



agape

| a · gap · ae |

a Greek word for love

A family Agape meal

The early Christians had a practice of meeting for meals together – ‘Agape Feasts’. ‘Agape’ is pronounced ‘a-gap-ae’ and is a Greek word for love. These were times of fellowship and sharing which strengthened the bond between them.

Use this leaflet to create an Agape meal at home. It works best if one person takes on the role of ‘leading’ and reads through the instructions in advance. There are some additional ideas at the end which you could also use.

There are prayers, questions and actions which others can participate in. We suggest that sometimes an adult asks the questions and a child gives the answers, and sometimes it is reversed.

Decide who will read each prayer before you begin.

Preparation

- Choose a short passage/story from the Bible to reflect on at the end of the meal (use a children’s Bible if that is more appropriate).
- Lay things out for dinner and have a candle, a bowl of warm soapy water and towel ready (or just use the sink!).
- Place a Bible in the middle, maybe on a special place mat and a cross if you have one. Involve the children in setting all this up.
- Cook something you all enjoy. There are no set dishes or courses, just what you would like to make and eat! Have fun developing your own traditions – perhaps food that reminds you of holidays or special times.

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Opening words

Stand together and hold hands, if you wish, while the leader shares these opening words:

Leader Our extraordinary God used ordinary items and everyday events to be signs and symbols for us.

Question Who has made us and knows us and loves us forever?

Answer God.

Question How does the church welcome us into God's family?

Answer Baptism.

Question What do we use for Baptism?

Answer Water.

Leader Let's wash our hands as we begin, reflecting with thankful hearts on the water of baptism and the welcome into God's family.

People wash and dry their hands and then everyone sits down.

Candle

Question Why do we light this Candle?

Answer To remind us that God is with us and that Jesus is the light of the world.

Light the candle and pray:

With the light of this candle,
we remember the light of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
God, you are here with us now
and with our friends, family, fellow
Christians and all people.

Especially we remember that you are also with...

(Invite everyone to remember someone from church, school, extended family, friends or neighbours by saying their name)

Thank you, Jesus, Light of the world.

Amen.



Thanksgiving prayer

Leader Jesus, God's own son, came into the world to be with us and save us through his death and resurrection. Jesus asked us to remember him as we eat and drink together.

Question What does Jesus say is the most important commandment?

Answer **To love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength and to love your neighbour as yourself.**

Set out the food – if not already set – and say grace (a thank you prayer for the food). There is one below or you can choose your own. Children can be encouraged to write or say their own; or use a prayer cube to make choosing a grace prayer more fun and interactive.



Generous God,
bless all of us who are gathered here.
May we know the fullness of your presence
at every meal and in all our sharing,
longing for that day when we will share together
in your heavenly banquet.
Amen.

Enjoy the food and the company, share good news, invite each person to share something they are grateful for. At the end of the meal you may want to clear the dishes away.

Leader Jesus broke bread and gave people physical food, but he also said we need spiritual food. He sent the Holy Spirit to be our teacher and guide.

Question What can help us learn about God?

Answer **The Bible, which tells God's special story.**

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Bible prayer

Lord God, thank you for your word.
As we read and listen to it now,
please encourage us through it
and help us know you better.
Amen.



Read a short Bible passage and, if appropriate, invite everyone to think about it. You could use open ended questions to prompt imagination like 'I wonder what...?' 'What might it have felt like...?' You could draw a picture to go with the story or act it out!

Closing words

Leader Give thanks to God for all that is good, God's love endures for ever. Let us reflect and share God's love in our lives this week, in all we do and think and say.

You may want to finish by saying the words of The Grace together (this is a prayer used by Christians all around the world):

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God and the fellowship of
the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore.

Amen.

Choose two people to blow out the candle and put the Bible away.

Further suggestions

- Place the Bible on a special cloth already open at the reading, or mark the page.
- Invest in a good children's Bible. Use a prayer cube (see previous page).
- Make a simple cross to stand on the table.
- Use British Sign Language for 'love God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength' – see christianbsl.com.
- Additional liturgical resources available from southwark.anglican.org/liturgy.

Share your pictures and stories on social media:
#AgapeMeal, and tag @SouthwarkCofE



The Diocese of
Southwark