

Title: The Celebration of Communion

Purpose: A look at Communion as a celebration within the Reformed tradition.

Scripture Reference: 1 Cor 11:17-34

Reformed Perspective: Book of Confessions: Scots 3.21, HC 4.065-4.068, 2ndHC 5.171, WCF 6.149-6.150, 6.164, Short 7.091, Large 7.271-7.272, 1967 9.52.; Book of Order: W-2.4000-2.4012

Visual Aids: Bread. Grape juice. Party Hats.

*This lesson should be done on a day in which communion is being celebrated. Gather the children together in front of the communion table:*

Pastor: Who can tell me why we have all this stuff on the table? Can anyone tell me what we call this? The Lord's Supper or Communion.

Pastor: Do you know that we sometimes refer to this as a celebration. What is a celebration? Can you name some things which you celebrate? What do you do when you celebrate? You throw a party! What do you have at a party? Food, balloons, a cake, presents.

We first need someone to be our guest of honor? For Communion, Jesus is our guest of honor.

Well, then we'll need to have some food. *Pass around the bread and grape juice. Let the kids feel the bread and smell the grape juice.* It's regular bread and grape juice right.

There is another thing you need in order to have a celebration. Do you have a party by yourself? No, you invite people to your celebration. God invites everyone to this celebration, but first you have to be baptized.

How many of you have been baptized? That's when you accept Jesus Christ and are presented before the church where you are sprinkled with water as a sign of your becoming a Christian. This might have happened when you were really young. Baptism is like wearing the right clothes to the party. Baptism prepares us to come to the celebration.

Okay, what are we celebrating? *Let kids answer if they can.* We are celebrating God's present of Jesus Christ to the world.

Speaking about presents what kind of presents are we going to bring to Jesus? We want to get something that Jesus really wants right. Well, there is nothing Jesus wants more than for us to love God and to love one another. So that will be our present to Jesus. During communion, we will make a promise to Jesus to be faithful to God and to act nice to one another.

How often do you guys celebrate your birthdays?

Did you know that God loves this celebration so much that he wants us to celebrate it as often as we like. So in this church, we celebrate it at least once a month.

*End with a prayer thanking God for Jesus and that we are glad that God invites us to a celebration of Jesus each month.*

Notes:

Celebration goes hand in hand with our Presbyterian understanding of Communion. The Directory of Worship states, "In this meal the church celebrates the joyful feast of the people of God." (W-2.4007) In this children's sermon, I have tried to incorporate these principles of celebration and community within the children's growing knowledge of Christianity. I centered around concepts that they could relate to such as a birthday or a party. These images are more tangible to children.

Besides presenting images, it is important to remember that younger kids and some older kids are tactile learners. These kids learn through experience of touch and doing. That is why it is important to allow kids to touch the elements. (Not the elements actually used for communion that day.) By touching the bread and smelling the grape juice, all the kids can go away with a broader picture of communion. It also shows them that there is nothing magical about the elements. I could have emphasized our understanding of the elements, but I thought that this would detract from the central point of celebration. A good children's sermon is simple and to the point. Since you are dealing with a wide array of children and if you detract too much from your main point then the kids will go away more confused than they came.

I did however want to emphasize that communion is a special celebration which requires a commitment of baptism. This and other elements can be important points to build upon later.