

Children and Holy Communion – Some ideas for discussion

For each area, there are one or two questions, a Bible passage and a personal story:

- What answers might you give initially to the questions?
- Read the Bible passage carefully in its context. Does this give any help in thinking about this area? Is there other Biblical material to look at?
- How do you respond to the personal story?
- As a result of your discussion in this area:
 - ➔ What main idea/point do you want to affirm?
 - ➔ What main question do you want to pursue further?
 - ➔ How does this help us think about children and Holy Communion?

1 Children and God

- How is a child's faith/relationship with God different from that of an adult?

Mark 10:13-16 (and 17-31) Jesus, children and a rich young man

"I like it when we share the bread. I think about Jesus loving me." (Esther, 8)

"The stuff in the cup at our old church tasted weird, but I liked joining in." (Grace, 11)

2 Children and the church household

- How is a child's place in the church household different from that of an adult, especially in what they might be able to give or need to receive?
- Can Holy Communion have a part to play in this?

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (and 10-25)

"On Sunday lunchtime Josh is always asking difficult questions about what they've done in Sunday Club. I try to answer as best I can, but I'm not sure I help. Yesterday he was asking all about what Communion's for and Jesus' blood and things. I explained it really badly?" Sarah

3 Children and baptism

- How is a young child's baptism different from that of an adult in what happens and what it signifies?

Acts 16:16-40 (esp. 31-34)

"Anna and our two girls and I came along to church for the first time last year. It wasn't like we thought it would be. We've taken big steps of faith together and decided we would all be baptised. What will happen about Communion for Jodie and Olivia?" Kelvin

4 Holy Communion and its roots in the Passover

- If children played an important role in the Passover meal, are there any possible benefits from their participation in Holy Communion?

Exodus 12:21-28

“What do you think of Communion?”

“It’s good to have it. I like having it because you can remember Jesus dying.”

“Do you have any questions about Communion?”

“Does something happen to you when you eat the bread?”

Clare (aged 45) talking to Owen (aged 7)

5 The significance of Holy Communion

- What is/are the purpose(s) of Holy Communion?
- Can those purposes be the same for a child?

1 Corinthians 10:14-17; 11:23-26

“I know I shouldn’t get so worked up about it, but it feels as if children are taking over the whole of our worship. Holy Communion is the one place where I can still concentrate on the heart of my relationship with God. Surely children can’t understand what it is all about.” Elizabeth

6 Holy Communion and me

- What is the basis on which I come to share in Holy Communion?
- Can a child come on the same basis?

Mark 9:33-37

*“I’ve never thought about it before, but I find it very hard to answer my eight-year-old son when he asks me why he doesn’t get bread or wine – though he likes being prayed for. Sam loves Jesus as much as I do – probably more. I don’t think I can carry on receiving bread and wine when he is denied it. Am I being over-the-top?”
Jon*