**

Host says:

“Jesus poured out His soul unto death for us, so that we may be saved. When we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, His blood covers us – protecting us from eternal death and separation from God. The night before Jesus died, He celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples and said that from now on we are to partake of the Lord’s Supper as a reminder of His death and resurrection until He comes again.”

Read: John 3:16 (CEV): Ask someone to read these verses:

God loved the people of this world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who has faith in Him will have eternal life.

Pray a Prayer of Thanksgiving: (Read by the host or someone at the table.)

“Let us pray a prayer of thanksgiving.”

"Thank you, Jesus, for the ultimate sacrifice of your blood that was shed for us all and for Your resurrection. Thank you, God, for this food and for the time spent remembering what You did for us to forgive us from and save us from our sins."

Discuss Meal Items & Enjoy the Meal Together:

- At this time, the host describes each meal item (see the next page). The host passes each meal item (one at a time) after the description has been given, letting each person take some to eat it in silence reflecting on the meaning of that item.
- Go in the order of the sheet.
- Allow time for each person at the table to take some of the item and eat it in silence, before continuing on to the next meal item on the list.

Meal Items & Descriptions

Charoset:

This mixture of apples and nuts that symbolizes the mortar and bricks the Israelites (who were in slavery in the Old Testament) used in making the bricks for the king of Egypt. This reminds us that we are slaves to our sin & need a Savior to deliver us.

Unleavened Bread (or Matzah):

At the Last Supper Jesus told us that the bread would represent His body that was broken for us. We eat it in remembrance of His body that was given for us.

Bitter Herbs-Horseradish:

Jesus suffered greatly for us that we may be saved. This reminds us that on the cross He was given the bitter vinegar on the sponge to drink.

Roasted Lamb:

Jesus was our final perfect Lamb who was sacrificed for us all.

Boiled Egg:

The egg stands for renewal. We have new life in Jesus because of what He did on the cross for us.

Karpas: Parsley & Small Bowl of Salt Water:

Parsley plants stay green all year and represent everlasting life because of Christ's resurrection. The salt water represents our tears for those who haven't accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Dip the parsley into the salt water bowl and eat it.

Red Grape Juice or Wine poured in glasses:

At the Last Supper Jesus said that the wine represented His own blood, poured out for us all. Drink in remembrance of Him until He comes again.

Host says at the end of the Meal:

“Jesus is the Messiah (the promised Savior) who died on the cross and rose again on the third day. He is alive today and all who accept Him have been given not only life eternal but everlasting peace.”

Read: John 17:20-26 (CEV): (Ask someone to read these verses:)

Jesus said, “I am not praying just for these followers. I am also praying for everyone else who will have faith because of what my followers will say about me. I want all of them to be one with each other, just as I am one with You and You are one with Me. I also want them to be one with Us. Then the people of this world will believe that You sent Me.

I have honored my followers in the same way that you honored Me, in order that they may be one with each other, just as We are one. I am one with them, and You are one with Me, so that they may become completely one. Then this world’s people will know that You sent me. They will know that You love My followers as much as you love Me.

Father, I want everyone You have given Me to be with Me, wherever I am. Then they will see the glory that You have given Me, because You loved Me before the world was created.

Good Father, the people of this world don’t know You. But I know You and My followers know that You sent me. I told them what You are like, and I will tell them even more. Then the love that You have for Me will become part of them, and I will be one with them.”

Host ends the Meal time by saying:

“Thank you, Jesus, for your unconditional love, and the incredible sacrifice You made out of that love for us, to allow us to spend eternity with You, God and the Holy Spirit. Give us the grace and courage to follow your example and share Your love and Message with the world. Be with us, and speak to our hearts as we remember, honor, and celebrate You on this Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.”

Optional Reflection:

You can spend some time to talk about this meal together if you like. These questions can help.

1. How do you feel having a meal like this (either alone or together)?
2. What part of the meal was your favorite and why?
3. What do you want to say to Jesus tonight?
4. Will certain foods now be a reminder of Jesus and His love for you?

Credits:

“A Simple Family Passover (Seder) Supper” by Sharon Glasgow, © 2013

Stacey Livingston, Spiritual Formations Arts Pastor @ Crossroads Church and Ministries, © 2017