

“Invited to the Table”

People Gather in Large Circle Facing Each Other

Welcome Prompts

Leader A

Welcome! Picture with me that our group is around a giant table..... We are here today as the people of God gathered at His table. Think of all the times Jesus sat at a table and taught and fed and loved the people around Him. Jesus visibly demonstrated that the invitation to His table is for every sinner. Being included at a table brings us community and nourishment and rest. Being included at God's table is the ultimate invitation.

Leader B

Our Father is present with us here now and is inviting us to the table once again as His children. The Lord Jesus is escorting us to the table. The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to commune with Him and with each other. His table is a place of fellowship and grace. Let's give thanks together that our Triune God has invited us and let's rejoice together in His presence.

Call to Worship – Psalm 95:1-7 (NIV)

Read Responsively & Joyfully! /Musicians Begin Playing

Leader C/Congregation read bold

[Or you could divide the group into two groups. For example, two halves of the circle or all men and all women, etc.]

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;

let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before him with thanksgiving

and extol him with music and song.

For the Lord is the great God,

the great King above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth,

and the mountain peaks belong to him.

The sea is his, for he made it,

and his hands formed the dry land.

Come, let us bow down in worship,

let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;

for he is our God

and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Worship Song

[Insert Words to Song Here]

Choose a celebratory song such as:

“To God Be the Glory” (traditional hymn)

“Wonderful, Merciful Savior” (Rodgers)

“All Creatures of Our God and King”

“Glorify Thy Name”

Preparation Prompts

Leader D – Holding a Cup and Loaf

The physical elements of bread and wine poignantly remind us that Jesus was human....He was flesh and blood just like we are. His human body died, was raised to life again and ascended into heaven. Jesus said, “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” (John 6:56) By the physical act of eating and drinking, we are demonstrating the spiritual reality of our union with Him.

Leader E

The Supper proclaims the heart of the gospel: “Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ is coming again.” We not only remember His death and resurrection, but we also look forward in hope to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in His Kingdom. The table of the future will be a joyous celebration that will come when the Lord gathers all of His people together some day.

Leader F

As you celebrate the Lord’s Supper together today, be thankful for your place at His table. Look around at the others who are at the table with you and give thanks for them. Then, prayerfully call to mind the empty places at the table. Who is not yet here? We are called to make disciples, to show others the way to the fellowship of God’s table. We need to share this hope with a lost world.

Prayer of Preparation

Leader G use the following prayer or extemporaneous prayer with similar format

Father, we are thankful for Your unending grace and hospitality to us. We are unworthy of Your love and yet we rest in the knowledge of Your unconditional favor toward us through your Son Jesus Christ who died in our place and rose again to set us free from sin. We confess our sins before You now..... (silence)

We thank You that You are faithful and just to cleanse us from our sins. We receive Your forgiveness and recognize the price that was paid for our pardon. Set aside these elements to minister Your grace to our hearts as we remember Jesus’ death and suffering. As we partake of the Lord’s Supper together, we ask You to renew us in our love for You. Deepen our faith and open our hearts to grasp Your very real presence with us at this moment. Anoint this time and speak deeply to our hearts what Your Holy Spirit desires to say to each one of us. Amen

Leader directs group to break into small groups and have each group sit or stand in a circle

Distribute Cup and Loaf to each group

Selected Readings (from the Luke 22, I Corinthians 10-11 & Revelation 19) (NIV)

Before taking the elements, have members of the small groups take turns reading. The person holding the cup and bread reads first and go around the circle.

[Selected verses from I Corinthians 10-11]

- *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.*
- *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 share the one loaf.*

[Luke 22:14-17]

- *Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."*
- *After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."*

[Revelation 19:4-9]

- *The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: "Amen, Hallelujah!"*
- *Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small!"*
- *Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!"*
- *For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."*
- *Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."*

Sharing of Communion

We will share communion by intinction. Serve the person next to you by holding the cup and bread in front of them. When you are served, tear off a piece of the bread and dip it in the cup. When you serve your neighbor look them in the eyes and call them by name. Say to them:

"[THEIR NAME], this is the body and blood of Christ given for you."

As your group finishes make your way back to the larger circle.

Suggestions:

“O Praise the Name” (Hillsong)

“How Deep the Father’s Love for Us” (Townend)

“Come, Behold the Wondrous Mystery” (Boswell/Papa)

Declaration of Faith

Leader A

As we have been united by the table of the Lord, let us be united and renewed in our faith by repeating together the Wesleyan statement of faith.

The Wesleyan Church Statement of Faith

We believe in one God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
and the Savior of all who put their faith in Him alone for eternal life.

We believe that those who are made new in Christ
are called to be holy in character and conduct,
and can only live this way by being filled with the Lord’s Spirit.

We believe in the Bible and its sufficiency to establish our faith and conduct.

We believe God wills for people everywhere to know Him and be made new in Christ.

We believe that the purpose of the Church is to worship God in spirit and in truth,
and to reach a lost and fallen world with the gospel of Jesus Christ
through its worship, witness, and loving deeds.

Closing Prayer and Words of Dismissal

NOTES:

- Choose readers for the big gathering who will project and speak with energy, preferably alternating men and women. If possible, give them the script in advance so they can take some time to read it over and know it well before the service. I have designated Leader A-G, but you could make this a smaller group of leaders and re-designate them if needed.
- If service is outdoors, a sound system will be necessary for people to be able to hear the readings
- Depending on the setting, the musicians could be playing throughout unless it will inhibit everyone from hearing.
- I left out references to location in the prompts just in case you have to change locations, or there are weather restrictions, etc. So, feel free to add those in – reference to the beauty around you, the ocean, etc.
- The songs should be directed to the Lord and corporate in nature (referring more to the Body than the individual).
- Other elements could be added to the small group section, if there is enough time, for example prayer could be added there.
- For intinction it is good to wrap the bread in a napkin and be sure that the cups are filled high enough to be able to dip the bread so people don’t have to put their hands too far in the cup.
- A variation on the closing part of the service could be to have the group gather in the large circle again and face outward as a symbol of our focus on the lost, and those who are not yet at the table.
- The Love poem by George Herbert could be printed on the back of the service program as a meditation. (see next page)

Love

Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back

Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack

From my first entrance in,

Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,

If I lacked any thing.

Love said, You shall be he.

I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,

I cannot look on thee.

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,

Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame

Go where it doth deserve.

And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?

My dear, then I will serve.

You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:

So I did sit and eat.

George Herbert