

# *The Night Before*

GRADES K-1



We are grateful to Sheri Dunham Haan, for her work in developing *The Night Before*. A children's Bible story author and curriculum writer, Sheri makes her home in Rockwood, Tennessee.

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# GRADES K-1

## The Night Before

### SCRIPTURE

Matthew 26:17-30








### FOCUS

On the night before he was crucified, Jesus gave his disciples the bread and wine to let them know that he loved and forgave them.

### FAITH NURTURE GOALS

- Realize that on the night before Jesus died, he wanted to tell his disciples that he loved and forgave them.
- Sense that the bread and the wine/juice make us sure that Jesus loves and forgives us.
- Thank Jesus for this meal that reminds us of his love and forgiveness.

### A NOTE ABOUT LEARNING STYLES

In the chart below and beside each *Easy Extra* activity, you will find one or more of the following descriptions: **Aa** Word Smart,  People Smart,  Music Smart,  Number Smart,  Earth Smart,  Self Smart,  Body Smart, and  Picture Smart—and an icon beside each one. Those descriptions and icons refer to “multiple intelligences,” a term developed by Dr. Howard Gardiner to describe the different ways in which people learn. We’ve used them here to indicate to you which learning style(s) each step/activity taps into the most. For example, some people are visual learners, others are musical, some learn best when they are physically engaged, some are a combination of several “smarts,” and so on. For more information on each of these learning styles along with a fun quiz you can give your students (and one you can take yourself!), visit <http://dwell.faithaliveresources.org/downloads>, click on “Topics for Leaders,” and open the “Learning Styles Quiz.”

### REFLECTION: GETTING INTO THE STORY

Matthew frames his telling of the Last Supper between two stories of betrayal. Just prior to this passage, Judas Iscariot pays a visit to the chief priests in order to sell Jesus out for thirty silver coins. Immediately following the Supper, Jesus tells his disciples that they will soon abandon and deny him. Within twenty-four hours, he will be hung on a cross.

It seems like an odd time to institute a new celebration. But in the middle of all this betrayal, Jesus takes time to give his disciples a gift—the gift of assurance. Jesus wants his disciples to know that he loves them. That is why he provides them with this Supper, which will provide assurance of his continued love and faithfulness to them even after he is gone.

Jesus takes the bread and the wine, elements that represented God’s provision in Jewish festivals like the feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover, and shows how God will continue to provide for them but in a radical new way. Just as God provided the children of Israel with manna, God would now provide the bread of life through Christ’s body. The children of Israel will no longer be required to offer the blood of sacrifice to be right with God because God would do that through Jesus Christ.

Jesus also wants the disciples to know that he forgives them. His disciples will soon scatter, as will their promises. But Christ’s promises will remain—promises of God’s covenant faithfulness, the forgiveness of sins, and the coming kingdom of God. Those promises provide the disciples with the hope they will need in the difficult days ahead.

Through the Lord's Supper, followers of Christ have the opportunity to participate in their redemption by repenting of their sins, professing their faith, and expressing their hope for the future. The Supper also reminds Jesus' followers that our salvation does not come through our own actions but only by the work of Christ on the cross.

### WONDERING








- What do you think the disciples were thinking and feeling as they participated in this first Lord's Supper?
- What do you notice about the disciples' responses to Jesus telling them that one of them will betray him?
- Why do you think they ended the supper with a hymn?

### TEACHING

- The Lord's Supper is mysterious, and it can be confusing for children. Invite children to use their imaginations to enter into the story of this first Lord's Supper. As the teacher, you don't need to have all the answers to their questions. The main purpose is for children to see how this story demonstrates Jesus' love for all of those who follow him.
- In the book of Matthew, Jesus' disciples address him as "Lord," and those who test him refer to him as "Rabbi." Notice that in this passage Judas uses the latter term to address him. In writing to a Jewish audience, Matthew takes care to affirm that we are called to recognize Jesus not only as a nice man or a wise teacher but as our Savior and Lord.

—Rev. Shannon Jammal-Hollemans

### SESSION AT A GLANCE

Steps	Time	Activities	Session-Specific Materials	Multiple Intelligences
Gathering for God's Story	10	Welcome	<input type="checkbox"/> Reproducible page 13-14 <input type="checkbox"/> Crayons or markers, optional	Aa 
Entering the Story	10	Story	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible, bookmarked to Matthew 26	Aa
Living into the Story	10	Story Drama	<input type="checkbox"/> Pitcher of juice and cups, or seedless grapes <input type="checkbox"/> Bread slices, cut into quarters <input type="checkbox"/> Bread basket <input type="checkbox"/> Napkins or paper towels	Aa   
Living Out of the Story	15	College	<input type="checkbox"/> Reproducible page 15, one per person <input type="checkbox"/> Crayons or markers <input type="checkbox"/> Dear Family letter, reproducible page 16, print or email one per child	  

## Step 1 Gathering for God's Story

### NOTES

- Before the session begins, cut apart the eight pictures found in the reproducible pages section. If you know someone who enjoys coloring, invite that person to color the pictures before the session.
- Or, if you have time as the children arrive, put out crayons or markers and ask the kids to color the pictures. *Without telling how they will be used in the session*, invite them to talk about the pictures and to make up picture stories.
- Remove two pictures—the bread and the wine/juice pictures—from the rest. They will be used only at the *end* of Step 1.

As the children arrive, welcome them by name, putting both hands over your heart as you do. Tell the group that “hands over the heart” has a special meaning for today.

Lay the six pictures in a place where everyone can see them. Ask the children to describe what they see. After a brief discussion, place both hands over your heart and tell the group that each picture shows a way that someone wanted to say *I love you*.

Read the following stories aloud. After each, pause to have the children identify the picture that goes with that story. Encourage them to tell *who* wanted to say *I love you* and *what* they used to say it, reminding the recipient of that love.

- Aliyah and Jayden LOVE waffles. But making waffles takes too much time on busy school mornings. So on Saturdays when dad makes breakfast he always makes waffles and covers them with yummy maple syrup!
- Isabella has a collection of teddy bears. A few weeks ago when she was shopping, she saw a teddy bear that was bigger than she is! She wanted it right away, but mom said to wait. Guess what she got for her birthday? Yep! The giant teddy bear!
- Jacob loves to have his Grandpa visit because he knows that Grandpa *always* takes him to the donut shop for his favorite: chocolate milk and a donut covered with colored sprinkles.
- Kimi lives in Alaska where it is very cold for much of the year. When Kimi's Grandma asked her what she wanted for Christmas, Kimi asked for a really warm scarf. The day before Christmas, a package arrived for her. In it was a scarf—but not just any scarf—it had her name knit into it. Wow!
- Every morning, the first thing that Ji-yoon's step-dad does is make a cup of steaming hot coffee. He sets it down on the night table next to where Ji-yoon's mom sleeps. He does it because he knows that Ji-yoon's mom loves her coffee first thing in the morning.
- Dakota and Chaska are twins who love to watch football games with their dad. They also know that dad loves a humongous bowl of popcorn with lots of butter to eat during the game. Now that they're old enough, they make the popcorn because they know how much their dad loves it.

Conclude that these stories all show ways that people have said “I love you.” Ask the group to share something special that someone has done for them—something that says “I love you.” Or they may prefer to share something *they* do for someone that says “I love you.”

Show the last two pictures—the bread and wine/juice. Ask if the pictures remind them of something they may have seen at church. Invite the children to hold their hands over their hearts. Tell them that these two things are one way that someone in today's story says “I love you.”

## Step **2** Entering the Story

### NOTES

- In the days leading up to the session, prepare to tell the story well by reading it aloud once or twice each day. Doing so will enable you to tell the story from your heart and to hold the attention of your group well.
- You will notice the underlined words in the story. They are underlined for use in the Easy Extra #3. Ignore the underlining for this step.

Open your Bible to Matthew 26 and show the children where this true story is found in the Bible, God's great book to us.

### *The story follows:*

It was the beginning of a special celebration--in fact, it was the very first day of the celebration called Passover. On Passover God's people remembered how God had saved them long ago. They remembered how God had rescued them from Egypt where God's people were once slaves. And they thanked God for saving them and loving them.

**Celebrations are always special. What do you do or what do you eat when you celebrate at your house? How about birthday celebrations?** *(Pause for kids to share responses.)*

On the day of the celebration in our story, Jesus' disciples knew that special things needed to be done. So they asked Jesus where he wanted to celebrate the Passover meal. They wanted to know so they could get everything ready.

Jesus told them to go into town to a certain man's house, and tell him this: "Jesus says 'My time is near and I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" So the disciples hurried off to the city and found that man and got busy preparing the food.

Later that night, Jesus was sitting at the table with his twelve disciples. They were talking with each other like you do when you're celebrating with friends. Then Jesus said something that changed everything! It made the disciples sit up straight—eyes wide open—shocked at what he said. They couldn't believe it! Jesus said, "This is the truth. One of you will betray me . . . one of you will hand me over to the enemies who will kill me."

**I wonder what the disciples were thinking when Jesus said that? What do you think?** *(Pause for kids to share responses.)*

Let's find out what happened. First of all, what Jesus said made them feel very sad. They couldn't imagine that one of them would actually do that to Jesus. Then in a burst of talking, each one of them said, "Lord, am I the one?"

Jesus answered, "It is someone I eat with every day. Someone who passes me food at the table. He is the one. It will be a very, very sad day for him."

Immediately Judas burst out, "Surely, Teacher, I am not the one who will do that!"

Jesus said, "Yes, Judas, you are the one."

**I wonder how Judas felt when Jesus told him that yes, he was the one who would betray Jesus by handing Jesus over to his enemies. What do you think?** *(Pause for responses.)*

With sadness, the supper continued. While they were eating, Jesus picked up the bread and thanked God for it. Then he broke it into pieces and offered it to his disciples. As he did, he said, "Take this, and eat it. This bread is my body." All the disciples ate the bread.

Then Jesus took the wine and thanked God for it. He poured the wine and said, “Drink it, all of you. This is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of your sins.”

When the Supper was finished, they sang a song to God together. Then they left the house and began the walk to the garden where Judas was about to betray Jesus. Judas would point Jesus out to Jesus’ enemies so they would know which man was Jesus.

### End of story

### ASK

**I wonder why they ended this supper by singing a song to God?** *(Pause for responses.)*

**I wonder how the disciples felt about this evening and what happened?** *(Pause for responses.)*

Pick up the pictures of the wine/juice and bread. Explain that the wine and bread were very special gifts Jesus gave his disciples. He wanted them to always remember that he died—gave his body and blood—for them—for us too. And the best part is that we know that Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to die for us and forgive our sins. When we see the wine/juice and bread during the Lord’s Supper, Jesus wants us to remember that he loves us so much and forgives all our sins.

Invite the kids to place their hands over their hearts and repeat after you, “Jesus loves me and forgives me.”

**How does it make you feel to know that Jesus loves you so much he was willing to die to take away all your sins?** *(Pause for the children to respond. Be sure to share how it makes you feel too!)*

### TIP

Take the opportunity to personally express to the children the joy you have in knowing that Jesus loves *you* and forgives *you* too.

### CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER

**Thank you, Jesus for loving us so much that you were willing to die for us and forgive all our sins. Thank you, too, for the juice and bread to remind us of your love. Amen.**

## Step 3 Living into the Story

Invite the children to imagine that they are the disciples as they act out today’s story. Ask them to help with a few things:

- Arrange the room in a way that gives you space to sit together and have a supper like Jesus and the disciples had.
- Decide what song you all know that you will sing at the end.
- Practice singing it once.
- Near the spot you’ll be sitting, place the bread basket with bread slices in it, pitcher of juice and cups (or bowl of grapes), and napkins or paper towels.

Your group may find it interesting to know that in Jesus’ day people didn’t sit in chairs like we do. Before Jesus’ time they sat on the floor, using special mats to sit on. During Jesus’ time they had tables like ours but instead of chairs, they reclined on low chairs, like couches. They leaned one elbow on the table and ate with their other hand. They stretched their legs out behind them, a little bit like lying down as they ate.\* If everyone in your group is able to sit on the floor, you may wish to do so while acting out the story.

### TIP

Because grape juice can stain clothing, if you are worried about spills as you act out the story together, you may choose to serve seedless grapes instead of drinking grape juice during this activity. If you do opt to use grapes, explain to the children that grapes are crushed to make wine/juice. To serve the grapes, cut them apart into small bunches and place them in a container that can be passed along.

\*This information is taken from pages 465-467 of *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible* by J.I. Packer and M.C. Tenney, Editors. © 1980. Used by permission of Thomas Nelson. [www.thomasnelson.com](http://www.thomasnelson.com).



In this story, the children will play the part of Jesus' disciples. Before you begin, tell the children that you will touch your nose when it's time for them to do something or say something. Explain that the story begins in the evening as everyone is seated, ready to enjoy the Passover supper with Jesus.

***The story begins:***

When all of you had finally arrived, Jesus was ready to enjoy a special celebration supper with you. You were friends. After all, you had traveled and worked together for a few years, so you knew each other well.

**What sorts of things did you talk about as you arrived at the house?** (*Touch your nose and pause for responses.*)

Yes, I'm sure you had a lot to talk about. You probably also talked about the special event you were all celebrating—about the time long ago when God had sent the angel, telling the angel to punish the families who made God's people work like slaves but to *pass over* the houses of God's people.

While you were eating, Jesus said something that surprised you. Jesus said, "One of you is going to turn me over to my enemies—one of you will betray me." You were shocked! You couldn't believe it! What did you all say and what expression did you have on your faces? (*Touch your nose and pause for their responses.*)

Of course you were sad that Jesus thought that one of you would do such a terrible thing. You were also quite sure that *you* would *not* do it!

Jesus said, "It is a person with whom I eat every day. Someone who passes food to me at the table."

Judas called out, "Teacher, surely I am not the one who will do this!"

But Jesus answered, "Yes, Judas. You are the one."

**Wow! You cannot believe your eyes! Show me the look you have on your face when you realize that your friend, Judas, will betray Jesus.** (*Touch your nose and wait for responses.*)

**What did you think when you found out it was Judas, one of your friends?** (*Touch your nose and pause for responses.*)

Then Jesus took bread and thanked God for it. He passed it around and said to you, "Take it and eat it. Remember that this is my body." (*Take one piece of bread and begin eating it and pass it around the table. Don't rush this part.*)

Then Jesus took the wine (*or "juice made from grapes" if you use grapes*). He thanked God for it. Then he passed you the cup and said, "Drink this, all of you. It is my blood which I will shed when I die on the cross to forgive your sins." (*Pour the juice and pass it around or pass the basket of grapes.*)

When you finished the Supper with Jesus, it was time to go, but not before you sang a song together. (*Sing the chosen song.*)

**As you think back on the Supper you had with Jesus, what will you remember most?** (*Pause for responses.*)

**What does Jesus want us to remember when we see the bread and wine or juice served during the Lord's Supper?** (*Pause for responses.*)

**What questions do you have?** (*Pause for responses and your answers.*)

Thank you for acting out today's story. Let's all place our hands over our hearts, close our eyes and repeat this prayer after me. (*Pause after each line so the kids can repeat the words.*)



Dear Jesus,

Thank you for loving me so much.

Thank you for your promise to forgive all my sins.

Thank you for the bread and juice.

I love you.

Amen.

## Step 4 Living Out of the Story

Give each child a copy of Reproducible page 15. Read the caption on the left aloud. As you do, run your finger under each word so the children can see. Ask the children what two very special things Jesus gave to the disciples and to us—things that help us remember that Jesus loves us and forgives us. (*Pause for responses.*) Tell the group that they will draw a picture of these things on that side of the paper.

Read the caption on the right, again running your finger under each word as you do. Ask the kids what things they do as a way of showing someone—dad, mom, grandparents, sisters, brothers, friends—that they love them. Maybe things like giving a hug, setting the table, sharing toys. (*Pause for responses.*)

Place the markers and/or crayons on the table and invite the artists to go to work. Instead of standing above them, sit beside them and join in on the fun and the conversation. As you work, encourage them to tell the stories behind the drawings they place on the right side of the paper.

Send the children home with their drawings, the letter to their family, and a special goodbye. As they walk out the door, place your hands over your heart and, using each child's name, say: **Remember [name], Jesus loves you and forgives you.**

## EASY EXTRAS

### 1. Arrival Activity: Praise Maze

<b>TIME</b> 5-8 minutes	
 <b>Body Smart</b>  <b>Word Smart</b>  <b>People Smart</b>	<b>SUPPLIES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> None needed

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children form a line.
- The line leader will lead the children around objects in the room. Late-comers can join at the end of the line.
- The line leader stops the line whenever you call out an instruction. While stopped, the kids will repeat what you say as they also do the motion.
- Then the line leader moves the line forward until you call out the next instruction.

**TIP**

If there is a child in your group who is physically unable to participate in all or any of the movements listed for this activity, replace all of those that won't work for everyone with other activities that will work for all (for example humming a tune, blinking and winking, laughing out loud, and so on), so that everyone has the opportunity to participate equally.

Let's praise God for the amazing bodies he gave us and all the wonderful things we can do with our bodies.

1. I praise you, God for my twirling, whirling body.
2. I praise you, God, for my wiggly, squiggly fingers.
3. I praise you, God, that I can clap my hands behind my back.
4. I praise you, God, for my stomping, romping feet.
5. I praise you, God, that I can do jumping jacks.
6. I praise you, God, that I can snap my fingers in the air..
7. I praise you, God, that I can rock from side to side.
8. I praise you, God, that I can swim.

**OPTION**

Ask the kids to show how other creatures in God's creation might praise God.

1. Eagle: I praise you, God, for strong, flapping wings.
2. Ant: I praise you, God, that although I am small, I can crawl.
3. Lion: I praise you, God, that I can sneak through the jungle without making a sound.
4. Elephant: I praise you, God, that I can swing my trunk up and down and from side to side.  
(arms together, hands folded)
5. Kangaroo: I praise you, God, that I can hop.
6. Fish: I praise you, God, that I can flop and splash and play in the water.

## 2. Mountain Climb *This activity can be substituted for Step 3, Living into the Story.*

**TIME**

10 minutes

**Aa Word Smart**

 **Body Smart**

 **People Smart**

 **Number Smart**

**SUPPLIES**

- ☐ Shoe print shapes, reproducible page 17, white board or newsprint and marker, tape or sticky tack

*Note:* Before the session, cut out the 12 rectangles containing shoeprints.

Invite the children to the mountain climb. Draw a mountain on the board or newsprint. Make it about as tall as 12 shoeprints so that the shoeprints can reach the top.


*Instructions:* The leader asks a question. Then the mountain climbers will talk among themselves, collectively deciding on the answer(s) they will give. If they are correct, the leader will give a shoeprint to one of the climbers to place on the mountain. The goal is to have the shoeprints form a straight line to the top of the mountain.

Choose from the following questions or create some of your own. (**W**=wondering question; **F**=factual question)

1. **W:** The night before Jesus died, he invited his disciples to have supper with him. What reasons can you think of why Jesus might have been sad at that supper?
2. **F:** Why did the people celebrate the Passover?
3. **F:** How many disciples did Jesus have?
4. **F:** Where did Jesus and the disciples eat the supper?
5. **F:** Who got the room ready for the Passover supper?
6. **W:** Sometimes this supper is called the Last Supper. Why could that be?
7. **F:** What did they eat at this supper?
8. **F:** What did Jesus say that the bread was to remind us of?
9. **F:** What did Jesus say that the juice was to remind us of?
10. **W:** What does the word betray mean to you?
11. **W:** What did Jesus say that surprised you?
12. **W:** Why did that surprise you?
13. **F:** Who did Jesus say was the person who would betray him?
14. **W:** What feelings do you think Judas felt in his heart when Jesus said that he was the one who would betray Jesus?
15. **F:** Name the book where we can find this story and all of God's stories.
16. **F:** Just before they left the room, what did they do together?
17. **W:** How does it make you feel to know that Jesus loves you and forgives you?
18. **W:** Name something you will think of when you see the bread and juice during the Lord's Supper.



At the end, have the mountain climbers stand and celebrate the climb with high-fives all around.

### 3. Fill in the Blanks

<b>TIME</b> 5 minutes	
<b>Aa Word Smart</b>  <b>Self Smart</b>  <b>People Smart</b>  <b>Number Smart</b>	<b>SUPPLIES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> None needed

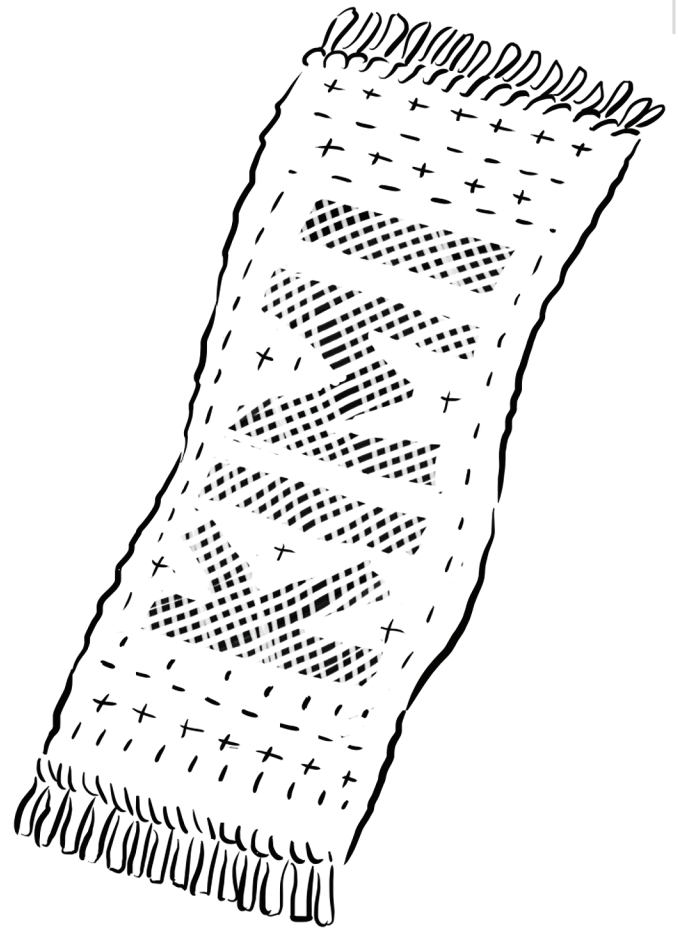
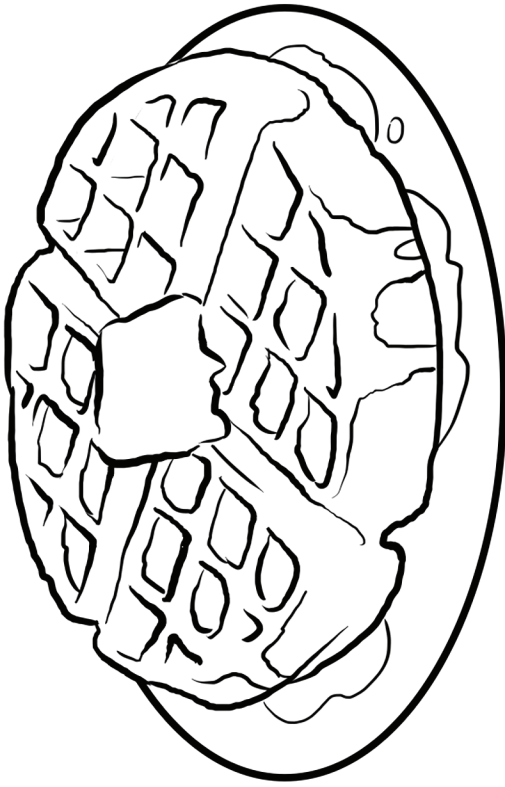
Read aloud the story found in Step 2. Omit all the questions; read only the story text. When you come to a word that is underlined, pause and have the children call out the word that fits.

## 4. A Closer Look

<b>TIME</b> 8-10 minutes	
<b>Aa Word Smart</b>  <b>Picture Smart</b>  <b>Body Smart</b>	<b>SUPPLIES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Communion table set with the elements, pastor

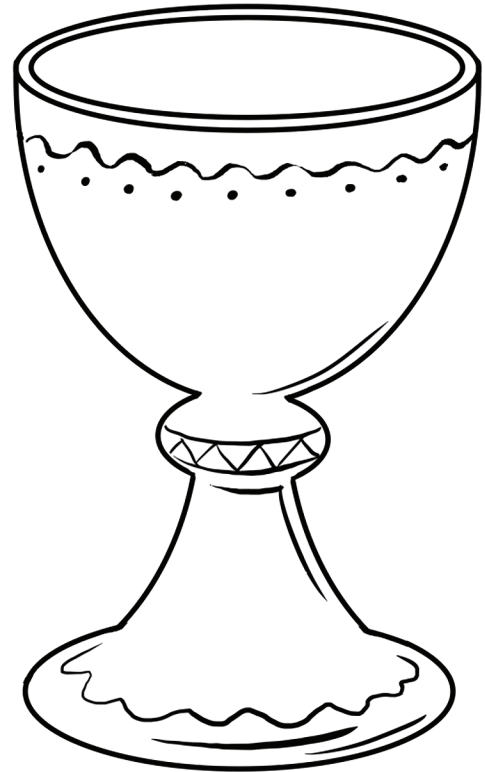
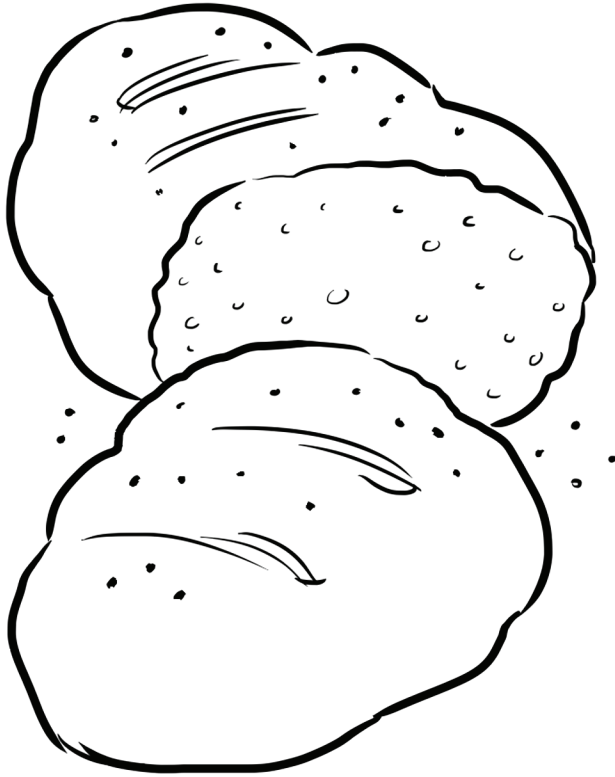
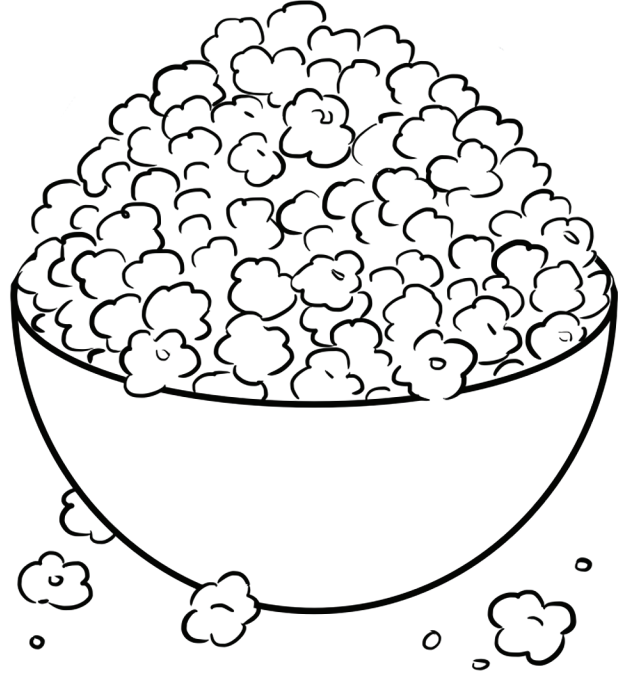
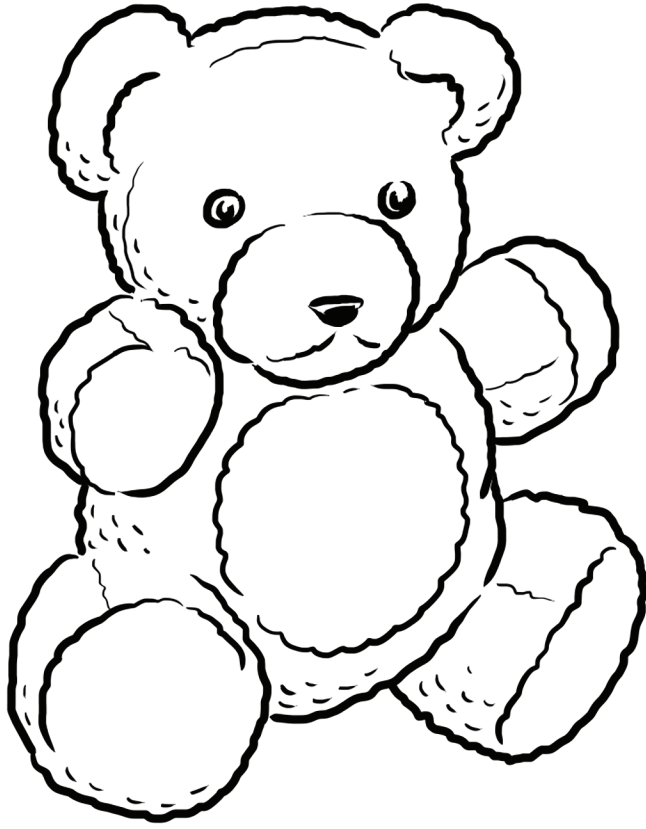
Give children the opportunity to take a closer look at the communion table and the elements. Arrange to meet the pastor around the communion table in the sanctuary so that the children may touch and see the elements and the pastor can explain your congregation's practices regarding the Lord's Supper. (The pastor may appreciate receiving the focus statement for this session ahead of time so he or she can emphasize and reinforce the session teaching.)

If it's not possible to meet in the sanctuary, arrange in advance to have some of the serving dishes that your congregation uses during the Lord's Supper celebration brought to the class so that the children can see and hold them and ask any questions they might have.



**The Night Before, Step 1**

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Jesus says: I love you and forgive you.

I say: I love you.



Dear Family,

Today your child learned about Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. Specifically, that on the night before he died, Jesus gave his disciples the bread and juice to let them know that he loved and forgave them. Jesus wanted them to remember that important truth each time the Lord's Supper was celebrated.

To help your child understand this symbol of remembrance, we heard some stories about how people might show each other that they love each other. Ask your child to tell you the story about the scarf, the waffles, the big bowl of popcorn, and any other stories they can remember. Talk together about things that each of you has done to show how much you love each other. Maybe you'd like to plan a loving thing you could do together for someone in your family or neighborhood!

The next time you share a simple snack or meal of bread and a drink, take the opportunity to talk with your child again about the meal that Jesus gave to the disciples—and us!—as a special reminder of God's great love for us and his promise of forgiveness. Be sure to share with your child why that gift means so much to you.

Have a great week!

Sincerely,

