

# Exploring bread and wine



## Way In

**Taking bread and wine in Holy Communion is a spiritual practice in which nearly all Christians share. As we eat and drink we look in a number of directions at once: backwards to the cross of Christ; around us to the body of Christ; up to the ascended Christ and forward to the coming Christ! But in it all we are in the presence of the living Christ, whose life we encounter in a new way every time we partake.**



### Connect: Share with the group

1. Who is the most interesting person you have met in the last two weeks?
2. What have you done in terms of your 'action point' from the last meeting?
3. What images or thoughts go through your mind when you take Holy Communion?



### Contemplate

1. Place a loaf of bread or bread roll in the centre of the group. Invite each person to take some of the bread and hold it in their hand.
2. After a short time of silence read John 6:35.
3. Invite as many as feel able to pray this aloud, and after they pray, to eat the piece of bread they have taken:  
*Jesus, bread from heaven, feed us as we meet together. Amen.*



### Consider 1: Read Scripture

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

Then he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

(Mark 14:22-24) TNIV

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are

one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.  
(1 Corinthians 10:16-17) TNIV

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.  
(1 Corinthians 11:23-26) TNIV

### Wesley's wisdom

All who desire an increase of the grace of God are to wait for it in partaking the Lord's Supper: for this also is a direction [the Lord] himself has given... Is not the eating of that bread, and the drinking of that cup, the outward, visible means, whereby God conveys into our souls all that spiritual grace, that righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which were purchased by the body of Christ ... for us? Let all therefore, who truly desire the grace of God, eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

(John Wesley: Sermon  
– The means of grace)



### Consider 2: More about

- Holy Communion reminds us that Jesus' death was for the salvation of all – his life, "poured out for many". It reminds us of the cost of our salvation and the greatness of God's love for all people, and so it fills us with *thankfulness*.
- Holy Communion reminds us that salvation rests not primarily in our

commitment to God, but in God's promises to us ("the blood of the covenant"), and so it fills us with *confidence*.

- Holy Communion reminds us that Jesus is alive and with us as we eat and drink, and so it fill us with *joy*.
- Holy Communion reminds us that Jesus will return to us, and so it fills us with *hope*.
- Holy Communion reminds us that we are part of one Christian family, and so it fills us with a sense of *unity* with all God's people, of all ages and in all places.
- God gives us far more than bread and wine in Holy Communion! God gives us of God's own self, and so we eat and drink filled with increasing *desire* for more of his life to flow into and through us.

(for more on Holy Communion, see the article on the Methodist Church website [www.methodist.org.uk/deepeningdiscipleship](http://www.methodist.org.uk/deepeningdiscipleship))



### Consider 3: Your response

Spend a moment in quiet, considering your own response to the readings. You might like to jot down your thoughts in the following boxes.



What new thing have I seen about the bread and wine of Holy Communion?



What puzzles me about taking Holy Communion?



What encourages me to want to take Holy Communion regularly?



How does taking Holy Communion help my walk with Jesus?



### Consider 4: Sharing wisdom

Now share your thoughts, questions and insights together in the group.

- Take it in turns to share something from your personal reflection.
- Listen to one another carefully.
- Discuss the issues raised, sharing your knowledge, experience and wisdom together.
- Aim to help one another find out what you are each learning about the importance of the spiritual practices in following Jesus.



### Commit 1: Reflect

Take a few moments to sit in silence together, reflecting on this session. How is God asking you to respond as an individual? These questions might help you think through your response:

- How regularly do I receive Holy Communion?
- How might I take Holy Communion more meaningfully in the future?



### Commit 2: Focus

Write one thing in the box below that you would like to take away from this session, either to do, or to think and pray about further.



**MY ACTION POINT:** In response to this session on Holy Communion, I would like to...



### Commit 3: review

At the close of this final session share with the group how you have benefitted from this course. In terms of the spiritual practices:

- What is the most important thing you have learned?
- What have you done that has helped you?
- What do you want to keep doing?
- How could you gather a small group of friends to help you keep growing? (See Introduction and Going Further sheets to read about forming an Inspire fellowship band.)



### Commit 4: Pray

Lord Jesus, thank you for our time together. As we move on, may we continue to find strength for our journey in our use of the spiritual practices. Amen.