


# The Lord's Supper

## Who is worthy?

# TEACHER GUIDE

  
Luther  
House  
Confirmation  
Curriculum




**A person who has faith in these words: “given for you” and “shed for you for the forgiveness of sin,” is really worthy and well-prepared.**

Essential Questions: What is the Lord's Supper good for? Who is worthy to receive it?


Students will be able to:

- Explain the benefits of the Lord's Supper
- Define *worthy*
- Confess that there is nothing you can do to make yourself worthy to receive the Lord's Supper
- Confess that God is the only one who can make you worthy
- Explain what mercy is, how it is unfair, and that Christ is giving you mercy in the Lord's Supper
- Identify Jesus' words that clearly designate who is to receive His body and blood for the forgiveness of sin
- Explain what would make a person unworthy and unprepared to receive the Lord's Supper


**Lesson Overview:** Let's review: What is the Lord's Supper?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** *"The Lord's Supper is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and the wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and drink."* The Lord's Supper, also known as the Sacrament of the Altar or Holy Communion, is the sacrament Jesus uses to give His own body and blood to His betrayers for the forgiveness of their sin.


What benefits do you receive in the Lord's Supper? In other words, what is the Lord's Supper good for?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** The forgiveness of sin. The Lord's Supper is Jesus' last will and testament. On the night before He was killed, He designated His heirs (the ones who would receive all His possessions) and gave them everything He had left to give: the forgiveness of sin.


Whom does Jesus choose as His heirs who receive His forgiveness?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** Those who betrayed Him. Those who sinned against Him and left Him to die with their sin.

So in order to need Jesus' forgiveness of sin, what do you have to do first?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** First you have to sin against Jesus Christ.

When did God first give you the promise that your sin is forgiven for Jesus' sake?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** In Baptism. In Holy Baptism God forgave all your sin, made you His child, and joined you with Jesus Christ.

Therefore, before you receive the Lord's Supper, you ought to be baptized. Why? Because Baptism is the way God has decided to first and finally choose sinners as His own children. It isn't that God is giving you a checklist, but it's that Baptism really is once and always. The problem is, the promise given in Baptism is constantly under attack. The devil, the world, and even your own flesh don't want you to believe that Christ's forgiveness given to you in Baptism actually saves you. But it does. So Baptism is once and you never need it again. In the Lord's Supper, God gives you the same promise over and over again, as often as it is given to you.

This brings up another question: Is there anything *you* can do to make yourself worthy of the Lord's Supper? What does worthy mean?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** deserving; being well-prepared; having worth or value

So another way of asking this question is: Could you ever do anything to make yourself deserve forgiveness? Hopefully, you're getting pretty good at answering that question. No. You can't do anything to make yourself worthy.

So who *is* worthy to receive the Lord's Supper? That's the question we'll deal with in this lesson.

## 1. Opening Prayer



Lord Jesus, we confess that, in ourselves, we are not worthy to receive you. We do not deserve Your mercy. There is nothing we can do to earn Your grace. Yet, You make us worthy by giving Yourself to us to forgive our sin. Keep us always with You in this faith. Amen.

## 2. Essential Vocabulary



 **For Teachers: Words matter! Here are a few that you can explore briefly with your students:**

**worthy** - deserving; being well-prepared; having worth or value

**benefit** - a good and helpful result of something; a gift

**mercy** - the unfair gift of God's grace, given through the forgiveness of sin

**forgiveness** - the act of pardoning or taking away sin; absolution

**sin** - unbelief in the truth of God's Word; doubt that God is for you and will do what He says


## 3. Video Lesson: The Lord's Supper: Who is worthy?



This video offers some words about what the Lord's Supper gives to us. This video sets up the lesson that follows.

## 4. SING BOLDLY: Hymn Connection



 *There is a video that explores a hymn that can be sung during worship, and how the hymn connects to what we believe. The students will learn how this ties into the subject of our lesson, some background of the hymn, and the video will even teach us how to sing it boldly!*

*Teachers:* At this point in the lesson, there will be an option to skip ahead to the “**Memory Work and Wrap Up**” portion. Alternatively, you may lead your group through all or part of “**Here I Hear & Speak**”. This section will equip you to lead group discussion and achieve the lesson’s learning goals. We advise that you explore this option with your small group (or as an individual). This guide has been created primarily to help you as you facilitate the “Hear I Hear & Speak” section. You will be learning about this part of Martin Luther’s Small Catechism, how it comes out of God’s Word in Scripture, and even how to equip our learners how to give that Word to others.


## 5. HERE I HEAR & SPEAK: Discussions and Activities




**Group Activity:** LORD’S SUPPER and WORTHINESS. “For where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.”

We learn these words from the Small Catechism to confess what we receive in the Lord’s Supper. The forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are the benefits of receiving this sacrament worthily. But what does it mean to receive the Lord’s Supper “worthily”?


NOTHING YOU DO. Remember, worthy means deserving or being well-prepared. The Catechism says, “Fasting and other outward preparations serve a good purpose.” So what about taking a class like this one? **Could learning about the Lord’s Supper make you worthy? Why or why not?**

 **TEACHER NOTE:** No. There is no preparation you could do that would make yourself worthy. Let’s repeat that: there is **nothing you** can do to make yourself deserving. That includes prayer, fasting, taking a class, serving at a homeless shelter, or anything else you could come up with.


If learning about the Lord’s Supper doesn’t make you worthy, why would you need to take a class like this one?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** This class has only one purpose: **to get you to stop wondering if the Lord's Supper is really for you and instead to get you to listen to what Jesus says.** When we learn about the Lord's Supper before we receive it, we learn what we're actually getting (Christ's body and blood), why Jesus gives them to you (for the forgiveness of your sin), and who it is for (you—a sinner who betrayed Jesus).


There is only one thing that makes you worthy to receive the Lord's Supper, and it's not anything *you* do. Here's a hint: **What makes the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper the true body and blood of Jesus Christ?**

 **TEACHER NOTE:** Jesus' words: "This is my body" and "This cup is the New Testament in my blood". They are His body and blood for no other reason than He says so.

WHAT MAKES YOU WORTHY? So what makes you worthy to receive the Lord's Supper?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** Jesus' words. He makes you worthy with His words. You are worthy to receive the sacrament for no other reason than He says so.

Remember the Words of Institution? Which specific words from Christ make it clear who is to receive Him?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** FOR YOU. "This is my body given **for you.**" "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed **for you,** for the forgiveness of sins."

When you hear Jesus' words, they are clear: this is **for you.** But what do we sinners do with a promise from Jesus? We disagree with it. Remember, that's what sin is: not believing the truth of God's Word. So instead of trusting what Jesus' words clearly say, we try to come up with a list of things we could do to make ourselves worthy.

Here's the problem: If you could make yourself worthy, you wouldn't need Jesus. But you do need Jesus—desperately. So when you receive the Lord's Supper, Jesus gives you **mercy.** **What is mercy?**

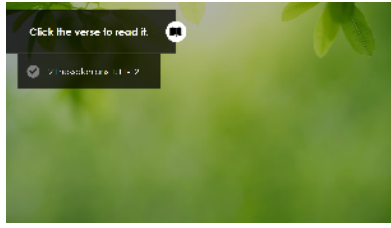
 **TEACHER NOTE:** Mercy is the unfair gift of God's grace, given to you through the forgiveness of your sin.

**Why is mercy unfair?** Because it's the exact opposite of what you deserve. The result of everything you do—your sin—is death. You deserve death. But Jesus took your sin and death and instead, gives you His forgiveness. It is a pure gift, for you. It's got your name on it. So it's not up to you whether you get this gift or not. You can't earn or deserve it. That's what mercy means. If you could choose or deserve mercy, it wouldn't be mercy anymore. But mercy is what Jesus is giving you in the Lord's Supper, whether you want it or not!

JESUS' WORDS FOR YOU. So what *do* you have to do to be worthy or prepared? Let's make this crystal clear one more time: ***you can't do anything to become worthy. You can't make yourself deserving.*** But when you hear Jesus' words **for you,** specifically and personally, you have the promise to trust that cannot fail. Jesus can't lie. He gives His body and blood for you—a betrayer who sinned against Him—so He can forgive *you* all your sin. When you have this promise from Christ to believe, that's what makes you worthy. God uses the Lord's Supper to deliver the promise and the faith.



**In the Word:** Let's see how Scripture passages relate to what we've discussed so far!



- Read: 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12
- St. Paul wrote this letter to the church in Thessalonica, where they were enduring “persecutions and afflictions.” In other words, the Gospel that they had received was under attack.
- What is the Gospel?

**TEACHER NOTE:** Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected for the forgiveness of your sin. The Gospel is delivered to you in the Lord’s Supper.

- What is Paul’s prayer for the congregation at Thessalonica?

**TEACHER NOTE:** “That God make you worthy of His calling and fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power.”

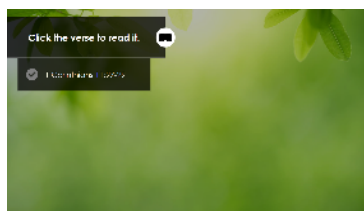
- Who is the one that makes someone worthy?

**TEACHER NOTE:** God makes you worthy, and He doesn’t need any help from you to do it. You cannot make yourself worthy. It is not your work, but God’s work, by God’s power, “so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him.” Jesus Christ does it, and He gives it to you as a free gift. That’s what grace means. Grace is God’s attitude toward His children, and He gives it to you freely, because you didn’t earn it, don’t deserve it, and never will.

- It is by faith in God’s promise that you are made worthy. How does God give you faith?

**TEACHER NOTE:** He gives you faith by delivering His promise to you through His Word and the sacraments—Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.


UNWORTHY AND UNPREPARED. So by causing you to hear His promise, Jesus makes you worthy, apart from anything you do. But in the Small Catechism, we hear that some are “unworthy and unprepared.” Who is unworthy and unprepared to receive the Lord’s Supper?




- Read: 1 Corinthians 11:27-29
- According to St. Paul, who “drinks judgment on himself”?

**TEACHER NOTE:** “Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body.”


- “Discerning the body” means knowing what you’re getting. When you receive the Lord’s Supper, what are you getting?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** The body and blood of Jesus Christ given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sin.

- How do you know that's what you're getting?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** That's what Jesus' words clearly say, and Jesus won't deceive you. He is faithful. His words always do what they say. So it is most certainly His body and blood, given for you, for the forgiveness of your sins. And because this is what Jesus Christ says, it's true whether you believe it or not.

- Who, then, would eat and drink “without discerning the body”, and drink judgment on themselves?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** Those who do not hear the clear words of Jesus Christ, or who try to change His words or their meaning to suit themselves. Those who do not believe they need Christ's forgiveness of sin.

**LUTHER'S SUMMARY:** Martin Luther summarizes this in the last part of this section of the Catechism: “Anyone who does not believe these words, or doubts them, is neither prepared nor worthy, for the words ‘for you’ require simply a believing heart.”

But is being worthy or prepared something you do? No. It never was and it never will be. You have nothing of your own to add here. Christ has done it all. A believing heart hears Jesus say “for you” and is certain that He means exactly what He says. That's what a believing heart is: a heart that clings for dear life to Jesus' words. He does not lie. It is for you, a sinner who betrayed Him and to whom He gives His own body and blood for the forgiveness of your sin. This is most certainly true.

## 6. MEMORY WORK



The words in Luther's Small Catechism are worth memorizing. In this lesson, there could be tools, including songs, that will equip students to find some success.

- *What benefits do we receive from this sacrament?* The benefits of this sacrament are pointed out by the words, *given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sin*. These words assure us that in the sacrament we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.
- *How can eating and drinking do all this?* It is not eating and drinking that does this, but the words, *given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins*. These words, along with eating and drinking, are the main thing in the sacrament. And whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: forgiveness of sins.
- *When is a person rightly prepared to receive this sacrament?* Fasting and other outward preparations serve a good purpose. However, that person is well prepared and worthy who believes these words, *given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins*. But anyone who does not believe these words, or doubts them, is neither prepared nor worthy, for the words for you require simply a believing heart.

# 7. LEARNING CHECK



- Which of these are benefits we receive from the Lord's Supper?
  - **the forgiveness of sin**
  - **salvation**
  - **eternal life**
  - good citizenship



- Which word is closest in meaning to “deserving”?
  - forgiveness
  - mercy
  - **worthy**
  - benefit



- **True** or **False**? There is nothing you can do to make yourself worthy to receive the Lord's Supper.



- Who can make you worthy of Christ's body and blood?
  - You can make yourself worthy by praying, serving your neighbor, etc.
  - Your pastor or confirmation teacher
  - **Only God can make you worthy, and He does it by choosing you as His own apart from anything you do**



- Mercy is
  - unfair.
  - not getting what you deserve.
  - what Jesus is giving you in the Lord's Supper.
  - **all of the above.**



- Which words from Jesus Christ tell you who is to receive the Lord's Supper? **FOR YOU**



- The person who believes Christ's words has
  - **exactly what the words say: the forgiveness of sins.**
  - to work really hard to keep their faith alive.
  - paid attention in confirmation class.
  - all of the above.

- What would make a person unworthy and unprepared to receive the Lord's Supper?
  - sinning against Jesus
  - **believing you don't really need Jesus' forgiveness**
  - skipping confirmation class
  - all of the above

## 8. WRAP UP

### Closing Prayer & Benediction



- *(from Martin Luther)* Lord, I am unworthy, but You have assured me I shall have forgiveness of sins through Your body and blood which I eat and drink in the sacrament. Amen, dear Lord; Your Word is true. I do not doubt it. Let happen to me whatever You say. Amen

It is good practice to give a blessing to each individual student before they leave you! (You might also select one of them to give this spoken benediction to you.) Our Lord uses baptized believers to give this, God's message, to one another. Here is a Benediction that you could use this week:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ, who by His promise alone makes you, *[name]*, worthy to receive the gift of His kingdom, keep you in His grace and in faith, to everlasting life. Amen.



**Luther House**  
of Study