

Prayer Experience Holy Thursday

We give thanks for each other

Done around the dining room or kitchen table, as part of your main meal together.

Note: You may want to invite extended family members or friends you feel comfortable socializing with to join you for this experience.



□ Preparation to do ahead of time

1. Simple decoration tonight could include either a white or golden tablecloth or anything else that might bring these colors onto the table and into the room.
2. You will also need some unleavened bread:
 - Option 1:** Pick up some pita bread or crispy matzoh, and some grape juice at your local grocery store.
 - Option 2:** Make your own. [CLICK HERE](#) for a simple and easy recipe. It is easy enough for kids to help! Make sure one of your loaves is large enough for everyone who will be at your table to break off and eat a small piece or use two slices of pita or two matzoh crackers
3. Place the unleavened bread on a nice plate and a chalice (wine glass) of red wine or grape juice in the center of the dinner table. These will be shared at the end of the meal.
4. In addition, place as many candles as possible on your table surrounding the candle that you have chosen to serve as your family Christ candle for the week. All colors, sizes and shapes will do). **This meal will be eaten and celebrated by candlelight.**

Once all of the food for the meal has been placed on the table, invite everyone to sit down.

Note: If you don't have many candles (**do not go out and buy them**), turn on all the lights in the room, make it as bright as possible.

During dinner dim the lights.

□ Introduction - Parents feel free to use these words or your own

Tonight, our family dinner table becomes an **altar** – a **sacred table** – where Jesus will join us as we enter into the mystery of his Last Supper and the wonderful gift of the Eucharist that he gives his friends at this special meal.

Make the Sign of the Cross

Light the Christ

The Christ candle is lit by the mother of the house, as is the Jewish custom at a Passover Meal. The mother prays the following prayer as she lights this candle:

Mother (while lighting the Christ candle)

O God,
the God of our mothers and fathers,
may the rays of these festival candles bring the radiant light of Christ
to us and all who break the bread and drink from the cup
on this Holy Thursday evening.

After the Christ candle is lit each person who is able lights another candle around the table until all are lit. Then all other lights are dimmed way down or turned off completely.

If you don't have extra candles, simply dim the lights as much as your able.

Mother continues

Praise to you, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe,
who makes us holy as we eat this sacred meal together.

All: **Amen**

Dinner - Dinner is then eaten by candlelight.

Once all have eaten, all the plates are removed except for the unleavened bread and the chalice.

The Breaking of the Bread

One parent picks up the unleavened bread and holds it up for all to see, saying,

Parent: Behold the unleavened bread of the Passover – the bread without the yeast that represents the sins of this world – broken and shared with us here at this table and reminding us of the Eucharist that Jesus gives us this very night because of his great love for us.

Parent instructs those at the table saying,

As Eucharist means “thanksgiving,” please tear off a piece of this bread and give it to the person on your **right**. As you do, say “Jesus, I thank you for (say the person’s name) because ... (of some quality, trait or kindness that makes this family member special to you).”



**How many times have you shared a candlelight dinner with your kids?
Make Holy Week something you kids will remember.**

★ If you want to include music, [CLICK HERE](#) to play **Endless is Your Love** softly in the background

When the remaining unleavened bread makes it around to the original parent, he or she places it back on the plate.

☐ **Sharing the Cup of Salvation**

Parent then picks up the chalice and prays,

Parent: Behold the cup of the Passover, the cup of salvation. See in its fullness, God's many blessings to us.

Parent instructs those at the table saying,

As Eucharist means "thanksgiving," please take a sip from the cup and give it to the person on your **left**. As you do, say "Jesus, I thank you for (say the person's name) because ... (of some quality, trait or kindness that makes this family member special to you)."

★ If you want to include music [CLICK HERE](#) to play **Our Blessing Cup** (based on Psalm 116) softly in the background.



“Do this in memory of me”

☐ **Closing prayer:** When the chalice returns to the original parent, all pray **The Lord's Prayer** together.

Note: If possible, leave the candles on your table. You will be using them for Good Friday and Holy Saturday

After Dinner Activities (optional)

- Visit a neighborhood Catholic Church to spend some time with Jesus in the form of the Blessed Sacrament. You can pray, listen or just sit in the presence of the Lord on this sacred night. Be sure to check ahead of time to see how long the parish will be open for visitation and if you need to register to attend.
- If you did not get chance to watch Cecil B. DeMille's **The Ten Commandments** or do so Disney's **Prince of Egypt** earlier in the week, do so now to learn more about the first Passover and how God used it to deliver the Israelites from their slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt.