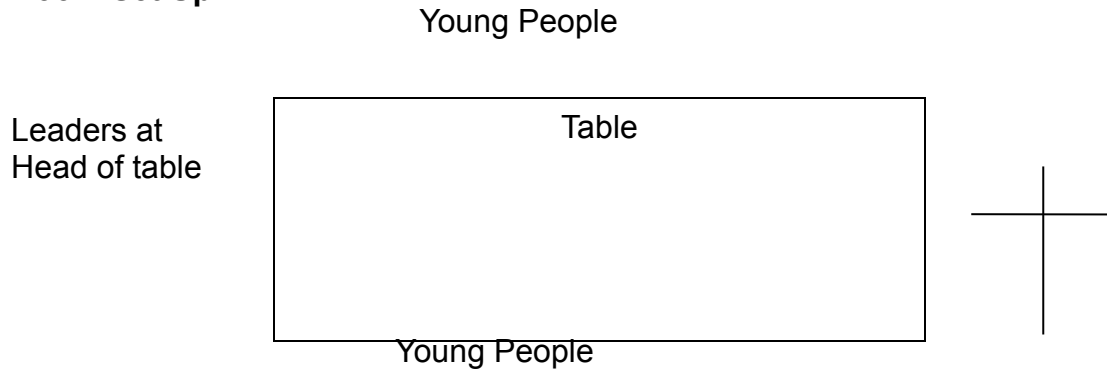


The Last Supper

Equipment List: Cross, spot lights, candles, projector, passion of the Christ DVD, Bread, wine/blackcurrant, cups for communion, quiet background music, Doritos and dips

Room Set Up



Introduction: A you know it's Easter soon and tonight we're going to think about what it all means. You have just arrived at the last supper.

Ice Breaker: The Weakest Disciple Video - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fY1Mr-C4ePg>

Setting the scene: So up until this point Jesus has been going around performing miracles and teaching but he isn't exactly Mr Popular, in fact, the authorities and Jewish teachers can't stand him and they want him out of the way. So Jesus is with his disciples in an upstairs room sharing a Passover meal with his disciples, they'd have bowls to dip things in much like we are doing with the Doritos.

Passover Theology

Passover is the most important Jewish Festival – in Old Testament times it was THE religious festival of the Jewish calendar (a bit like Easter today). It was held to mark Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt.

Throughout the 8 days of the festival nothing made with yeast was eaten – so flat, unleavened bread was eaten. This marked the fact that the Israelites escaped Egypt in a hurry without giving time for the bread they needed for their journey to rise.

The main part of the Passover festival is the Passover (or Sedar) meal. A lamb would be killed for this meal. In the story of the Exodus from Egypt, God asked for lamb's blood to be painted onto the door posts of all the Israelites living in Egypt as he was going to send Death to all of the Egyptians. Hence the name given to the festival - 'Passover' - as the Angel of Death passed over the Israelites, whose doors were painted, allowing them to escape.

So therefore, in the Passover festival, lambs would be sacrificed for the Passover meal to celebrate God's gift of freedom to the Israelites.

This is very significant: You may have heard of Jesus being the 'sacrificial lamb'. It is thought that Jesus chose Passover as the last supper because he knew later that evening and the next day he would become the new and eternal 'sacrificial lamb' and his resurrection would give all God's people freedom now and forever.

The Passover meal lasted around 4 hours with a compulsory cup of wine taken at each hour and bowls of dipping herbs and unleavened bread on the table. The traditional meal would have been set out the same way each time:

start with the first cup of wine

- telling of the story of the escape from Egypt
- singing psalms

second cup of wine

- dipping into the bitter herbs – these tasted horrible and represented the Israelites ancestors pain of slavery in Egypt. (Jesus mentions dipping his hand in with Judas)
- men was their hands (possibly when Jesus washed their feet)

3rd cup – this is the Cup of Blessing – as the Israelites had God's blessing on them in their escape (this is probably where our Communion wine is taken from)

- singing

4th cup – this is the 'Cup of God's Wrath' with a prayer to send God's wrath on the nations that despised God.

Jesus would have left the meal after the 3rd cup of wine and gone into the Garden of Gethsemane. This is where we read of Jesus asking God to "take this cup of suffering away" – Jesus's 4th cup of the meal is actually the suffering he takes for us on the cross as God's wrath is poured over Him as he takes our sins upon himself – so that you and I are truly free.

Read: Matthew 26: 14-25

Discuss: How do you think Judas would have felt this evening knowing that he'd already betrayed Jesus

Explain: During the evening Judas probably felt guilty for what he'd done, after all it led him to go on and commit suicide. His eyes and those of Jesus probably met several times, perhaps the look Jesus gave was one of love, one saying 'Yes, you've betrayed me, but God's in control and I love you'.

Read: Matthew 26: 31-35

Explain: We all make mistakes and Jesus knows it, he knew Judas had made a mistake, the punishment for those mistakes is death, but Jesus took that punishment for us, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice and because of that even when we do mess up Jesus is there with open arms ready to forgive us. It's the beauty of grace which makes life not

fair, we don't deserve this forgiveness but because of Jesus' love for us and his death on the cross we can be forgiven.

Clip Introduction: We're going to watch the scene of Jesus dying, after we'll have a time of silence, just think about what that means to you, perhaps thinking how it is our sin that drove those nails in his hands.

Video Clip: The Passion of the Christ – Crucifying Scene alternatively use a clip from the JESUS video podcast

Silence:

Communion: We're going to take communion now as a response, a chance for us to show God what he means to us, and our commitment to him, but first we're going to have a short time of prayer, a chance perhaps for you to say sorry to God for something, or a chance to thank him. If you want a leader to pray with you come and ask.

Read: Matthew 26: 26-30

Bread and Wine will be taken at this point – give the young people an opt out of this so it becomes their choice.

Closing Prayer: To finish