

Good Friday

t a b l e l i t u r g y



Acknowledgements

This liturgy was pulled together from several great resources:

ThinkingWorship.com

Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals

PracticeTribe.com

Being Neighbor: The Catechism and Social Justice

Living Water: Post Primary Prayer Service

Introduction: Leader Instructions

The goal for this evening is for you to lead your people through the practice of remembrance, as you remember the crucifixion of our Lord together. Though most folks are very familiar with the facts surrounding this historic event, our desire is for them to feel the weight of this reality in a fresh and personal way, both emotionally and physically. This liturgy has been designed to assist you and your people in creating a space in your life as a community to participate in this practice together, by reflecting on the truths of what Jesus accomplished on the cross, while eating and drinking in remembrance of him.

While this liturgy was originally designed to be experienced around a table in people's homes, we've modified the content so that you are able to participate with others virtually. It will be important for you to think through the environment for your gathering, and thoughtfully consider details that will help cultivate reflection and participation in your group.

Here are some items to consider:

Ways to Gather

In order to participate with your group, establish a time/place to meet in person or set up a group call (Zoom, Google Hangouts, FaceTime, etc.). Plan ahead by communicating these details to your group several weeks prior to Good Friday.

Reading

The readings spread throughout the liturgy are intended to be read out loud. To facilitate the reading, it may be helpful to establish a reading order ahead of time and share it with the group.

Lighting

This liturgy incorporates the use of candles from the ancient Christian practice of Tenebrae (explained below). Since the diminishing light provided by the extinguishing of candles throughout the night is an important element of the liturgy, consider dimming or turning off other lights in the room to help accommodate the intended effect.

Communion

For the first few hundred years of Christianity, communion was always received in the context of an entire meal. Our vision is to recapture this reality by remembering the crucifixion as we share communion as a meal of bread and wine with our community.

Kids

For groups with kids, it's important to have a plan for them as well before the evening begins. SummitKids will provide a curriculum for kids to participate. Feel free to be flexible and adapt for the ages of the children in your group. Based on ages, you may want to plan your group call to start later in the evening, after bedtime, or you may choose to have older kids participate.

Supplies

Good Friday Table Liturgy, candles, lighter/matches, wine and/or grape juice, bread, butter/oil.

(*We realize you may not have all of these supplies at home - feel free to get creative here, collaborate with your group, and adapt as necessary.)

Explanation of Tenebrae

The word “tenebrae” (TEN-A-BREE) comes from the Latin meaning “darkness.” The Tenebrae is an ancient Christian Good Friday service that makes use of gradually diminishing light through the extinguishing of candles to symbolize the events of that week from the triumphant Palm Sunday entry through Jesus’ burial.

This increasing darkness symbolizes the approaching darkness of Jesus' death and of hopelessness in the world without God. The service concludes in darkness, sometimes with a final candle, the Christ candle, carried out of the sanctuary, symbolizing the death of Jesus. A loud noise may also sound symbolizing the closing of Jesus' tomb. The worshipers then leave in silence to ponder the impact of Christ's death and await the coming Resurrection.

Explanation of Eucharist & Communion

Eucharist is from the Greek *eucharistein*, meaning “thanksgiving.” Communion is from the Latin, meaning “union with.”

One of the church's peculiar practices is communion, also called the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist. The early Christians were accused of being cannibals because they talked of eating flesh and drinking blood together. It was a way of remembering, as Christ had asked them to remember him in this way.

“Re-member-ing” has to do with becoming something new, the body of Christ, in which we lose ourselves in something bigger than ourselves; we are re-membered into a new body.

Sadly, and ironically, the sharing of the Eucharist or communion table is both the most unifying and the most divisive practice in the Christian church. After all, sacrament is a “mystery,” so we don't want to try to systematically analyze the practice of Holy Communion. What we want to do is invite you into the deepest part of this mystery. We are what we eat.

When we take the wine and bread and eat it, we are digesting Christ — or an even better way of understanding might be that we are made into a new creation as we are digested into the body of Christ. Performing the Eucharist with a community makes us into

the body of Christ. As often as Christians take the common elements of bread and wine, they re-member themselves into Jesus. In the Eucharist, we don't just remember Jesus in general; we remember his suffering. The bread symbolizes a broken body, and the wine is poured like shed blood. Both grain and grapes have to be crushed and broken to become something new together. If you are what you eat, the Eucharist is indeed the act of uniting yourself with the one who lovingly suffered at the hands of his enemies. If you ritually cross yourself (like Catholics do), you are stamping upon yourself the sign of the cross; you are identifying with Jesus' suffering love. Those who ingest and become one with the suffering body of Christ all together become the body of Christ.

We pray as we take the elements that the blood of -Jesus would run through our veins and that we would be digested into the body of Christ. The early church used to say, "God became man that we might become God." Certainly none of us is God alone, but all of us are God's body together. God has chosen to have no hands but ours, no feet but ours. Maybe this is the greatest sacrament or mystery of our faith — that these broken pieces become one body.

Good Friday Table Liturgy



Call to Worship

Leader: This evening we walk with Jesus to Golgotha. We remember the pain that he suffered. We remember the triumph of his death – that didn't look much like triumph to anyone. And today we remember what it really means to say we are “taking up our cross” and “following Jesus.”

We are going to move together through the words Jesus spoke as he hung on the cross – and we are going to move together through the last hours of Jesus, and with him into the tomb. As we move through each phrase that Jesus spoke from the cross, we will blow out one of our candles – and we will have a short time of silence. After the seventh word, we'll blow out our final candle, and we will share a longer moment of silence in relative darkness.

Come, let us worship together.

Throughout this liturgy, words to be read by the entire group are in **bold**.

Leader: Psalm 22:1–2, 9–11

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
and are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress?
O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer
by night as well, but I find no rest.
Yet you are he who took me out of the womb
and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.
I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born
you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.
Be not far from me, for trouble is near
and there is none to help.

All: **He who hung the earth upon the waters : today he is hung upon the cross.**

Reader 1: Jesus we come – to walk the road with you – to follow you to the cross. We prepare ourselves now to follow your footprints in the dust. To understand how you died. To understand how we die. To understand how you lived. To understand how we should live.

Reader 2: John 19:1-18

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!”

When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.” The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.” When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer.

So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?” Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.” From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.” So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” So he delivered him

over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.

All: He who hung the earth upon the waters : today he is hung upon the cross.

Statement I

Reader 3: Luke 23:32-34

Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Reader 4: You forgave even those who took your hands and feet and drove nails into solid wood. Who, straining, lifted up the cross that held you and dropped it into place. You have forgiven them. When we ask for mercy, we are amazed to find that it has already been extended. You have forgiven us.

All: He who hung the earth upon the waters : today he is hung upon the cross.

1st candle blown out – short silence (1 min)

Leader: Let’s respond by singing...

Song: “Jesus Paid it All”

Jesus paid it all,
All to him I owe
Sin had left a crimson stain
He washed it white as snow
(Repeat)

***If you prefer to have accompanying music,
you can use this link for Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/track/0X6zo3gCOaS6ccC7IT9Emf?si=IGj7avI9SNKNxz8F7dRuow>***

Statement II

Reader 5: Luke 23:35-43

And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!” The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.” One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Reader 6: In your darkest hour, you turned to reassure the man beside you – a stranger. You extended eternity to him, even as you died. When we suffer, we find your hand extended to us – we find strength in the life you give us.

2nd candle blown out – short silence (1 min)

Statement III

Reader 7: John 19:25-27

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Reader 8: You turned, in your suffering, to care for those who cared for you. You turned those you loved toward each other, and asked them to give each other the status of family. You have called us your sisters, your brothers.

3rd candle blown out – short silence (1 min)

Leader: Let's respond by praying...

Group Response

Embracing Father, You grace each of us with equal measure in your love.

All: **Let us learn to love our neighbors more deeply,**

So that we can create peaceful and just communities.

All: **Inspire us to use our creative energies**

To build the structures we need to overcome the obstacles of intolerance and indifference.

All: **May Jesus provide us the example needed**

And send the Spirit to strengthen our hearts for the journey.

All: **Amen**

Statement IV

Reader 9: John 19:28-29

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.

Reader 10: You were fully human – thirsty as you hung there, in the hot sun. You felt the urgent need of a parched throat and a dry tongue. You have quenched our thirst with your living water.

4th candle blown out – short silence (1 min)

Statement V

Reader 11: Mark 15:33-34

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Reader 12: You were abandoned by God, alone in your suffering. You withstood what we could not, and promised to never leave or forsake us.

5th candle blown out – short silence (1 min)

Statement VI

Reader 13: John 19:30

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished." and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Reader 14: You finished the work you came into the world to complete, at great cost to yourself. At great cost to yourself, you completed, and will complete, the world in which you came to work. At great cost you have completed and will complete your work in us.

6th candle blown out – short silence (1 min)

Leader: Let's respond by singing...

Song: "I Surrender All"

I surrender all,
I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.
(Repeat)

***If you prefer to have accompanying music,
you can use this link for Spotify:
[https://open.spotify.com/track/
45bthi0SK4vxduIwzS1G9y?
si=SeT6KVK5SVKniG7ZXXFiMQ](https://open.spotify.com/track/45bthi0SK4vxduIwzS1G9y?si=SeT6KVK5SVKniG7ZXXFiMQ)***

Statement VII

Reader 15: Luke 23:44-46

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

Reader 16: After all. After everything. After the pain, the rejection, the sorrow – you entrusted your spirit to your heavenly father. Although you felt the forsakenness of sin in its fullest, you trusted your father. Now you entrust us to your heavenly Father – sitting at his right hand, and interceding for us. The curtain was torn, our separation from God is ended – in this moment. May we trust. May we learn, in the darkness, the extent of your faithfulness. May we entrust ourselves to you.

Leader: In a moment, as we blow out the seventh candle, we will take a moment together to grieve, and to feel the weight of Christ's sacrifice, of the Father's sacrifice. As we sit in silence, and as we sit in the dark, we will also fill our hearts with stillness, as we seek to understand the cross – and as we seek to take up our own cross.

All: He who hung the earth upon the waters : today he is hung upon the cross.

Leader: Lord Jesus, we ask that you would teach us to understand this great and terrible mystery. Please accept now our silent worship.

7th candle blown out – long silence (5 min)

Leader: John 19:40-42

So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Benediction

Leader: And so we wait. Through the night, through the long, silent Saturday in the tomb. The battle is already won. Jesus has already declared his work finished – but we wait. We wait for the glimmer of dawn in the darkness. For the sliver of hope that lightens despair. We wait for the empty tomb. We wait for Christ to return.

Over the next few moments, we are going to share a meal of bread and wine together. Communion, as it was first celebrated, was the sharing of a meal. Jesus did not sit with his disciples the night of his betrayal and offer them only a bite of bread and a sip of wine – he sat with them around a table that contained a feast. Take a moment before you eat, to bow your head and remember. As you eat this food that many hands have prepared, hold in the back of your mind the words of Christ: “Take and eat. This is my body.” And as you drink, hold in the back of your mind the words of Christ: “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

And as you wait, as you eat and drink, may the darkness of waiting make the light shine brighter. May the pain you experience intensify your joy. And may your night, gradually, gloriously, give way to morning.

Communion

Table Discussion

A few ideas for thoughtful conversation topics as your group partakes in the meal together

As we read and reflected on the 7 statements of Christ from the cross, how did the Spirit speak to you?

Take time for confession and lament - as we commemorate Christ's crucifixion, what weighs heavy on your heart? What do you need to bring to the cross?

Closing Prayer

Leader: While we were still your enemies, the Lord Jesus Christ, suffered and died for us, winning the victory over death for our sakes. Give us grace to lift you up as we follow the way of the cross so that all people may be drawn to you.

**All: May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you:
wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness:
protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing:
at the wonders he has shown;
May he bring you home rejoicing:
once again into our doors.**

Amen

