

Prepare

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples."' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

Jesus directs his disciples to prepare for the Passover meal. Let your dinner preparations tonight be a part of your spiritual practice. Involve your children if they'd like. Set a nice but simple table. Pay attention to your food as you prepare it—the gift of the ingredients you've gathered, the miracle of heat from the stove, the smells that fill your kitchen as food becomes a meal. Feel the sensation of touch as you wash your hands and dry them, imagining that Christ himself does so for you.

Pray

Light a candle if you have one. Use a familiar family blessing and/or the following prayer:

God of love, we thank you for the gift of this meal, and for the memory of the meal Jesus shared with his disciples on the night before he died. We thank you for your presence with us and your love for the world which Jesus came to redeem. We long for the day when we can come together in and for communion. And we long to feast with Jesus in the coming kingdom. May our worship tonight deepen our anticipation of that glory. Amen.

Serve yourself and/or one another, and begin the meal.

Ponder

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

During your meal, read aloud the story of Jesus blessing and breaking bread and pouring wine.

- Tell the story of a time when someone handed you food or drink as an act of love and care. Perhaps a tray heaping with Thanksgiving turkey, or a foil-wrapped MRE; a champagne flute at a wedding, or a cup of coffee in a hospital waiting room. What is special to you about that memory?
- What is special to the church about the memory of Jesus' last supper? What does it mean that Christ is present for us in bread and cup when we gather for the sacrament of communion? How does the Lord's Supper sustain us, individually and as community? And how do we feed and care for others?
- What is painful about being separated from in-person community? What are you longing/hoping for?

Depart

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

After the meal, sing or say the Doxology (*Praise God from whom all blessings flow...*). Extinguish the candle.

In your evening reflections, consider reading the story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-56) as you prepare for Good Friday.