

Holy Communion



Matthew 26:26-28

Shortly before his death, Jesus Christ instituted Holy Communion in remembrance of his suffering and death. We celebrate Holy Communion in the divine services; it enables us to have close fellowship with the Lord Jesus and secures eternal life for the soul. The body and blood of Jesus contains the power enabling us to overcome anything which might hinder our salvation. Holy Communion is a joyful, thankful celebration in remembrance of the bitter suffering and death and the fully valid sacrifice of the Son of God.

The children are happy to receive Holy Communion.
They perceive the meaning and significance of this celebration.

It is Sunday. Stephen and his parents have been to church and are now on their way home. Mother looks at Stephen and speaks to him very seriously: "Stephen, I saw that you did not eat the Communion wafer during service today. What did you do with it?" A little shyly Stephen replies: "Well, I kept the wafer so that I could look at it properly. But I did eat it later on."
"Do you know now what is depicted on the wafer?" asks his mother. Stephen replies a little impatiently: "No, not exactly. All I could make out was three red dots."

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Father now adds: "Those are three drops of wine. The drops of wine and the letters on the wafer have a special meaning. We can only really understand this when we know why we celebrate Holy Communion in the first place."
He explains: "Shortly before the Lord Jesus was crucified, he had a last supper with his disciples. They gathered in a beautiful room. There Jesus Christ took bread, thanked God and distributed it to his disciples saying words to the following effect: 'Eat of this bread! I am this bread. It is my body. By eating of this bread you are part of me.' Then the Lord Jesus took the cup, passed it to his disciples and said: 'Drink of this

cup—all of you! This wine is my blood. It is shed for the forgiveness of sins.' Thereafter he told the disciples to continue celebrating Holy Communion with bread and wine."

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Stephen marvels at his father's story. He asks: "Why don't we get a piece of bread then when we celebrate Holy Communion?"

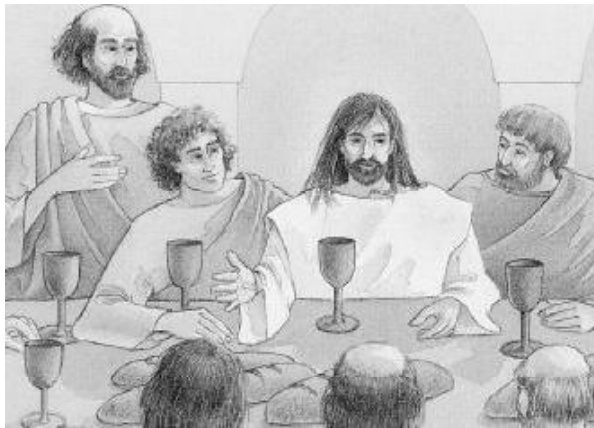
"The wafer is a tiny piece of unleavened bread. The red dots are three drops of wine. The wafer is therefore bread and wine and, being small, it is easy to use and keeps well." Stephen remarks: "I think the wafer is a good solution."
Father continues: "The sermon or the Sunday-school lesson prepares and attunes the worshipper for the celebration of Holy Communion. The congregation prays the Our Father together: the prayer Jesus Christ taught his disciples. Thereafter our sins are forgiven. Only then is Holy Communion consecrated. In doing so the Priest speaks the same words in his prayer as the Lord Jesus did at the Last Supper. Through this consecration the wafers carry the life and power of the Son of God. Everyone then receives a wafer. Do you know what the Priest says when he places the wafer in your hand?" Of course he does: "The body and the blood of Jesus given for you." Father continues: "By celebrating Holy Communion, we are as close to the Lord Jesus as the disciples were at the Last Supper. We receive the strength to improve ourselves and do everything better. Holy Com-

munion helps us to leave off that which is not good and to do that which is good. This brings joy and thankfulness. Every time I receive Holy Communion, I am particularly thankful and grateful to the Lord Jesus for his great sacrifice. I really look forward to his return on the day of the first resurrection."

Stephen has been listening attentively. He now has an inkling of the importance and meaning of Holy Communion. He resolves not to take Communion indifferently or casually any

more, but to do so joyfully and gratefully each time, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus.

3/4



The Lord Jesus instituted Holy Communion.

We celebrate Holy Communion in remembrance of the Lord Jesus. It is handed to us with the words: "The body and the blood of Jesus given for you."

- 1 Do the children know what is depicted on the wafer and what this means? We look at a wafer with the children: The three red dots are drops of wine. The A (= Alpha) and Ω (= Omega) are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. They signify that Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end.
- 2 Discuss the picture and ask the children to retell.
- 3 Let the children describe the photograph and compare it to the picture. How do we receive Holy Communion? What goes on in our mind? What significance and effect does the partaking of Holy Communion have?
- 4 The children draw a wafer, or how they receive Holy Communion.