

FREEDOM SUPPER

Holy Thursday reminds us of two things central to following Jesus. First, Jesus' act of footwashing calls Christians to serve others unselfishly and willingly. Second, we are reminded that to become, like Jesus, bread broken for the world is every Christian's mission.

Set a festive table with at least three candles, plates, and wine or juice glasses for all. Place the following symbolic foods for the meal in the center:

- matzo crackers (unleavened bread);
- a drink for making toasts. Sparkling catawba juice makes a festive substitute for wine.

GATHERING

LEADER: On the night before he died, Jesus gathered with his closest friends to celebrate a Passover meal, a meal that celebrates Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt and the people's journey to freedom. Jesus made this meal a way to remember him in breaking bread together and sharing a cup of wine.

BLESSING OF LIGHT

Light a candle with each blessing.

BLESSING 1: God, you light our days with sun and our nights with the stars. You turn our world toward spring and bring



us to this night of freedom.

ALL: Blessed are you, Giver of Light.

BLESSING 2: God, you set us free.

Open our eyes to see you in our companions at this table, in all those who need our love.

ALL: Blessed are you, God our friend.

BLESSING 3: God, you are with us in our doubts, in our desires, our dreams, our discontent. Bring us through this night of passing from death to life.

ALL: Blessed are you, God with us.

BLESSING OF BREAD & WINE

LEADER: We come together this night to eat unleavened bread. It is the bread of freedom our ancestors ate when they escaped from slavery in Egypt. It is the bread Jesus gives us to become his Body, a community set free to love.

TOAST: Our God, you call us to freedom, service, and love. You give us this wine, this supper, these friends. May we be poured out for others as Jesus poured out this cup for us.

ALL: Blessed are you, Lord Jesus, who set us free to love. All drink the toast.

BREAD BLESSING: *Hold up the matzo.* Blessed are you, Creator of the earth. You call us this night to become bread for one another and for the people of your earth.

ALL: May this bread make us hungry for a table at which all may eat.

LEADER: Jesus broke the bread and gave it to us, his friends, saying, "Take this and eat. This is my body to be given for you. Do this to remember me." And we always have.

ALL: Give us an attitude like Christ's—to be bread for one another.

THE QUESTIONS, THE STORY

QUESTION 1: Why is this night different from all other nights?

MIRIAM: Let me tell you the story of this night. Once we were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt. Life was good there, but not for us. We made bricks for Pharaoh's cities. He feared us because we grew so numerous, and he told the midwives to kill every male baby. Shiphrah and Puah were our midwives. They paid no attention to Pharaoh. "The women have their babies before we can get there," that's what they told Pharaoh. I hid my brother when he was born. I put him in a basket in the rushes where Pharaoh's daughter bathed in the Nile. Sure enough, when she saw him, she wanted to keep him alive. Then I turned up and offered to find him a wet nurse—our mother. By the way, his name was Moses.

ALL: We outsmarted Pharaoh.

QUESTION 2: On all other nights we talk about many things. Why on this night do we remember the passover?

MOSES: We are the people God set free. These slaves, our ancestors, cried out to God to help them, and God called me,

a man who stuttered, to speak for them. I did everything God commanded. I threatened Pharaoh. God sent terrible plagues on the Egyptians! First the Nile turned to blood, then came frogs, gnats, flies, pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness. But Pharaoh didn't listen until the night when Death passed over our houses but killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians. Pharaoh set us free!

ALL: We are the people God led on a dry path through the sea when Pharaoh sent his army after us. God is our strength and our courage.

QUESTION 3: On other nights we eat leavened bread. Why on this night do we eat unleavened bread?

MIRIAM: This is the bread of freedom like that our ancestors took with them out of Egypt when they left too quickly for bread to rise. (*Passes matzo crackers. Each takes one.*)

CHRISTIAN: This bread is like the unleavened bread that Jesus blessed and gave his friends. We eat it to become like Jesus, bread broken to give life to the people of the world.

ALL: We believe in the gift Jesus gave us, himself as our spiritual food. (*All eat matzo.*)

MEAL

After these prayers at a Passover meal, everyone eats dinner.

BLESSING FOR SERVICE

JOHN: This was the night Jesus washed our feet like a house slave. He put a towel around him and washed our feet one by one. Peter objected, but Jesus insisted. I'll never forget what he said when he finished. "What I just did was to give you an example. As I have done, so you must do."

LEADER: Jesus gave us an example of how to serve one another. Let us remember his example by washing each others' hands before we leave our meal. (*Hand out warm, wet towels. Wash each others' hands in pairs.*)

LEADER: Bless our hands for service. Bless our hands for showing support. Bless our hands for expressing praise and enthusiasm. Bless our hands for writing our best thoughts. Bless our hands for creativity and music. Bless our hands for...(*Add blessings.*)