

The Augsburg Confession *Talking About Faith with Family and Friends*

Emperor Charles V summoned the Protestant and Catholic theologians to Augsburg in 1530 to settle the divisions between them. The emperor asked for a concise statement of their beliefs with the intended purpose of finding areas of agreement to keep the empire united.



Article X: Of the Lord's Supper

Discussion: When and where did you first receive the Lord's Supper? When was the last time you received the Lord's Supper? How do you understand the mystery of the miracle of the consecration of the Lord's Supper? Is the Augsburg Confession too restrictive when it only accepts the teaching of the Real Presence and the distribution of both the body and blood or is this teaching of supreme importance in the history of the Christian church? Is it appropriate to smile when receiving this sacrament or is a pensive and reflective behavior more appropriate?

"Of the Supper of the Lord they (Lutheran churches) teach that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who eat the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise."

Importance: The interpretation of the consecration and distribution of the Lord's Supper has been interpreted differently by all the major Christian denominations. The Lutheran Church teaches that the body and blood of Christ is truly present in the elements of the bread and wine. The phrase that clearly defines the Lutheran teaching is that **Christ's body and blood are really present in the bread and wine, with the bread and wine, and through the bread and wine**. This is called the Real Presence.

The difference with the Roman Catholic Church is that with the teaching of transubstantiation the bread and wine lose their physical elements when the priest consecrates the sacrament with the Words of Institution spoken by Jesus Christ. Other Protestant denominations teach that the elements represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ. All Christian religions teach that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament, forgives sins, strengthens faith, requires the Words of Institution spoken by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper, and requires a personal self-examination or preparation by the individual. The names commonly used for the Lord's Supper are the Eucharist and Holy Communion.



The Real Presence: Belief in and Knowledge of the Catholic Teaching by Christians in the United States

	ANES '08: <i>Believe—the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus Christ</i>	PEW '10: <i>Know—that Catholics teach bread/wine become body/blood</i>
All Christians (Catholic and non-Catholic)	64%	41%
Catholics	74%	55%
Other Christians (neither Protestant/Catholic)	61%	
All Protestants	59%	35%
<i>Lutherans</i>	<i>70%</i>	
Protestants, "born again"	65%	
<i>Methodists</i>	<i>63%</i>	
White, Protestants, "born again"	63%	40%
<i>Baptists</i>	<i>60%</i>	
Protestants, <u>not</u> "born again"	51%	

Sources: American National Election Study, 2008 and Pew Research Center's Forum On Religion & Public Life, 2010.
 Note: ANES respondents asked this question were self-identified Christians who are American citizens of voting age. Pew respondents were adults living in the continental United States, 18 years of age or older.

ANES question: *R belief in Transubstantiation: Do you believe that when people take Holy Communion, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, or do you believe that does not happen? 1) Yes, does happen or 2) No, does not happen.*

Pew question: *Which of the following best describes the Catholic teaching about the bread and wine used for Communion? 1) The bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus Christ or 2) The bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.*

