

Reflecting on the Last Supper at Home

Enacting the Last Supper as a prayer

One way in which you can recall the Last Supper with your children is to have them enter into the roles of the people who experienced this time with Jesus. I would like to share with you a way in which we do this with the children at the atrium so that it becomes a prayer, a reflective moment of great joy.

By simply reading the scripture and inviting the children to step into the place of one of the characters, it is possible to enter into this moment in history in a way filled with wonder and awe. What would it have been like to be present at this moment? To hear Jesus say these words? Imagine being Jesus or John or Peter. Imagine coming to sit with Jesus at this meal? Why is this meal so important? What was it leading to? Or even what must it have been like for Jesus especially knowing what was ahead of him.



You might have to draw lots for who gets which character. The number of characters will depend on the number of people participating in the celebration.

The key characters are Jesus, Peter and John. You could have one of the other characters also take on the role of the angel at the end, announcing the wondrous moment of the Resurrection. Other characters can also be narrators. For those who don't read they might like to bring the cross or candles to the table. (See booklet)

Here is a list of the apostles:

Peter, John, Andrew, James (the Great), James (the Less), Philip, Matthew, Jude, Simon, Bartholomew and Thomas. Usually we do not have anyone play the part of Judas.

The booklet

Attached separately is a simple booklet. The words in the first two parts are straight from the Bible from the gospel of Mark (14:12-31). They have been colour coded according to the characters with Jesus (red), Peter and John (green) and the angel (gold) and the narrator (blue). The second two parts that are in black are extra words added at the end to conclude the reflection. (Note: If printing in black and white you may like to highlight each part.)



Setting

Choose a space inside or outside of your house to be the area where the disciples are gathered outside the city of Jerusalem. Another room, perhaps the dining room or somewhere you can sit around a table (or on the floor), can be where the Last Supper is held.

Let the children dress up. It can be as simple as a beach towel thrown over a shoulder and tied at the waist with a cord, dad's dressing gown, a sheet wrapped around, whatever you can find. The children will have ideas for this, so allow them to lead. You could discuss this a few days before hand and let them come up with ideas.

Items needed

These include flat bread, grace juice (in a cup), cloth for table, cross, 2 candles, serviettes, plates, extra cups. These can be set up on a shelf or table near the main table where you will celebrate the Last Supper.

Getting Ready

Here are some suggestions to start.

Many of the children know and love this celebration so let them help to lead it and play their part to the full. It is one that is always eagerly anticipated and celebrated. This will be a very special experience for you as a family to do it together in your own homes.

Before you begin, get the children to tell you what they remember about the Last Supper. You could read the scripture together. After choosing the two spaces and explaining the roles of each character (see booklet) you can then discuss who might take each part. Work out the costumes and place the items needed in room with table, so that all is ready

Songs

Choose some songs that the children know before you begin. There are some suggestions in the booklet, but they may have other favourites. You might find a song to start with that is about the Last Supper itself. (E.g. Do this in memory of me.) You could have a similar song during or after the sharing of the bread. And then have a few songs to sing at the end. If the room is dark and the candles are lit then songs about the light of Christ may be appropriate at this moment

How to begin

Begin by gathering in prayer and inviting Jesus to be with you as you remember this special moment in his life when He was giving himself to us in such a special way. Perhaps sing a song.

Following are some simple directions for acting out the Last supper as you proceed through the booklet.

In Part One

At the beginning of part one all will gather “outside Jerusalem”. At the end of page 5, Peter and John will go and prepare the table with a white cloth, a plate containing the bread and the cup of filled with “wine”. They will then return to the group waiting outside and the narrator will read final page (6) of part one.

In Part Two

Jesus and the apostles will enter the room prepared and sit at the table. Once all are seated* the narrator will read from page 7 (pausing between pages).

(* could also sing a song here to help everyone settle down after moving)

After Jesus says the words over the bread, he will break it and pass it around. Then after the words over the wine he will pass the cup of wine around for all to take a sip.

In Part Three

The narrator will pause reading to wait for cross to be placed on the table in the centre between the wine and the bread. All will pause for a moments silence before the narrator continues.

In Part Four

The apostle who is to also play the part of the angel can either take off an outer garment to reveal an angelic costume underneath or simply place a white cloth around his shoulders. He/she can stand and proclaim loudly the words of the angel. It is good to conclude with a time of prayer or song.

In Conclusion

At the end after singing and praying for as long as the children want, you could ask them to share what it was like to play their character.

What was it like to be Jesus? To be an apostle? To be the angel. To hear those words? To share the bread and the wine? As an adult it would be good to share your experience with the children as well. This is a time for all, adult and child alike, to reflect on the wonder of this event.





Recollections from the atrium

Many times, when a child gets to play Jesus it is a powerful moment in their lives. However, I also remember when the girl playing the part of the angel expressed an incredible sense of power when she proclaimed the words “He is not here He is risen”. You might be surprised at what your children will share.

Some practical points

Have several spare serviettes on hand when passing around the wine. It might be good to demonstrate how to wipe the cup before you begin.

You may choose to just pretend to drink from a shared cup and have individual cups to drink from later.

Have matches ready for lighting candles.

Have extra bread and grape juice as they are most likely to want more.

As this reflection goes right through to the resurrection you might choose when you want to do it. It does not have to be on Holy Thursday night but could be at any time over the three days.

This is a guide, you may have some other ideas you want to add to this celebration, remember to keep it simple.