

The Last Supper

How does what happened at the Last Supper influence church services today?

The Passover festival remembers the Israelites, escape from slavery in Egypt, led by Moses (Exodus chapter 12).

Matthew's Gospel describes how, in the upstairs room of a house in Jerusalem, Jesus and the disciples celebrated the Jewish **Passover** festival by eating a meal together. Later on the same evening, Jesus would be betrayed and arrested.

On the day after that, he would die.

The cup would have contained wine.

In the Old Testament, God made covenants (promises) with the Israelites, confirming they were his chosen people.

*While they were eating, Jesus took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. **"Take and eat it," he said; "this is my body."***

*Then he took a **cup**, gave thanks to God, and gave it to them. **"Drink it, all of you," he said; "this is my blood, which seals God's covenant, my blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink this wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in my Father's Kingdom."***

Matthew chapter 26 verses 26-29

Christians carry out Jesus' instruction to 'Do this in memory of me' by taking part in Holy Communion services (also known as Eucharist, the Lord's Supper or Mass), during which they eat and drink bread and wine which have been consecrated (blessed).

The words Jesus used at the Last Supper are used during Holy Communion services, usually when they are spoken by the priest or minister as he or she blesses the bread and the wine.

To do...

-  Circle what Jesus and the disciples ate and drank.
-  In a different colour, circle the words 'body' and 'blood'.
-  Draw lines to link them up with the matching food or drink.

There are three main Christian views about the bread and wine during Holy Communion:

- The Catholic church teaching is called transubstantiation – it says that the bread and the wine become the real body and blood of Christ, though they physically remain the same.
- The Real Presence – the bread and the wine are unchanged, but Christ's presence is made spiritually real through them. This is a commonly-held belief in the Church of England.
- The bread and the wine are unchanged and are symbols, representing Christ's body and blood in remembrance of his sacrifice. A Baptist might hold this view.

To do...

-  Which words from the passage might a Catholic use to explain why he or she believes in transubstantiation?

To do...

-  How could a Christian use this passage to show that Jesus was willing to be a sacrifice? (For an extra challenge, try to use the keyword 'omniscient' in your answer.)

Matthew's account goes on to describe how Jesus and the disciples next went to the Mount of Olives, a hill just outside Jerusalem. Betrayed by Judas, one of the disciples, Jesus was arrested by the Jewish religious leaders, put on trial and sentenced to death by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. On the following day, his execution would be carried out.