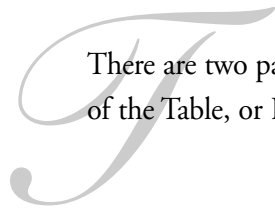




Episcopal Worship

SEGMENT 3: AN INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE



There are two parts to the Eucharist, the Service of the Word and the Service of the Table, or Holy Communion.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it the spirit of grace and of supplication: Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 833)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What are the two parts of the Eucharist?

What is my role in the Eucharist?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



The Instructed Eucharist

The Word of God (Liturgy of the Word)

Gather in the Lord's Name

Proclaim and Respond to the Word of God

Pray for the World and the Church

Exchange the Peace

Holy Communion (Liturgy of the Table)

Prepare the Table

Make Eucharist

Break the Bread

Share the Gifts of God

Dismissal

USING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

The Holy Eucharist: Rite II, pages 355-366

INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST

The first thing we do when we come to the service is to gather in the Lord's Name. Each part of the gathering prepares us to enter fully into the service. As you enter the church building, you may be given a service leaflet. Many churches position the baptismal font or other receptacle to hold blessed water near the entrance of the church. You may see people touching the water and making the sign of the cross on themselves. We do this as a reminder of our baptism and our preparation for worship.

You may see people bowing slightly toward the altar as they take their seat, in respect and acknowledgement of Christ's presence symbolized by the altar. In some churches you may find a red lamp burning either near the main altar or in a side chapel, a reminder of the Reserved Sacrament. The Reserved Sacrament is bread and wine not consumed at a previous service kept to take to the sick or shut-ins, or for small services during the week. You may see some people genuflecting (bowing down on one knee) in the presence of this red light in respect for the Reserved Sacrament.

You may see people crossing themselves as they kneel, sit or stand for a moment of quiet reflection and prayer. The time before the service begins is a quiet time for people to say prayers, center themselves and prepare for worship. It is not a time for talking and visiting – out of respect for the worship and other people present.

Worship in the Episcopal Church is filled with dignity, beauty, deep traditions, with honest integrity and with a sense of God's presence. The styles of worship vary from congregation to congregation. Some services are quiet and introspective. Others are extroverted and lively. There are formal or casual styles of worship, contemporary or traditional. And yet, within this great diversity there is one common thread that runs through all of our worship: transformation. Some churches print out the Scriptures in the leaflet or have an insert that contains the readings. Some churches have Bibles in the pews next to the hymnals. (And, you may bring your own.)

The readings for each day are indicated in the Lectionary for the current year of the three-year cycle. The readings reflect a cycle of celebrations and seasons surrounding the Easter commemoration of Jesus' death and resurrection, and the Christmas commemoration of Jesus' birth and presence in the world. If you attend worship services at an Episcopal Church regularly over the course of three years, you will hear most of the Bible read. Hymns are chosen to

INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST

correspond with the readings and the season of the church year. Colors of the vestments and altar hangings also reflect the season of the church year.

We expect to meet God when we worship. We are invited to transformation every time we come for worship. The word “Eucharist” comes from a Greek word that means thanksgiving. The Eucharist is a celebration of the good things that God has given us, and a way of offering ourselves, in thanks, to God. At the heart of this thanksgiving service, we find the proclamation of the Word and the meal given by Jesus to the church on the night before he suffered and died. Gathered at Christ’s table, we receive a little bread and wine – simple substances that are transformed by God’s grace into the body and blood of Christ.

This transformation is not magic – it is received by faith. In the Eucharist, we believe that we too are transformed by God’s love and grace. Through offering of ourselves at the Eucharist, and through receiving what God shares with us at Christ’s table, our lives are changed. We become what we receive. Just as we call the bread and wine of the Eucharist “holy food,” so we come to know ourselves as “holy people.”

As the people of Jesus Christ, we gather each Sunday to share this holy meal, hear the story of the faith, make our common prayer and offer our lives to God. We are transformed in worship. We renew our hope and reaffirm our core values.

Sometimes another word is used to describe our worship. It is the word “liturgy” which comes from the Greek word that means “common labor for the common good.” That is what our worship is about – working together to offer praise to God, to lift up the discouraged and to gain understanding of God’s word. Liturgy is the work of the people and so we all have an active part in worship in the Episcopal Church by singing the hymns, listening to the readings, participating in the prayers and making the responses throughout the liturgy.

Music has always been the most powerful way to participate in worship and to experience renewal, so our worship uses music from many different traditions. Some of the music that is offered in praise to God comes from traditional sources. More and more music is finding its way into our worship from other cultures and parts of the world. It is not unusual to worship with African freedom marches and German chorales in the same service.

INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST

Every time we come for worship, it is a celebration. When we celebrate in our homes, we may use special dishes, put flowers and candles on the table, use linen napkins and serve the best we have. When we celebrate the Eucharist we use special dishes. Instead of an everyday plate, we put the bread or wafers on a plate called a paten. Instead of an everyday cup, we put the wine in a chalice. We put flowers and candles on the table and cover the altar or table with a fine linen cloth. The table for the Eucharist is the symbol of Jesus' presence among us. We treat the table reverently and with great care.

When we celebrate in our homes, we tell stories – family stories, who we are, *whose* we are, how we impact one another. Many of these stories are told for the sake of newcomers so that they can learn who we are. Sometimes these stories are told so that long-time family members can reaffirm and celebrate who they are. When we gather for worship we do the same thing. We gather for a meal. We tell stories and hear stories. We talk about the way our relationship to God and each other impacts us. We celebrate.

And who can come to this meal? All people – young and old, wise and uninformed, those who have been close to God their whole lives and those who are only now realizing who God is in their lives. Although baptism is a prerequisite for receiving Communion, really no preparation can make us worthy of coming to the Eucharistic table. Instead, the Eucharist makes us worthy. We come, knowing that we don't understand everything. But we come in faith knowing that we are strengthened.

The Word of God

We Gather in the Lord's Name

The service typically begins with an opening hymn and the procession. The procession may include the acolytes, choir members, lay ministers, and clergy who will take part in the service. You might see people bowing as the cross passes them. If the Bishop is present, she or he will be the last person in the procession and will either be holding the crozier or will be preceded by a person selected as the bishop's chaplain holding the crozier (a staff symbolizing a shepherd's crook, reminding us that the bishop is the shepherd of the flock). Some churches use a verger who directs the service. It is appropriate to bow as the processional cross passes and to join in the singing of the opening hymn.

The Hymnal 1982 #410 (Praise my soul the King of Heaven) is used in this instructed Eucharist.

The service begins with the Opening Acclamation in which we acknowledge our own place in God's blessing.

*Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be his kingdom; now and forever. Amen*

There are two other choices of opening acclamations – one for penitential seasons and one for the Easter season. You may see people making the sign of the cross during this acclamation.

A prayer known as the Collect for Purity is said next. The priest reads the Collect and the people respond with "Amen." This Collect ('kah - likt) helps us collectively focus on worship.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A song of praise follows. Giving praise to God is another way of saying that we prize God above everything else. Praising God also allows us to more easily step out of ourselves and our sometimes-limited view of things so that we might catch a glimpse of God's desire for us.

*Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people
on earth.*

*Lord God, heavenly King,
Almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory . . .*

The priest then prays the Collect of the Day, a prayer that reflects the assigned readings and season of the church year. The congregation remains standing for the Collect. The following Collect was used in the video:

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Proclaim and Respond to the Word of God

Following the Collect, we sit for the readings. These may include an Old Testament lesson – stories of God's love for his chosen people, the Israelites or Hebrews; a Psalm – early pieces of poetry written over centuries which have been included in worship since ancient times; and a New Testament reading from the Epistles – stories of the first apostles and the early church or sections of pastoral letters written to early churches. Lay people may serve as readers. For this instructed Eucharist, readings were taken from Ezekiel 34:11-22, Psalm 23, Hebrews 13:20-21.

A reading from Ezekiel:

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness . . .

Psalm 23

*The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters . . .*

A reading from Hebrews:

Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant make you complete in everything good so that you may do his . . .

A hymn reflecting the readings often follows.

The hymn used in the video is #664 (My shepherd will supply my need) *The Hymnal 1982*.

The congregation stands for the reading of the Gospel out of respect for Jesus and the stories of his ministry. The Gospels contain the good news of God's kingdom coming to us in Jesus Christ. They contain the teachings of Jesus as well as stories about his ministry.

The three-year series of readings would have Gospel readings from Matthew one year, Mark the next and Luke the last. The Gospel of John would be read at Easter and other special days. Some people make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips and heart to signify their desire to keep these words in their minds, on their lips and in their hearts. The Gospel may be read amidst the congregation, symbolizing the bringing of the Gospel message out into the world. This may be done in a procession with cross, torches and the Gospel book. The Gospel read in the Instructed Eucharist can be found in John 10:11-17.

The priest or deacon reads the Gospel, saying:
The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to
_____.

The people respond with:
Glory to you, Lord Christ.

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

Following the Gospel, the priest delivers the sermon based on the readings. This helps us understand how the Scripture impacts our lives today. In the Episcopal Church we believe that the Word of God is a living thing. This Word lives in our lives and in our experiences; it finds its way into our own stories. The sermon suggests how this might happen. In the coming week, we are invited to reflect on the scriptures and make our own response to them.

Sermon.

Upon conclusion of the sermon, the priest and congregation stand to recite the Nicene Creed, which is an ancient statement of beliefs fashioned by early church councils. It is found in the prayer book on page 358.

*We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen . . .*

Pray for the World and the Church

Next we offer prayers known as the Prayers of the People. These prayers may be led by a designated lay person and allow the congregation the opportunity to add their own petitions and intercessions. This Instructed Eucharist in the video uses Form 6 of the Prayers found on page 392. This Form includes a Confession of Sin.

*. . . For this community, the nation, and the world;
For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.
For the just and proper use of your creation;
For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and
oppression . . .*

If a different form of the Prayers of the People is used, we would follow it with a communal confession of sin, reciting the General Confession. In this prayer, we admit our sins and ask God's forgiveness. We receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the priest who represents Christ. Another form of Confession can be found on page 360. People may either kneel or stand for the confession and absolution.

*We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins
Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;
in your compassion forgive us our sins,
known and unknown . . .*

The Absolution by the priest, representing God.

*Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins
through our Lord Jesus Christ; strengthen you in all
goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in
eternal life. Amen.*

Exchange the Peace

The Liturgy of the Word joins the Liturgy of the Table at the exchange of the Peace. In preparation to join in the prayer of thanksgiving at the altar, we pause in the liturgy to greet one another with the peace of Christ. This is much more than simply shaking hands in greeting. The Peace is a time, not for exchanging pleasantries, but for greeting one another in the name of the Lord, and for seeing Christ in others.

Priest:

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People:

And also with you.

Holy Communion

Prepare the Table

After the Peace, we begin the Liturgy of the Table – the Holy Communion. The deacon, if one is present, or the priest prepares the table or altar. Representatives from the congregation present the gifts of bread and wine, as well offerings for the relief of the poor and the missionary work of the church. The choir may present their gift of music at this time. The priest ceremoniously washes his or her hands representing the fact that no one comes to this table without sin. The chalice and paten, the bread and wine are placed on the altar. The priest pours wine into the chalice and adds a little water. The wine and bread represent Christ's body and blood. The water represents us. Once the wine and water are combined, they cannot be separated, symbolizing that we are one with Christ, just as Christ is one with the Father. The priest then leads the congregation in the Great Thanksgiving. A "Proper Preface" is said or sung for that particular Sunday or other occasion.

In the video, we use Eucharistic Prayer A, found on page 361. This Eucharistic Prayer is the most general of all four. Eucharistic Prayer B is particularly suitable for use during Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and on saint's days. Eucharistic Prayer C involves more congregational response and has more emphasis on creation than the others. It is also the newest Eucharistic Prayer. Prayer D provides for intercessions, and is adapted from the early fourth century. The people remain standing.

Make Eucharist

The Celebrant, the priest who will preside at the Eucharist faces the people and says:

The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. (Proper Preface is here.)

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

People join in singing or saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Celebrant continues:

You may hear bells or a gong rung three times during the Sanctus and Words of Institution. This sound is a reminder to us that something important is happening in the service – the “Holy, holy, holy Lord” is the song sung by angels praising God as we read in Isaiah. The bell may also be rung when the bread is blessed and the wine is blessed. In early times, the worshipers either couldn’t hear the priest because his back was turned to them or he was speaking in Latin and they couldn’t understand so the bells drew their attention to what was happening. And, for those who were working in their fields, the sound of the bells reminded them that the Eucharist was being celebrated. Often they would stop for prayer at this time.

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

At the following words concerning the bread, the celebrant holds it or lays a hand upon it. At the words concerning the cup, the celebrant holds or places a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated. Recalling the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, the celebrant says the Words of Institution, then the Holy Spirit is invoked to make the common bread and wine holy and to be present with God's people.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you. This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

The priest says:

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Here the congregation joins the priest in repeating the following three lines:

*Christ has died.
Christ has risen.
Christ will come again.*

The celebrant continues:

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom. All this we ask through you Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. AMEN.

The Eucharistic Prayer ends with the great AMEN (the only thing in the Prayer Book in capital italics).

The Lord's Prayer, the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, follows. In the Lord's Prayer we say what we believe most deeply about God, we call on God as a loving parent, assuring ourselves that God's sovereignty keeps us secure. We ask that God's desire for us come about and acknowledge that God's sovereignty maintains all things. We ask for what we need to sustain ourselves, and ask to be forgiven for our sins and also that we may forgive others in the same way. We admit that there will be difficult times in our own lives and ask God to help us when we fall. And we conclude by praising God and admitting that we need God's help.

Priest:

And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Break the Bread

Following the prayer, the bread is broken in order to share it, so that all may receive a just portion. The celebrant will hold up the large wafer or bread so all can see and break it in half. A special anthem called the Fraction Anthem may be sung. The Fraction Anthem was sung in the Instructed Eucharist. Or the celebrant may say:

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People:

Therefore let us keep the feast.

Share the Gifts of God

The congregation then comes forward to receive the bread and wine. Some may genuflect or bow as they step in the aisle to come forward to the altar. We may receive standing or kneeling. Some may make the sign of the cross before receiving the bread and wine. This is done as a reminder that Christ died for us by touching our forehead, chest, and left and right shoulders. It is acceptable to drink from the chalice or dip the bread/wafer into the wine (called “intinction”). To receive the bread or wafer, we hold out our hands, crossed, with palms up. It is all right to receive only the bread. To do this, simply cross your arms across your chest as a signal that you do not wish to receive the wine. The priest will give you a blessing instead. To drink the wine, take the base of the chalice in your right hand and guide it to your lips, while the priest or Lay Eucharistic Minister tips the cup slightly. As we return to our seats, we may kneel for a time of silent prayer. Hymns may be sung during this time.

When everyone has received communion, we say a prayer thanking God for the gift of His Son and asking for God’s presence in our daily lives. In the video, we use the first prayer.

*Eternal God, heavenly Father,
You have graciously accepted us as living members of your
Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
And grant us strength and courage
To love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

A closing hymn may be sung. The priests and other ministers depart led by the cross.

In the video, the closing hymn is *The Hymnal 1982* #390 (Praise to the Lord).

The Dismissal

The Eucharist concludes with the Dismissal – our charge to go forth into the world to do ministry in the Lord’s name. Just as the simple bread and wine we receive at Christ’s table is transformed by God’s grace, we too, are transformed by God’s love and grace. By taking the holy food of the Eucharist, we come to know ourselves as holy people. The Eucharist joins all of God’s people from all times and all places. As one people, the family of Christ, we share the holy meal, hear the story of our faith, make our common prayer, and offer ourselves and our lives to God.

The deacon, if present, or the priest concludes the service with these words:

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People:

Thanks be to God.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Where is it that you feel closest to God?

2. In your community, how do you feed each other?

3. How do you share the love of Christ with others?

W R A P - U P

We sometimes refer to the Eucharist as the Holy Mysteries. We don't fully understand what happens and at what exact moment it occurs, but we believe that Jesus is present in the bread and wine, just as he promised.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

Hymnal 1982

#51 - We the Lord's people

#306 - Come, risen Lord, and deign to be our guest

#312 - Strengthen for service, Lord

#314 - Humbly I adore thee

#488 - Be Thou my vision

#525 - The Church's one foundation

Wonder, Love and Praise

#763 - As we gather at your table

#766 - You're called by name, forever loved

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#146 - Break thou the bread of life

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