

The Last Supper Lesson

Lesson Goal: This lesson's goal is for the student to understand how Jesus instituted two sacraments during the Last Supper - Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders.

Overview: The Easter Triduum begins the evening of Holy Thursday with the Mass of the Lord's Supper. This Mass commemorates Jesus' Last Supper. It was at the Last Supper that Jesus instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion and instituted the priesthood. Jesus was celebrating the Passover feast with His apostles and even foretells of the betrayal of Judas at this meal.

Pre-Video Discussion: It may be helpful to take a few moments with your students to briefly remind them of the Passover story in the Old Testament. (Exodus 12:1-14) This was the Jewish feast that Jesus and His apostles were commemorating during the Last Supper.

Watch "The Last Supper" on Catholic Brain

Comprehension and Discussion Questions:

Note: These questions are asked after the video to check student comprehension and to clarify and further discuss and explain what was seen on the video.

- 1) What is celebrated on Holy Thursday?

The Last Supper is celebrated on Holy Thursday. This is the final meal Jesus ate with His apostles before His betrayal by Judas and His arrest.

- 2) What was Jesus and His apostles celebrating at the Last Supper?

Jesus and His apostles were celebrating the Jewish Passover. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to celebrate the Passover. The Jews remember every year the night the Angel of Death "passed over" the Israelites' families without harm, but slayed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians. The Israelites were instructed to kill and sacrifice a male lamb and then spread its blood over their doorposts. This was so the Angel of Death would see the blood and "pass over" the house. This was the final plague God sent to the Egyptians, and when Pharaoh's first-born son died, he finally agreed to free the Israelites from slavery.

3) The seven sacraments bring us God's grace. Jesus instituted (established) two sacraments at the Last Supper. What two sacraments did Jesus institute at the Last Supper?

Jesus instituted the sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders at the Last Supper.

When Jesus said, "This is My Body, which is given for you..." the bread was changed into Jesus' body and when Jesus said, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you." the wine was changed into Jesus' blood. At the Last Supper Jesus offered the very first Sacrifice of the Mass. Jesus was offering Himself as a sacrifice to God the Father for our sins for he knew that night he would be arrested and then crucified the next day. Jesus not only offered Himself as a sacrifice, but He also gave the gift of Himself in Holy Communion to the apostles and to us.

When Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of Me", he instituted the priesthood, which is the sacrament of Holy Orders. He gave His apostles the power to change bread and wine into Jesus' Body and Blood. The priest takes the place of Jesus at Mass while offering an unbloody sacrifice to God the Father. Then Jesus gives Himself to us as we partake and eat of the sacrificed "lamb" in Holy Communion.

Teacher Note: For those students who can understand, make the connection between the passover lamb and Jesus as the Lamb of God. The Israelites ate unleavened (flat) bread and then ate the slayed sacrificed lamb at the first passover. Sound familiar? At Holy Communion we eat flat communion wafers that are truly Jesus' Body. Jesus is the sacrificed lamb who freely offered himself up for our sins and then we eat and drink His Body and Blood to nourish our spiritual souls.

4) What did Jesus and the apostles do after the Last Supper?

Jesus and the apostles went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Jesus knew that Judas, one of His apostles, would betray Him that night and Jesus allowed it to happen. At the Last Supper, Jesus had offered Himself as the sacrificial Passover lamb and taught His apostles to do the same. Now in the garden, Jesus is arrested and willingly offered Himself up as a sacrifice for our sins. The sacrifice is completed when He dies on the cross the next day.