

# Communion Ideas

From  
WorshipIdeas.com  
Readers



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worship  ideas

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## **>Forward from Don Chapman:**

A Communion service should be a wonderful, meaningful time for you and your congregation -- a time to put aside our busy lives for a moment and focus on Christ and His sacrifice for us.

The tips in this special report will help you bring new life to your Communion services. With so many denominations represented with WorshipIdeas.com readers, not every idea will be practical for your fellowship. However, I encourage you to read each one, and maybe something will spark your imagination.

You might want to print out the report, punch holes and keep it in a 3 ring binder for future reference along with other WorshipIdeas.com tips.

## **>About:**

This special Communion Ideas report was compiled from emailed suggestions by WorshipIdeas.com readers from March 25 to April 12, 2002.

[WorshipIdeas.com is a website that features free music and practical tips for contemporary worship leaders.]

Feel free to copy and distribute this report in its entirety.

## >Ideas from Don Chapman

>I'd like to start this special report with a few ideas we've tried at Horizon Church. We meet in a public school cafetorium, and usually set up the Communion table in front of the room. Sometimes we set up to the side, in front of large glass windows (you can look out and see a nice wooded area). During one Christmas season I had a harpist play carols by the window as the congregation filed past the Communion table.

>One Sunday we had Communion "in the round" with everyone in the room standing in a circle. The elders distributed the elements and afterwards we joined hands and sang a hymn. This idea would of course be simpler for a church that can easily rearrange the chairs of their meeting place.

>Jim, our pastor, likes to give the congregation a good sized cup and piece of bread (instead of a tiny cracker and a thimble of juice), helping us remember that the first Lord's Supper was really a meal.

>My friend George and I love to eat at a local Indian restaurant. George became friends with one of the waiters and invited him to church. Ashfaque began attending regularly, and one Sunday he offered to go into the restaurant early and bake naan (flat Indian bread) for our service. Not only was that Sunday the most delicious Communion service I've ever attended, but it was also the most touching one as well!

Perhaps you can find a nearby ethnic food store or restaurant and purchase some inexpensive bread for variety. The owners may even be happy to donate the bread.

## >Engaging the Congregation, Washing Ceremony

>Here are some Communion ideas that I have found helpful throughout my ministry. First of all, there are simple ways to involve your congregation as participants in the Lord's Supper rather than observers only. You might want to try to have the congregation come up to receive the bread, preferably broken from a common loaf of unleavened bread baked by a member of the congregation. The same can be done for the cup, but this can take a while. If you plan the entire service around the table, then this shouldn't be a problem.

>Another idea is to incorporate a hand washing ceremony with the congregation. In the *Haggadah* (manual for the Seder meal in Judaism) there are several hand washings done on the part of participants, which are called *Rachtzah*. Jesus may have done this same thing when preparing for the Passover meal with His disciples. It is symbolic of cleansing, so you may want to incorporate a time of confession done in silence as the washing occurs or just before the participants begin the ritual.

This would be much easier to do in our congregations than foot washing, due to several factors. First of all, people can be sometimes timid about going barefoot in public. Secondly, it reserves the foot washing ceremony for Maundy Thursday. Finally, it doesn't take up as much time. For larger congregations (over 100), several washing stations can be set up around the sanctuary. This can be a very meaningful act and can remind people of the cleansing they receive from Christ when they confess their sins before Him.

Clay West  
University Heights Baptist Church  
Huntsville, TX

## >Bread

>We wanted to get as many senses involved as possible, so we had a bread machine hidden in the front of the sanctuary programed to bake bread during the service. The aroma of fresh bread baking was quite an addition to our Communion service!

Tana Hey

>Consider doing different types of bread at different seasons of the year making the point that while Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and forever, He is also the Bread of Life and is there to feed us in the ways we need to be fed.

Fresh warm bread, cooked in a bread maker, IN the sanctuary so that the tantalizing smell is part of the experience; matzos, the unleavened bread of the Passover (a feast of GOD and not the Jews, see Leviticus 23:2 & 4) during Easter season; a whole wheat or cracked wheat bread to remind us about the kernel falling into the ground to die so that it can live; and a dark bread with a little of the sourdough taste to remind us of the things that He took on for us. Imagination is the only limiting factor to how bread can speak the Scriptures louder than we can.

Dean Thomas  
ZionFire  
Kansas City, MO

## >Music & Arts

>For this last Passover, we did a Seder service for Communion. The pastor sat at the front at a table with his family and they went through the Biblical process for the Passover feast. We did Messianic worship music before and after the service. We had some of the teenage girls do a traditional Jewish dance for two of the songs, and had children dance with tambourines, homemade timbrels and sticks with shiny fabric attached. The service was very powerful and will be a yearly event.

Patti Deshazo  
Hope Evangelical Free  
Huntsville, AL

>For Palm Sunday we made a cross out of two small trees and drilled holes in them. As the congregation entered, they were handed a nail. At the end of the service while singing *O, How He Loves You and Me*, each member came to the cross and placed their nail in one of the holes. It really drove home the message that Christ's unconditional love overcame the fact that we placed Him on the cross.

Another thing we have done is to set a table with the Communion elements and twelve chairs. The chair in the center has a crown of thorns representing Christ's presence and His gift of eternal life and unconditional love. While Communion was being served, the song *Communion Song* by Barry McGuire was sung. A very powerful visual reminder of what we are, indeed, remembering.

Kathy Kukor  
Wilkesboro United Methodist  
Wilkesboro, NC

## >Impacting the Culture

>Since our recent transition to "seeker sensitive" services, we've been having Communion once a month on our Friday night "believer's service." We have been doing Communion the same way for 25 years in our church. With all the recent changes in the church, we have started to realize that doing things the same because we've always done it that way isn't good enough. We need to change with the times and are now constantly re-evaluating why and how we do things.

We want Communion to be a valuable and memorable experience for our congregation. We have decided to use music, lighting, video, special songs, or whatever else it takes to get people in the moment of Communion. They can then take the time to reflect on what God has done for them. We want each Communion service to be different so we don't get into a rut and lose the impact of what Communion is really all about. We want people to be touched by God through this and we want to let God use us to help the congregation.

Allen and Miriam Katerberg  
Elora Road Christian Fellowship  
Guelph, Ontario, Canada

## >Music, Keepsakes and Kindness

>Our church's tradition is to have people come to the front and receive the bread and the wine. During this time we have an extended time of singing and worship.

We've had instrumentalists at the back of the church playing as people walked to the front. We intentionally chose single note instruments - violin and oboe, then three flutes. They played by themselves, sparsely, with no accompaniment. During this time, we had questions slowly fading in and out of PowerPoint for people to spend their time in meditation.

>We also use this time in Communion to have people pick up things to take home and keep in their pockets. They'll be reminded of the message all week long. They have picked up nails, stones with Bible verses on them, WWJD bracelets, seashells (which in Bible times was a sign of a long journey), and other various things.

One of the most meaningful ideas was when we had stoles made -- one for each congregation member. These are the long pieces of cloth that some pastors wear over a robe.

Our pastor talked about how this was a symbol of his calling for ministry. When he became a pastor they placed a stole on him as a sign of the calling and presence of God in his life. In the same way, as the congregation stepped forward for Communion, people at either side gave each member a blessing and placed a stole over their shoulders. This act symbolized that we are called to be ministers of God.

[continued]



## >Music, Keepsakes and Kindness, continued

>After a message about service, people came forward and each picked up a strip of paper on which was written one suggestion for service -- give food coupons to a homeless person; give someone flowers; write a note of thanks to the police, ambulance or fire workers; pay for the meal of the person in the take out line behind you, and many more. Then when people picked up the "strips of kindness" they were asked to fulfill that in the following week. It was neat to hear some of the stories that people had done.

>In my last church, we always had a healing/prayer station where people could go for prayer during Communion. Since they were coming up to the front anyway, it was easy for them to slip over to the station for prayer if that's what they desired. The prayer station was very powerful in many people's lives.

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Bethel Lutheran  
Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada