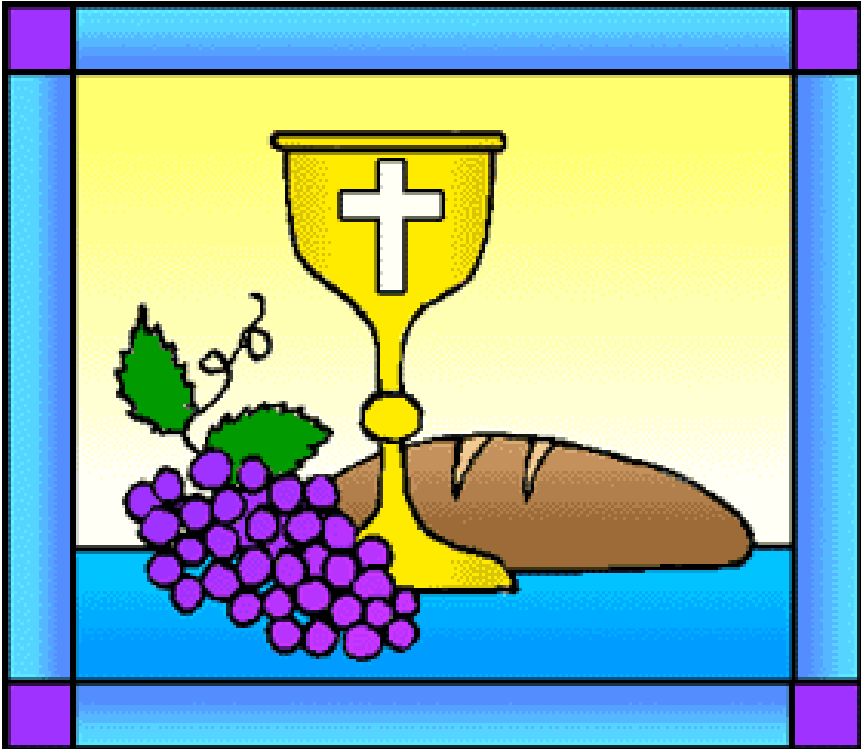


Admission of Children to Holy Communion before Confirmation in the Diocese of Durham



Introduction

The diocese of Durham was one of the first dioceses in the country to promote the admission of children to communion before confirmation, and many of our parishes have sought the Bishop's permission to admit children under this procedure.

The issue of admission to communion before confirmation involves each parish as a whole, it's congregation and everyone involved in the life of the parish and it is therefore important that the subject is discussed widely and at a number of levels.

This pack is designed to help those parishes wishing to admit children to communion before confirmation, consider and begin the process of admission, preparation and the taking of communion to ensuring this practice is continued in the life of the parish.

Sharon Pritchard Children's Ministry Adviser

Guidelines for churches

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Preparing a Parish

The decision to admit children to communion is a challenging but exciting step. The PCC will need to consider the nurture and the care of all its members. Issues of faith development and implications for rites of passage as well as patterns of worship will need to be considered. It is therefore not a decision which should be taken lightly. Considerable time and commitment will be needed for its proper implementation, but it is well worth the effort and help is available from the Children's Ministry Adviser, Sharon Pritchard.

It is hoped that this pack will help you to begin to explore this issue with a step by step guide through the Diocesan procedures, as well as information and details of further resources.

Issues to consider

Theological

- Baptism is the undisputed rite of entry into membership of the Body of Christ: “In the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body” (Common Worship p290); and membership of that body is affirmed in the reception of Holy Communion: “we are one body, because we all share in one bread” (Common Worship p179). To deny Holy Communion to any baptised Christian could be seen as denying the full validity of their Baptism.
- If a sacrament is seen as a free, unearned gift of grace expressing God’s unconditional love, to what extent can conditions be imposed regarding admission to the sacrament of Holy Communion?
- Jesus uses children as an example of what ‘the greatest in the kingdom of heaven’ are like. How is this reflected in our practice if we make children the least at the Communion Table by denying their full participation? Some passages of scripture to consider: Matthew 18:1-5; 19:13-14; 21:14-17.
- If Confirmation is made a condition of receiving Holy Communion it could be seen as having a confused significance - vying with Baptism for importance as a rite of entry - rather than having a clear and distinct significance of its own as a rite of adult commitment.

Historical

- The practice of the earliest Christians with regard to receiving Holy Communion is not clear but certainly whole households were baptised and it is assumed that children would have been included. It seems that Communion immediately followed Baptism, and there is no indication that children were excluded. The Eastern Orthodox Churches have always communicated children immediately after Baptism.
- The subsequent 'divorce' of Communion from Baptism has been the combined result of the theological preoccupations and practical circumstances of following centuries: e.g. the doctrine of original sin led to the promotion of infant Baptism; church expansion necessitated Baptism by priests rather than bishops, followed by laying on of hands by bishops during periodic tours; the failure of parishioners to present children to the bishop on these occasions contributed to the bishops' demand that 'laying on of hands' precede Communion; the development of 'laying on of hands' into a rite involving the confirmation of baptismal vows produced an emphasis on the need for teaching before Confirmation.
- The moves in recent times from afternoon to morning meetings of Sunday School, and towards Parish Communion as the regular Sunday service have led to a new practical situation in which children find themselves regularly in church at a service in which they cannot fully participate.
- The tradition of the church regarding admission of children to Communion is not represented by a static 'norm' but is characterised by a continued development in practice in the light of changing situations: in the spirit of this tradition, what developments are appropriate to our situation today?

Pastoral

- Child psychologists and experts in children's spiritual development alike point to the importance of children taking part in practical activities – learning by doing – and of their natural facility for engaging with symbol and mystery. Full participation in Communion is sometimes claimed to be an erosion of childhood, but instead it could be seen as cherishing and making best use of the very characteristics of childhood.
- One important characteristic of childhood is the need to belong. Partaking in Holy Communion is a powerful indication of belonging – to God, and to one another in the Church. Much is made of what children may or may not understand about the sacrament, but they will certainly understand the rejection implied in being denied food at the Lord's Table.

Setting the scene

An Ecumenical Dimension

Other churches have also been examining their approaches and have produced various reports that encourage and enable change:

- The United Reformed Church discussed their diverse practice in 1970 in Children and Communion
- The 1987 Methodist Conference approved the report Children at Communion
- The Church of Scotland discussed their situation in the 1982 essays Children at the Table
- The Roman Catholic Church prepares children to receive their first communion around the age of seven years and they are then confirmed at a later date around the age of twelve

In 1997 we were given a set of guidelines from the House of Bishops which opened up the way for Parishes in England to explore for themselves this important issue. These have recently been updated by the General Synod. This process has happened slowly and gradually in some Dioceses.

Where are we now?

The Church of England has grappled with the issue of children being admitted to communion before confirmation in both General Synod and the House of Bishops over the last 20 years. General Synod Reports such as '**Children in the Way**' (1988) and '**On the Way**' (1995) have considered the importance of children in our churches and how they are being welcome and involved in the worshipping community of the church. In 2006 General Synod approved Regulations for the Admission of Baptised Children to Holy Communion. The Regulations, which may be used in the Diocese of Durham, allow an incumbent, with the support of the PCC, to apply to the Bishop for approval to admit 'children who have been baptised but who have not yet been confirmed and are not yet ready and desirous to be confirmed' to Holy Communion, provided that the conditions set out in the regulations are satisfied.

From General Synod

ADMISSION OF BAPTISED CHILDREN TO HOLY COMMUNION REGULATIONS 2006

(see Canon B 15A paragraph 1(a))

Regulations made by the General Synod on 8 February 2006 and which came into force on 15 June 2006

The General Synod hereby makes the following Regulations under paragraph 1(c) of Canon B15A :-

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Admission of Baptised Children to Holy Communion Regulations 2006 and shall come into force on the fifteenth day of June 2006 as appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.
2. Children who have been baptised but who have not yet been confirmed and who are not yet ready and desirous to be confirmed as required by paragraph 1(a) of Canon B15A may be admitted to Holy Communion provided that the conditions set out in these Regulations are satisfied.
3. Every diocesan bishop may at any time make a direction to the effect that applications from parishes under these Regulations may be made in his diocese. The bishop's discretion in this respect shall be absolute, and he may at any time revoke such a direction (without prejudice to the validity of any permissions already granted thereunder).
4. Where a direction under paragraph 3 is in force in a diocese, an incumbent may apply to the bishop for permission that children falling within the definition in paragraph 2 may be admitted to Holy Communion in one or more of the parishes in the incumbent's charge. Such application must be made in writing and must be accompanied by a copy of a resolution in support of the application passed by the parochial church council of each parish in respect of which the application is made.

5. Before granting any permission under paragraph 4, the bishop must first satisfy himself (a) that the parish concerned has made adequate provision for preparation and continuing nurture in the Christian life and will encourage any child admitted to Holy Communion under these Regulations to be confirmed at the appropriate time and (b) where the parish concerned is within the area of a local ecumenical project established under Canon B 44, that the other participating Churches have been consulted.

6. The bishop's decision in relation to any application under paragraph 4 shall be final, but a refusal shall not prevent a further application being made on behalf of the parish concerned, provided that at least one year has elapsed since the most recent previous application was refused.

7. Any permission granted under paragraph 4 shall remain in force unless and until revoked by the bishop. The bishop must revoke such permission upon receipt of an application for the purpose made by the incumbent. Such application must be made in writing and accompanied by a copy of a resolution in support of the application passed by the parochial church council of each parish in respect of which the application is made. Otherwise, the bishop may only revoke a permission granted under paragraph 4 if he considers that the conditions specified in paragraph 5 are no longer being satisfactorily discharged. Before revoking any permission on these grounds, the bishop shall first notify the incumbent of his concerns in writing and shall afford the incumbent a reasonable time to respond and, where appropriate, to take remedial action.

8. Where a permission granted under paragraph 4 is in force, the incumbent shall not admit any child to Holy Communion unless he or she is satisfied that (a) the child has been baptised and (b) a person having parental responsibility for the child is content that the child should be so admitted. Otherwise, subject to any direction of the bishop, it is within the incumbent's absolute discretion to decide whether, and if so when, any child should first be admitted to Holy Communion.

9. The incumbent shall maintain a register of all children admitted to Holy Communion under these Regulations, and where practicable will record on the child's baptismal certificate the date and place of the child's first admission. If the baptismal certificate is not available, the incumbent shall present the child with a separate certificate recording the same details.

10. A child who presents evidence in the form stipulated in paragraph 9 that he or she has been admitted to Holy Communion under these Regulations shall be so admitted at any service of Holy Communion conducted according to the rites of the Church of England in any place, regardless of whether or not any permission under paragraph 4 is in force in that place or was in force in that place until revoked.

11. These Regulations shall apply to a cathedral as if it were a parish, with the modifications that:

- (a) any application under paragraphs 3 or 7 must be made by the dean of the cathedral concerned, accompanied by a copy of a resolution in support of the application passed by the chapter of the cathedral concerned;
- (b) the obligations imposed on the incumbent under paragraphs 8 and 9 shall be imposed on the dean of the cathedral concerned.

12. A diocesan bishop may delegate any of his functions under these Regulations (except his functions under paragraph 3) to a person appointed by him for the purpose, being a suffragan or assistant bishop or archdeacon of the diocese.

13. In these Regulations:

- (a) 'incumbent', in relation to a parish, includes:
 - (i) in a case where the benefice concerned is vacant (and paragraph (ii) below does not apply), the rural dean;
 - (ii) in a case where a suspension period (within the meaning of the Pastoral Measure 1983) applies to the benefice concerned, the priest-in-charge;
 - (iii) in a case where a special cure of souls in respect of the parish has been assigned to a vicar in a team ministry by a Scheme under the Pastoral Measure 1983 or by licence from the bishop, that vicar; and
- (b) references to paragraph numbers are to the relevant paragraph or paragraphs in these Regulations.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will the children understand what they are doing when they take Communion?

Children are certainly able to understand the origin and specialness of sharing the bread and wine. A deeper understanding of the mystery of the sacrament is a lifetime's work for all of us, and one that will never be complete however old we are. The important point to consider is whether we ought to view taking Communion as a prize which we win by passing tests, or whether we should see it as a free, gracious and unconditional gift from God.



Will they take it seriously?

Children respond to the mood and atmosphere around them. The vast majority of children will take their lead from the way the adult members of the congregation behave as they receive the bread and wine. Receiving Communion is a very powerful moment, and the power is certainly not lost on children in fact they have an openness to the Holy which many adults find it hard to recapture.

How will the vicar know who can receive?

A record must be kept of all the children who have been admitted to Communion before Confirmation, and the parish clergy will have been involved in preparing the children for admission. There should not, therefore, be a difficulty in knowing which children should receive.



What happens if a family moves to a parish which doesn't admit?

When the admission of children to Communion before Confirmation was first introduced, a major concern was that there would be problems if a child who had been admitted moved to a parish that didn't admit. In practice, this has not proved to be a difficulty: the incumbent of the parish in which the child has been admitted simply provides a letter to their new incumbent requesting that they continue to receive Communion. The principle, supported by the House of Bishops, is that no one who has been admitted to receiving the sacrament should ever subsequently be denied it.

What about children who are not baptised?

No one who is not baptised can be admitted to receive Holy Communion. If an unbaptised child wishes to be prepared for admission then they must be baptised before they are admitted. Their Baptism could form part of the preparation programme. However, it is important to consult fully with the family beforehand to make sure that they are willing for the Baptism to take place.

What if children do not want to be admitted to Communion before confirmation?

Consent is vital at all levels in admitting children to Communion. No one must feel that they are being forced into the practice. The parish as a whole must be supportive, and so must any family whose children are going to be involved. But most important, the individual children must make a free choice to be admitted. It may well be that some children in a particular church ask to be prepared for admission, and some do not.

What happens if not all agree to the change?

It is rare to have complete agreement on any development in the Church or any other large organisation for that matter. It is not necessary to have 100% agreement in the parish for admission to go ahead; however, there should be substantial support. Admission should not be a practice that disappears from the life of a parish if the vicar or a few enthusiastic families move elsewhere.

Is there a 'right age' for admission?

Children of seven years old are generally considered to be at an age where they can understand the basic preparation course and answer for themselves.

Will there be a problem with children whose parents refuse to let them receive?

Possibly, however if the parents understand the issues involved and have fully considered their child's request to receive communion they may feel at ease after talking things through with the Incumbent to reach a decision.

How might this affect church schools?

The Eucharist is an important part of worship in many church schools. Before children can be admitted to communion church schools must work with the local parish to either develop an appropriate policy which follows the Regulations or to work within the existing policy that parish may have to admit children to communion. A suitable preparation course will need to be in place, possibly led by the incumbent of the parish and the church congregation might be involved or invited to participate in a service of admission.

Will admission to communion alter the meaning of confirmation?

Admission removes the linking of confirmation as the only way to access communion. Confirmation can then stand in its own right as a commitment of faith with a public testimony and commissioning by the Bishop to live out that faith in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Admission to communion should not be undertaken until every member of the congregation is in favour of the policy.

A two-thirds majority vote by the Parochial Church Council is adequate to begin the process of admission.

What do Children Think?

Why does the vicar say we are one body because we all share one bread, when I don't get any?

'I like being part of carrying the bread or wine up to the front, but why can't I take it?'

I love Jesus just as much as everyone else!

There are lots of things I don't understand yet. But my family still feed me.



I think if I had been in that room with Jesus and the disciples, and I was hungry, Jesus would have given me something to eat and drink the same as the others.

Some questions and answers from children

What do you think about when you have the bread and wine?

Being at the Last Supper with Jesus and His friends. It's like being one of them.

Why do you think Jesus wants us to share bread and wine?

To show what He did for us and so that He can be really near us.

Does the communion part of the service feel different?

Everyone joins in and feels special.

What do you like about the communion part of the service?

When the vicar blesses the bread and wine and prays a blessing on those who don't take bread and wine.

What do you like about having communion?

It's great sharing the experience with other people.

Developing a Policy - A step by step guide.

Step One Talk through the idea with as many church members as possible, including the children. You may wish to do this through sermons, teaching and consultation events. In some situations there may be ecumenical partners who should be consulted about the matter.

Step Two The widespread consultation in the parish culminates with the discussion in and decision by the PCC. By now it should be clear whether or not there is a desire to apply to the Bishop for his permission to implement a parish policy for 'Communion before Confirmation'. The decision to approach the Bishop requires a vote at the PCC. The Bishop needs to know that a two-thirds majority is in favour of moving forward in this way. In the case of a team ministry where different churches may have different views, the PCC would need to agree to a diversity of practice in the team.

Step Three Producing the necessary policies. You will need:-

1. A Policy of Nurture

This is the articulation of the opportunities for growth and development in faith offered by the church community through its life of worship and learning, to everyone – from birth to and throughout adulthood.

2. A Policy for Admission to Holy Communion

This should meet the requirements of the Regulations and make reference to:

Consultation with children's leaders concerning the content of programmes of preparation, how parents/carers might be involved and how any preparation might be integrated into what is already taking place.

A preparation course should include teaching on belonging, prayer, the Bible and the Eucharist as the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, as well as on the more practical aspects of the reception of the Holy Communion. A short four week course is included in this pack along with details of other courses that are available.

The age at which children are likely to be admitted, and arrangements for parents/carers to give their consent. (Some example letters are included in the pack)

The bishop asks that careful note be taken of Paragraphs 2 & 5 of the Regulations and suggests that normally this is likely to be during Year 2 or 3 of Primary school. However he recognises that there may be pastoral reasons why at a local level a decision to admit a younger child may be appropriate.

The practical implications for patterns of services, liturgies and all-age involvement in the Parish.

The service of admission and the records that will be kept.

Examples of liturgy and content for the admission service can be found in this pack.

3. The relationship of this policy to the 'Safe and Secure' Policy.

The policies for nurture and admission to communion should be integrated with the Child Protection Policy '**Safe and Secure**'.

Step Four When the policies have been agreed, send them to the Bishop, along with the relevant PCC minutes which include the voting figures indicating the 'large majority' in favour of admission to communion before confirmation.

Step Five Having received the application and being satisfied that it fulfils the requirements of the Regulations, The Bishop will sign the admission policy and return it to the parish as an indication of his permission being granted. An example of a policy for Admission to Holy Communion can be found on the next page.

A SAMPLE POLICY (used with permission)

**St Alban Windy Nook
The Admission of Baptised Children
to Holy Communion before Confirmation**

1. Introduction

We believe all ages are called to be part of the Church of God, and we are committed to helping everyone find their place in the church. We believe that baptism is the universal sign of complete initiation into the Church. We all need to grow into our baptism as we daily respond to the call to follow Jesus. We believe that confirmation is a key part of growing into our baptism as an important rite of commitment and of being strengthened in Christian faith in adulthood. The opening of God's Word and the breaking of bread together are essential to our Christian nurture and should be limited by age or ability. We do not believe children are simply the 'church of tomorrow', but that we are all the church for 'Today'.

2. Background

At the beginning of 2003 the PCC and congregation of St Alban Windy Nook began seriously exploring the admission of baptised children to Holy Communion before Confirmation. A series of sermons set the discussion in a biblical and liturgical context followed by an open debate with the congregation. This debate was more heated than the PCC had expected, and although a clear majority of people were in favour of the admission the PCC decided to let the issue rest a while before returning to it formally. At the end of 2005 the PCC returned to the issue, and at the beginning of 2006 held a series of teaching and consultation events which were very well received.

3. Agreement

In March 2006 the PCC was able to unanimously pass the following motion: "St. Alban's PCC and congregation support baptised children receiving communion before confirmation, provided they are generally around 7 years of age or older and regularly attend worship. They must complete a 10 session preparation course, have parental support and the agreement of the vicar. The process should rightly be seen within the context of the church's whole ministry to children and be part of allowing them to participate appropriately in the worshipping life of the church."

4. Preparation

The preparation course is a nationally recommended 10 session course, *Welcome to the Lord's Table*. Sessions will take place on Sunday mornings, at special midweek sessions and at home with parental/carer support. Preparation will also include practical instruction about receiving bread and wine. At the end of the course admission to communion must be agreed by the child, parents and the vicar.

5. Admission

We expect children to be publicly admitted to communion before the whole church family at an appropriate time. The course and admission to communion will be held regularly and offered at least annually. We understand that children who have been admitted to communion in this parish will be entitled to receive communion in other parishes, even those who have not yet agreed the process. Children admitted to communion will still be expected to come to confirmation at an appropriate time as they take their place as adults in the church.

6. Review

As a new initiative the PCC will keep this process under regular review. *St Alban Windy Nook Draft Scheme for Admission of Children to Communion March 2007*

Preparation

Adequate preparation is very important especially where a child or children who wish to be admitted to communion before confirmation are from a family with no church background. The following four week course is designed to prepare children and equip them with the knowledge, understanding and experience to receive communion before confirmation, however it is important to remember that this is not intended to be a course that must be “passed” before a child is admitted to communion. We must be mindful of the varying needs of *all* our children. Jesus welcomes *all* regardless of any reservations we may have. We are here to help children along their journey of faith and it is not our place to ensure they are ‘ready’ in our opinion to be admitted to communion.

There are other preparation courses, some of which take up to ten weeks to complete. Please refer to the resources section of this pack for further details.



Diocese of Durham

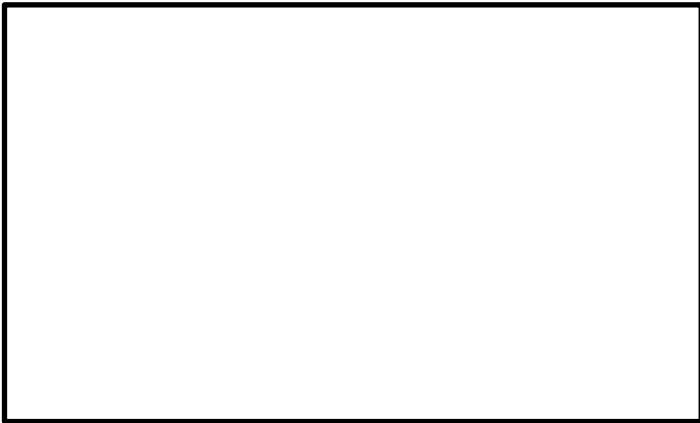
Admission to Holy Communion Children's Preparation Course



Week 1

Belonging

This is me
(draw yourself here)



My name is



My birthday is on



My favourite food is



This is my church
(draw it here)



It is called



Things I do at church



This is my school
(draw it here)




It is called



Things I do at school

God made us to be like Him and to be part of His family.
(draw a picture of your family)



God loves us all....

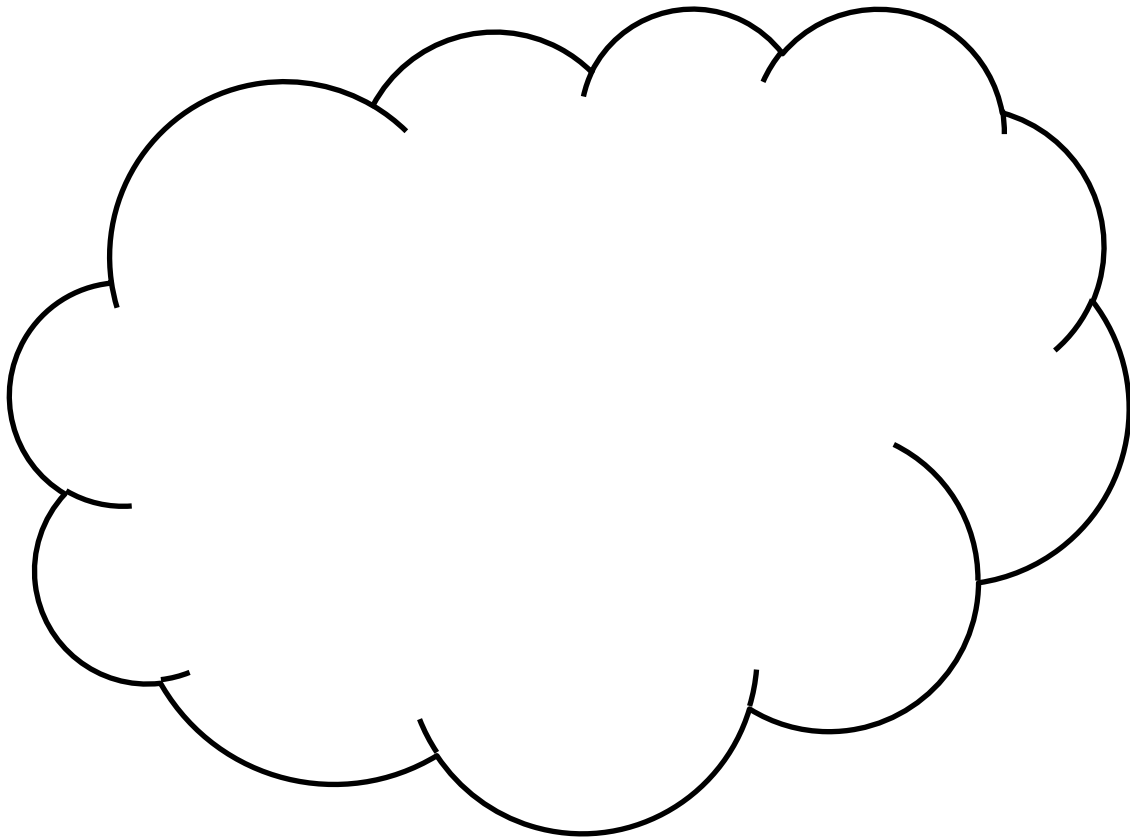
When Jesus was thirty, he was baptized in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. The Holy Spirit descended and he heard a voice from heaven saying, 'You are my own dear Son and I am pleased with you.'



In Baptisms today, there are lots of items used can you remember which ones?
(draw a circle around them)



Being part of God's family is very special. Write or draw how it makes you feel.



Week 2 Prayer

Amazing things can happen when you pray! It is great to chat to God and listen to what he has to say!



Use this prayer to start a collection of prayers in a notebook.
In the space next to it you can write your own prayer if you wish.

A prayer for little things

Dear God,
I bring to you all the little things on earth.
A feather, a daisy, a marble, a ladybird

For your own prayer.....

They are all your special treasures,
as we are your special treasures.
May we all be beautiful for you each in
our own way, giving thanks for your infinite
care of the tiniest things.

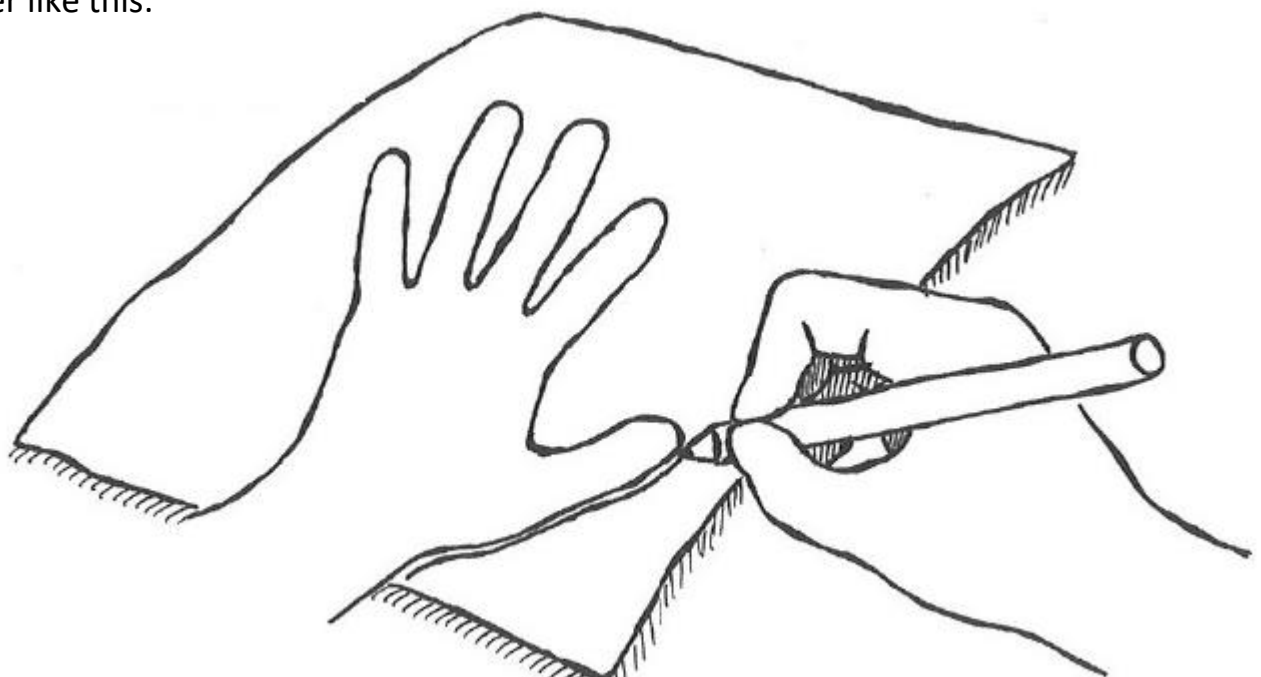
Christopher Herbert, Prayers for Children
National Society/Church House Publishing, 1993

It doesn't matter how you pray and chat to God, there are loads of different ways,
like going for a walk, being creative, sitting in a quite space and much more.....

In the space below write down or draw how you like to pray

When you pray.....

Draw round your hand on a piece
of paper like this:



There are five different kinds of prayer. Each finger can help you to remember the names. They are:

praise **saying sorry** **asking** **thanking** **silent prayer**

You can also use your fingers to remind you of different things to pray for, like this:

thumb this is the strongest finger. Pray for all the strong things in your life, like home and family, that protect and take care of you.

index the pointing finger. Pray for all those who guide and help, like teachers, clergy, doctors, fire and police services.

middle this is the tallest finger. Pray for all those who have power in the world.

ring this is the weakest finger. It cannot do much by itself. Pray for the poor, weak and helpless.

little the smallest and last finger. Pray for yourself.

When you say your prayers, hold each finger in turn, and remember!

Week 3

Do this in Remembrance of Me

Can you match the food on the left to the words on the right?

birthday cake

Easter

the Last Supper

Fridays

mince pies

Weddings

hot cross buns

Holy Communion

spaghetti

China

fish

Maundy Thursday

wedding cake

Italy

bread and wine

Christmas

Sweet and sour

Birthday

Can you remember what food is used for the Passover meal?
(Write or draw it here)



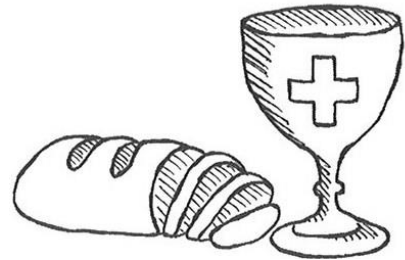
Remembering things is an important part of our lives.
We keep things to remind ourselves of important and
happy events. Do you have remembering things at
home - a baby book or photograph album?
What does your family keep?(Write or draw them here)

In church and school we remember things too. What is there in your church or school to remind you of people and past events? (Write or draw them here)

In the communion service we remember the Last Supper and the death of Jesus on the cross.

Here are some words for the breaking of the bread.
Which words does your church use?

Draw a ring around them.



Holy Communion Eucharist Mass the Lord's Supper

Can you put these words in the right spaces?

gave broke took blessed

Jesus _____ the bread. He _____ it,

he _____ it and _____ it to them.

You can find the story in the Bible, Mark chapter 14

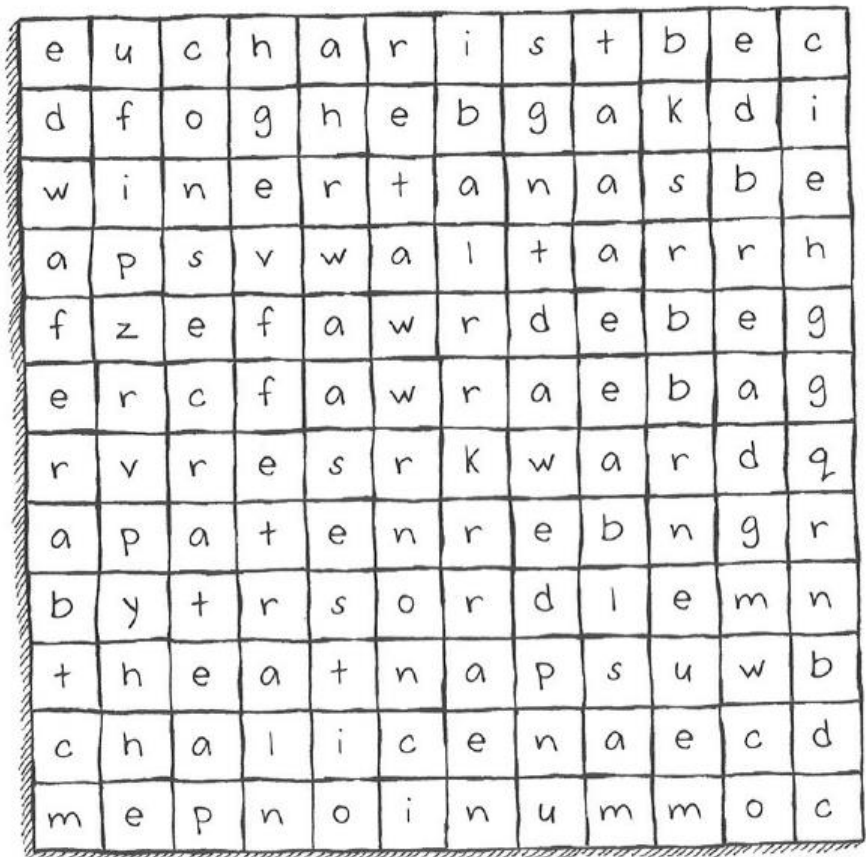
This is part of the communion service. Watch and listen for it. See if you can find the remembering words in your church service book.

Week 4

Everyone's invited!

Here are some Communion words for you to find.
Do you know what they mean? Don't worry if you don't!

communion
eucharist
bread
wine
chalice
paten
consecrate
water
altar
take
eat
draw
near
break
wafer



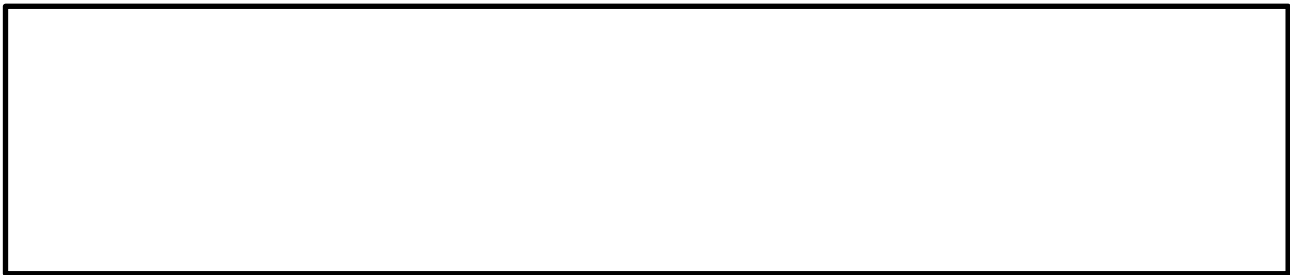
Which of these things do you use in your church's Communion service?
Put a circle around the words.....

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Cross | candles | chalice | paten | ciborium |
| plate | cup | flagon | holy table | wine |
| Altar | chasuble | stole | surplice | burse |
| Cassock | purificator | wafer | microphone | priest |
| service book | bread | server | crucifer | water |

Here is a Communion picture for you to colour.



How is this the same as your church or school?
How is it different?



Why not use the notes and doodle page to draw what Communion is like in your church or school if it is not the same as above?

notes and doodles page

Children and Holy Communion Preparation Course Leader's Notes

'Children and Holy Communion' by Diane Murrie and Steve Pearce was used as a basis for this course. Each session should be no more than an hour and a half long.

Week 1 – Belonging to God

Aims

- To think about the groups we belong to.
- To look at our family, our church family and Jesus' family.
- To see baptism as a sign of our belonging.
- To consider things we and others do that show we belong to God.

Things you will need

Drinks and biscuits
Booklets for children (downloaded separately)
2 Large A3 pieces of paper
Pens or colouring pencils
A4 sheet of symbols (at end of these notes)
Music
Candle and matches

I suggest you have juice and biscuits during one of the stories but it can happen at another time if you would rather.

Remember to get children to bring along their baptism certificates next week!

Beginning

As the children arrive get each of them to make a name badge that shows their name and maybe something about them. You could play a game where the children say who they are and something they like to eat, the next person has to then say their name and also the person's before them and it continues to go on..... Can get very confusing but it is fun!

Belonging to?

Ask each child to mention at least one group they belong to, as they tell you write down the groups on a large piece of paper. Discuss with the children how do they know they belong to the group?

Have a look at the first week of the children's booklet, give the children time to draw themselves and fill in the questions about themselves. Ask everyone, including leaders, to draw their family on the large piece of paper you have just written on. Talk as you draw but remember everyone's family will be different and that most children will be fairly matter of fact about what their family is like. Leaders must, of course, affirm everyone, must not express surprise or be judgemental, and should not invade family privacy. Be prepared to ask for yourself any questions you ask the children.

Chat to the children about church family, each child should though focus on whichever aspect of 'church' is most real, and expect each child's list to be different. Possibly if time give them a chance to fill in the spaces in the booklet.

Tell the story of the birth of Jesus or get the children to tell you the story of Jesus' birth. Then chat about Jesus' family.

Signs of belonging

One sign of belonging is through baptism. Ask the children who has been baptised and discuss what happens at baptism. If time allows you may want to look at the baptism register for any of the children who were baptised at your church, or other family members.

We belong to God because God loves us. God knows us all by name. Share a few thoughts on who God loves, inviting the group to say out their names first before they mention other people God loves. Names are a special sign of belonging, get the children to look up or see if they remember any of the disciple's names.

We belong.....

By coming to church – brainstorm with the children on another piece of paper under the heading 'what I like about coming to church'. Make sure everyone contributes something and avoid discussing contributions (if possible).

By having signs – look at the A4 sheet and ask the children if they have seen any of these signs, where have they seen them? Discuss what these signs are.

By sharing and caring – Discuss who needs caring for at the moment. Make a note to yourself to include any situations or people mentioned in your prayers at the end. Jesus very often showed his care for people who were in need. Tell the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand – at the end of the story talk to the children about when sharing is easy and when it is hard.

By talking and listening to God – chat about prayer ask the children when they pray, do they pray? Let them know that next week we are going to think about prayer and talking and listening to God.

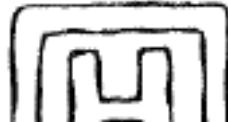
End

Put the two sheets of paper in front of everyone and tell the children that you are going to end this session by thinking about how they belong. Have a candle and place it in the middle of your sheets of paper and the mess around you. Get the children to sit quietly, you can play music. While they are quiet light the candle in the centre and pray for the children, for the session and remember to pray for those people and situations mentioned during the session.

Say the Grace together to finish off this time.

Signs and Symbols

Do you know what these signs mean?



Week 2 – Prayer

Aims

- To think about why we pray.
- To learn more about prayer and why it is important.

Things you will need

Drinks and biscuits
Booklets for children (downloaded separately)
A favourite prayer of your own that you can share
Different prayer books for children and prayer cube: Common Worship, Lion's books of prayers etc...
Things for creative prayer
Paper shredder
A4 pieces of paper
Pens
Music
Candle and matches

Make sure you look at everyone's Baptism Certificates

Why, How and When

Start off the session with discussion; ask the children 'do you know why you pray'? If nothing comes out of the conversation you can tell them that we pray because we want a relationship with God, to get to know Jesus and communicate. Ask the children if any of them have prayed. How do they pray? Share with the children how you pray.

Explain to the children there are lots of different ways to pray; through creative art and doing things, going for a walk, being aware of God's creation around you, at school, sitting quietly, lighting a candle etc.....

Matthew 6:6 Jesus said: "when you pray, go into your room, and when you shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." Jesus always went off to a quiet place to pray to his Father, explain that it is good sometimes to sit quietly and pray and listen to God.

Chat to the children and leaders, when they pray is there a good time to pray or does it just happen whenever?

Look at prayers

Tell the children that you don't always have to make up your own prayers, there are books and cubes that can help them; get the children to look at the prayer books and cube that you have brought. You might want to tell the children your favourite prayer and ask them if they have one of their own.

What do the children think of the books? Were there any prayers that they recognised in the books?

Time for prayer

Set up the room with some creative prayer activities: 'Ultimate Creative Prayer' by Kathryn Copsy and 'Multi- Sensory Prayer' by Sue Wallace are books that can help you with this activity. Make sure you give the children enough time to at least get around three of the activities and encourage the children to really think about what they are doing.

Here are some ideas of stations you could put up:

Creation - Take a petal and write on it some aspect of creation which you would like to thank God for. Arrange your petal around the edge of the circle to look like a flower. Take a few moments of silence to thank God for creation.

Unique - Finger prints God knows everything about us; He made us all unique. Press your finger on the ink pad and then onto the paper. Write your name next to it! Thank God for making you just as you are, unique and very special to Him.

The Mirror Look in the mirror, what do you see? Do you see something wonderfully made? Put your hand on your wrist. Can you feel a pulse? Life is running through you. Look at your finger tips, can you see the lines? No-one else has finger tips like that! You are so special. You are made in God's image, He is so proud of you, isn't that marvellous?

News - It is great to pray for the world around us. Look through the newspapers and cut out a story or headline that is important to pray about. As you cut it out start praying for that story or headline, then glue it on to the paper on the floor.

Candle Prayers - for our Friends, Family and the World. Who are the people in your life that you would like to say a prayer for? Maybe you would like to thank God for someone special. Maybe you know someone who needs His help. With an adult - light a candle as you tell God about them.

Thankful Prayers - Take a lump of play dough - touch it, how soft is it? Mould it in your hands, how does it feel? As you mould the dough into shapes what are you thankful for? Can you try to mould something that best resembles what you're thankful for? Take time to pray and let God know how thankful you are.

String of beads - Beads have been used as an aid to prayer for centuries. Take a length of thick thread and some beads of different colours. Tie the beads onto the thread to represent your life: your family, friends, school, hobbies and so on. Use the different colours to mark the different people or events. Using the beads, thank God for his blessings and to tell him about the difficult things in your life.

Throwing Prayers – (You need to make a sticky wall using double sided tape) Take a piece of paper and write on it a brief prayer for children in your community, or the names of children you know who are struggling with something. Then make your paper into a ball and as you pray throw it at the sticky wall and ask God to stick by the child. There are many more prayer ideas, if you would like more help please call the Diocesan Children's Ministry Adviser.

Ask the children to fill in the space about this section in their booklets.

Sorry

The greatest prayer of all is saying sorry

Tell the children the story of Jesus on the cross (Luke 23: 26 – 49), you can use your own words or use a child friendly version. Make the point that even on the cross Jesus forgave (Luke 23: 34).

Talk about when we do wrong things, mention another name for this is 'Sin' and how doing wrong things gets in the way of our relationship with God. Discuss with the children about 'confession', do they know what it means? Then discuss with the children about 'absolution' and how important it is to feel OK with God.

Ask the children to think of the wrong things they do – get them to write them down on a piece of paper. Once the children have written their prayers get everyone to say the 'confession' together

–
Almighty God Most merciful God (Common Worship, Order 1, page 169)

Then using the shredder, get the children to shred their wrong doings (Sin). Once the children have all shredded them say the 'absolution' (Common Worship, Order 1, page 170)

End

Ask the children to sit quietly while you have music playing, while they are quiet light the candle you used last week. Ask the children to think about prayer – chatting to God. Give them a moment to speak to God in their own way.

Using the hand prayer in their booklets ask the children to contribute to praying using their own hands. Bring all the prayers you have done in this session together through a short prayer then close the session with the Grace.

Week 3 – Do this in Remembrance of Me

Aims

- To talk about how food is used for special occasions
- To belong through remembering Jesus.

Things you will need

Drinks and biscuits
 Booklets for children (downloaded separately)
 A variety of food
 Find out what is eaten at Passover
 Bring along a photo album or something that reminds you of a place, situation etc...
 Music
 Candle

Make sure you have seen everyone's Baptism Certificates.

Food all the way

Start the session with a food quiz. Prepare a selection of foods for the children to taste. Go for variety, but make sure that several will have associations for them. (Make sure not to offend anyone's dietary customs or allergies – and avoid nuts.) You could include things like Easter egg, birthday cake, pickled onion, honey, tomato ketchup, salt etc...

Let the children taste the foods blindfolded, one at a time. Conceal the food so the children not tasting can't see what they are eating but they can listen to everyone's comments as they taste them. Ask the children if the food (either it's taste or smell) reminds them of something. Some of the foods may remind individuals of particular occasions, days of the week, celebrations etc.... or they may be able to remember the last time they had that food. What sort of memories does the food bring back – ordinary or special, good or bad?

The Passover

Tell the story of the Last supper in the Upper Room, the special last meal that Jesus had with his friends (Matthew 26:26-29), or watch a DVD clip ('Miracle Maker' is a good one to watch). Jesus wanted them to know how special they were to him so they celebrated on this special day of Passover with a meal together.

Explore the Passover celebration and the special food that is eaten during the Passover. This website could help you:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/holydays/passover_1.shtml

If there is time you may want to act out the Passover Celebration.

Remembering Jesus

Tell the group that Jesus wanted his friends to remember him and the way he gave his life for them. Ask how Jesus wanted them to do this? Several good answers may emerge but follow one that mentions bread and wine and the way that reminds us of Jesus. Draw out explanation and understanding from the children, rather than trying to give an adult rationalisation. This is a powerful story that will stimulate their thinking and give them opportunity to reflect.

Jesus told us to remember him through Bread and Wine 'This is my body broken for you..... This is my blood shed for you....' Ask the children what different ways of remembering they have (mementos, hugs, cards, stick on notes, photo album etc...) Show the children your photo album or thing you've brought along and tell them what it helps you remember.

One of the great things about Holy Communion is that it helps us remember what Jesus was and did. If there's time get the children to do their booklet and chat to them about what Jesus did for them.

End

On a table, place all the food you have used during this session and put the candle you have been using throughout this course in the centre. Get the children to sit quietly and play music, while they are quiet light the candle. Get the children to think about any recent or coming celebrations they might be having. After a short time encourages each child to mention them. Read the Eucharistic prayer which your church uses, bringing everything you have spoken about together through prayer.

Close the session with the Grace.

If you can, arrange some bread-making for the next session; that would be great. This may be an opportunity to involve a parent or member of the congregation who bakes regularly. Alternatively, use a bread maker or a bread mix of the 'just add water' variety.

Week 4 – Everyone's invited

Aims

- To become familiar with Communion in your Church

Things you will need

Drinks and biscuits
Booklets for children (downloaded separately)
Altar table and everything you put on it!
Bread or wafer (whatever you use)
Wine
Music
Candle and matches

Remembering Jesus in your Church or School

Remembrance has in it the idea of making the person or event real again. As we gather for Holy Communion we re-enact the Last Supper (re-tell the story).

Go into the church if possible and gather around the bare altar table (remove everything you normally have on it) and remember between you who might have been there the first time. Piece together the story of what happened. Wonder together about how it would have been. Use your imaginations – the Gospel account doesn't mention everyone who was there nor does it tell of every little thing that took place. Ask questions to the children, how did Peter feel? How did Jesus feel? What did they think when Jesus broke the bread?

What's missing?

Having removed all the usual things from the altar table and surrounds, now ask the children to identify what is missing, as each item is mentioned bring it back, commenting on what it is there for. You could use the children's booklet to help you with this section. If there are usually people in the sanctuary with particular jobs to do, invite them to this session so that they can play their part and answer any questions the children may have. Ask the children if there is anything they wonder about? Looking at the sheet, you may want to ask the children if there are any words they don't know and explain them to the children.

Taste and see

Now everything is back on the altar, let the children taste the sort of bread and wine that you use at your communion services, especially if they haven't tasted it all yet. Practise receiving the bread and wine in the usual way. Ask if there is anything the children want to know. Ask if any of the children (or adults) have anything they want to say.

If Time

Ask the children to finish their booklets and answer any questions they need answering.

Make sure the children can take home their booklets after this session.

End

Play the music and get the children to sit or stand quietly around the altar. Put the candle you have been using throughout your sessions on the altar and light it. Get the children to think about today's session.

After a minute pray for each member of the group by name.

Read the prayer of Humble Access you use in church – We do not presume.....Most merciful Lord.....

(Common Worship, Order 1, page 181).

Close the session with the Grace.

Communion before Confirmation in School

Since the admission of children to communion before confirmation legislation was put into practice, a rising number of clergy have been questioning as to whether the process of admission to communion before confirmation is a more suitable and appropriate process to that of confirmation in primary school.

The benefits of children receiving communion before confirmation, generally from the age of seven years old are clear to see as the child is able to develop a deeper understanding and experience of the sacrament of the Eucharist, which then develops into a desire to be confirmed at a later age, possibly during the secondary years of education.

Much has been written on the subject and views widely held are that the admission to communion before confirmation process is a very positive and nurturing one that should be offered more widely.

Consultation throughout the diocese has shown that admission to communion before confirmation is not yet being offered in our schools and it is intended that the guidelines included in this pack seek to address that in assisting parishes in offering admission to communion before confirmation to primary schools throughout the diocese.

Parishes will then be in a position to admit children to communion, possibly from years five upwards in Primary School and above who wish to be admitted by a process of preparation by the clergy/teachers/layity from the parish through the policy which is held by the parish in which the school belongs.

Included in the aims of engaging in admission to communion before confirmation with primary schools are to build/strengthen the links and relationship between the church and the school; to provide stability in worship if a child moves from a worshipping Church of England school to a community secondary school and to be involved in the life of the school and it's children.

It is important to be clear that any parish who has already been granted permission to admit children to communion before confirmation may prepare children in school as part of their parish.

A parish which does not yet have permission to admit children to communion before confirmation must seek this permission from the Bishop before commencing with a preparation course for children.

A school cannot admit children to communion before confirmation, the permission is granted to the PCC of the parish and as such it is the parish's responsibility to prepare, admit and nurture any children in church or school whom they have admitted.

The following guidelines are intended to assist this process:

Admitting children Holy Communion before Confirmation in School

The Incumbent must ensure that there has been adequate opportunity for teaching and open discussions about this matter with the whole congregation, staff, parents, school governing body and children of the school in question.

Some possible ways of doing this are:

- Introductory Sermons
- Articles in the parish magazine or pew sheet
- Agenda item at the next Annual General Meeting
- Evening Teach -in and discussion
- Governors meeting
- Open meeting for all parents

Developing a policy where the parish does not already have permission to admit children to communion before confirmation

The PCC must discuss the issue fully, looking at all the implications and there must be a two - thirds majority in favour. A formal resolution must be carried and recorded in the minutes. Under normal circumstances such a policy would only be approved where there was a two-thirds majority in favour across the Team / Benefice. This process will include:

- PCC reviews provision of nurture and care across the ages but especially with children and school's work.
- PCC draws up principles and guidelines of provision for nurture and care of children and young people and begins to make appropriate plans for implementation.
- PCC looks at implications for worship; how much of the liturgy communicate children will attend; their involvement and participation in worship, how frequently they will take Communion.
- PCC needs to discuss the place of confirmation as an opportunity for a more mature and reflective confession of faith in perhaps the later teen years.

- A presentation of the policy and procedures should be submitted to the congregation for their information and prayerful reflection.
- PCC needs to set up the procedure for the implementation of the policy and its workings , for example what preparation might include.
- PCC submits the policy and procedures to the Diocesan Bishop for approval.

Implementing the policy

The PCC must ensure that the process is followed to implement the policy using the best practise possible. This may include:

- Meeting with parents of the children eligible to receive communion before confirmation to discuss the issues and look at the teaching material.
- Children must be baptised and a minimum of seven years of age.
- The child should be declaring an interest in receiving communion.
- Appropriate teaching and preparation material should be used with the children. The preparation material should include :
 - Basic teaching of faith, baptism and prayer
 - Knowledge of the story of Jesus
 - The place and symbolism of the Eucharist in the Jesus story and today

Where possible a workshop should be run for children and parents together.

- A record should be kept of those children admitted to communion and a certificate given
- The children must receive on going nurture and support. This may be through the regular Sunday or the usual midweek children's teaching programme. This should, at the appropriate time, lead to confirmation.
- Once a child has received communion in one Parish, he/she must be allowed to receive communion when visiting other churches or when moving to another parish.

They brought children for him to touch. The disciples rebuked them, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant, and said to them, "let the children come to me and do not stop them; for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Mark 10:13 -16

Invitation to informal meeting

Insert Church letterhead/name, details etc.

Admission to Holy Communion before Confirmation

Dear parents/guardians,

Our church has been given permission by the Bishop to admit children who have been baptised to Holy Communion before Confirmation. The Diocese sets some guidelines for this, the main features of which are:

Those seeking admission must...

- be baptised
- themselves be keen to receive Holy Communion
- attend a preparation course before admission

It is proposed that we will begin our preparation course on(date), with a view to candidates taking their first communion at the Admission Service on(date).

Your child/children (names) would, I believe satisfy the requirements set out above. We are holding a preliminary informal meeting for parents and guardians who would like more information on Communion before Confirmation on(date) at(venue) to which you are invited.

Please could you complete the following letter and return it to me as soon as possible and at the latest by(date).

Yours sincerely,

Incumbent/Curate/Nominated person

Parents/guardians response form

Insert Church letterhead/name, details etc.
Date, time, place etc.

Parents/guardians meeting: Admitting the baptised to Communion

Name of child/children:.....

Name of parents/guardians:.....

Address:.....

.....

Post code:.....

Email address:.....

Telephone/mobile number:.....

Please delete as appropriate:

I am/we are interested in the possibility of our child/children being admitted to Holy Communion before Communion.

I am/we are not interested in the possibility of our child/children being admitted to Holy Communion before Communion.

I/we shall be attending the parents' meeting on:..... (insert details of meeting).

I/we shall be not be attending the parents' meeting but would like to be informed of further developments.

I/we have the following questions/comments at this stage:

Parental Support & Consent Form

Insert Church name and details here

Admission to Holy Communion before Confirmation

I/we understand that our child/children
would like to be prepared to receive Holy Communion. We support this and understand
that candidates must:

- be baptised
- be willing to attend all the preparation sessions involved

I/we also understand that it is helpful for parents to attend the first and last preparation
sessions

Name of Child:.....

Date of birth:.....

Date of baptism:.....

Place of baptism:.....

Signature of parent(s)/Guardians(s):.....

Date:.....

Please return to:(Clergy/Nominated person)

by:..... (date)

The Admission service

It might be helpful to choose an appropriate time of the year for the special service at which candidates are to be admitted to Holy Communion. The same time might then be reserved on an annual basis, if appropriate. Suitable times might be: Easter Day, Advent Sunday, or the church patronal Festival. If the service is to be held in school, an appropriate day may be the end of term. While the service needs to be a little special, it should not differ too much from the normal Communion liturgy to which the candidates are accustomed. Liturgy and service outline material can be found in the resources section of this pack.

The Children and their Parents together with the Leadership Team could :

- a)** design an appropriate liturgy for the service. This may well include: input from the candidates themselves and from their preparation times: the distribution of Certificates of Admission.
- b)** arrange for any after - service catering etc.
- c)** encourage the candidates to invite Godparents and wider family to the Admission Service .
- d)** choose suitable cards / gifts from the church to mark the occasion. Then they should formally record those admitted to Communion in a parish register set aside for the purpose and send the same information to Bishop's Office.

Admission Service

Suggestions for use at services when children are admitted to Communion

At the service when the children are to be admitted to communion may be involved in the service through:

- Reading
- Praying
- Taking part in the offertory
- Choosing the songs and hymns
- Receiving Communion first with their families or sponsors

If formal words are required to mark the occasion either of the following forms A or B could be used. (After the Intercessions and before the Peace would be an appropriate moment in the service)

Either:

A

Priest/Minister: "Today we welcome A, B, and C as communicant members of the church. Over the past X weeks they have been learning together how special the communion is. As they continue as members of God's family with us, we share in their joy and ask for God's continued blessing upon them."

Or

B

The priest or minister addresses the children:

Are you baptized Christians and regular members of the Church?

The children reply together:

Yes.

Do you wish to be admitted to Holy Communion and to share regularly in this meal?

The children reply together:

Yes.

The priest or minister addresses the parents or sponsors:

Will you help these children to grow in faith and come to Confirmation?

The parents or sponsors reply together:

Yes.

The priest or minister addresses the congregation:

Will you welcome these children as communicant members of Christ's family and support them with your friendship and your prayers?

The congregation replies:

We will.

The priest or minister says to the children:

In the name of Stephen, Bishop of Durham I welcome you to the sacrament of Holy Communion. May God bless you as you continue with us on your journey of faith.

Cards of certificates may be presented to the children at this point or after the service.

(From the Diocese of Wakefield)



Diocese of Durham

Certificate

Of Admission to Holy Communion

This is to certify that

.....

Has successfully completed a preparation course and was
admitted to receive **Holy Communion** on:

.....

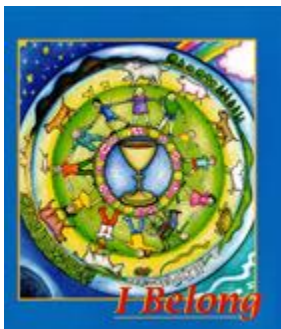
In the parish of:

Signed: Date:

Incumbent/Churchwarden

Resources

These resources are a collection of those recommended from a wide range of sources which approach Holy Communion from differing perspectives. Many can be borrowed from the Resources Centre: www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk or you can buy them from: www.eden.co.uk



I Belong

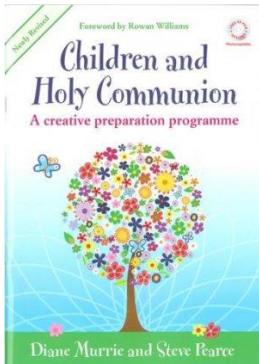
Aileen Urquhart ISBN 9780852311714

A programme for parents and children that includes themes, such as parenthood, mercy and glory, drawn from the celebration of Communion and firmly rooted in everyday experience. The programme includes a leader's guide, parent's guide and children's workbook.

I Belong Special

Aileen Urquhart ISBN 9780852312377

This edition of I Belong provides both Makaton signs and simplified language for children with learning difficulties. Each aspect matches the standard book, thereby offering inclusivity for all children in the parish as they prepare for Holy Communion.



Children and Holy Communion

Pearce & Murrie ISBN 978-1-84417-151-4

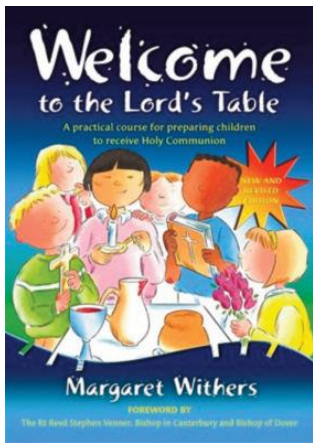
A creative preparation programme for preparing the church and the child for Holy Communion, also includes CD Rom.



The Communion Cube

Diana Murrie & Margaret Withers

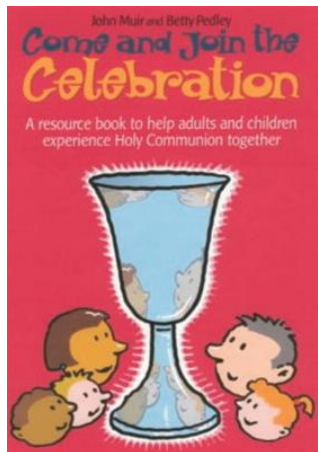
A child-friendly illustrated cube summarising the parts of the Communion service for younger children.



Welcome to the Lord's Table

Margaret Withers ... ISBN 9781841010434

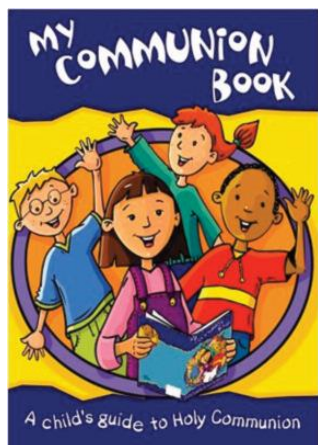
This is a teaching manual for all those seeking to welcome children to participate fully in the Eucharist. The introductory chapters explore the background to the question of preparing young children for Holy Communion, give guidance on preparing the congregation, training leaders and involving the family, and includes a guide to using the course. The material is designed to last approximately three months overall, with the children receiving Holy Communion towards the end of the course. Each unit is divided into two distinct forty-minute sessions and includes aims and objectives, biblical basis, teaching time, focus on the Church, prayer, activities and suggestions for music. A separate do-at-home activity book is available to accompany the main course book.



Come and Join the Celebration

John Muir and Betty Pedley ISBN:0715149474

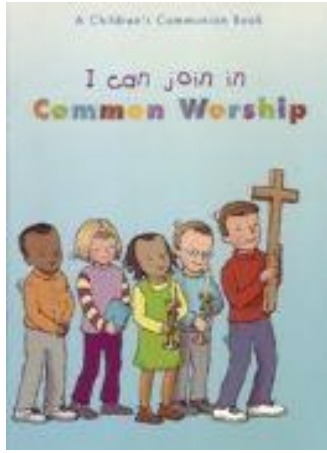
A resource book based on Holy Communion for both adults and children. Chapter titles include; The Liturgy, Helping Younger Children (2 – 6 years old) and Activity Sheets.



My Communion Book

Diana Murrie ISBN 9780715149461

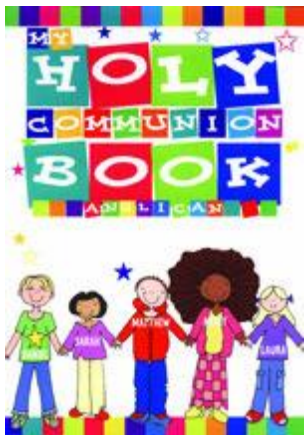
An all-age resource for children and families, primarily aimed at 4 to 8 year olds. It can be used initially as a sharing book, adult and child reading together, but children may use it at times on their own. Taking the child through the service, the book explains key words and asks questions that relate directly to the child, helping them to engage with the service of Holy Communion.



I Can Join in Common Worship

Tony Kershaw ISBN 0 281 05568 8

A Children's Communion book explaining different elements in common worship. Colour illustrations combine with the full text of the prayers and explanations of the action giving children the chance to worship God with the whole congregation. Also available in packs of ten.



My Holy Communion Book (Anglican)

Aileen Urquhart ISBN 0 85231 238 5

Holy Communion explained for a younger audience, with plastic-coated pages enabling erasing/rewriting of answers.

Celebrating Together

Schofield ISBN 9780719709449

Designed as a resource to encourage churches to work on an all age basis to discover for themselves both the depth and breadth of communion. This is a publication for those interested in exploring the benefits on integrating communion into all-age worship.

Celebrating with Children

Joan Brown ISBN: 1840034815

Ten Roman Catholic liturgical celebrations to use with children who are preparing to receive Communion. Designed for use in both schools and parishes and to enable children to be involved in a meaningful way.

Meet Christ with Joy: Preparation for Holy Communion

Joan Brown ISBN: 0862091721

A colourful activity book for parents to use with their children as they prepare for first Communion. Through activities, prayers, Bible stories and celebrations the book aims to relate Mass to everyday experience.

My Eucharistic Journey in Here I Am

Byrne, A. et al ISBN: 0003176711

This book provides worksheets and activities to introduce the themes of Eucharist.

Preparing for First Eucharist

Matthew James ISBN: 1898366284

This resource uses a sensory approach to introduce the Eucharist in fifteen sessions to those with learning and communication difficulties.

SHARE: A Communion Preparation Course for 7-11's

Nick Harding ISBN: 1840039272

Pre-confirmation. 5 children's sessions including Bible activities, games, prayers & practical ideas. Subjects covered - God's work, God's word, God's way, God's meal and God's future. + 2 parent sessions

Liturgy for Admission

See Common Worship - Initiation Services

Also, some of the preparation materials above include sample liturgies for the admission of Children to communion.

Children in the Church

John Muir & Betty Pedley ISBN: 0715148850

Practical advice on the involvement of children in all aspects of the communion service and a range of all age services.

Bread and Wine People

Susan Sayers ISBN: 184003694X

An all-age programme to enable a whole church approach to exploring the meaning of communion. Relating to Common Worship it explores the difficulties of an all-age faith community and celebrates the diversity of such congregations.

Complete Children's Liturgy Book

Katie Thompson ISBN: 0862096367

A comprehensive programme for each Sunday of the lectionary including discussion ideas, activities and worksheets.

Celebrating Together : Exploring Holy Communion

Kathryn Schofield ISBN: 071970944X

Explores the significance of the meal of Communion and the symbolism of the bread and wine as signs of God's love. It comprises a structured programme of activities for each age group from under 5's through to adult.

Additional Eucharistic Prayers

Prayer One

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

(or)

The Lord is here

All His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

[*Holy, Holy, Holy*]

It is always right to give you thanks,
God our Creator,
loving and faithful,
holy and strong.

You made us
and the whole universe,
and filled your world with life.

[*Holy, Holy, Holy*]

You sent your Son to live among us,
Jesus our Saviour, Mary's child.

He suffered on the cross;
he died to save us from our sins;
he rose in glory from the dead.

[*Holy, Holy, Holy*]

You send your Spirit
to bring new life to the world,
and clothe us with power from on high.

And so we join the angels
to celebrate and sing:

All

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
[Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.]**

Father, on the night before he died,
Jesus shared a meal with his friends.

He took the bread, and thanked you.
He broke it, and gave it to them, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this to remember me.

After the meal, Jesus took the cup of wine.
He thanked you, and gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you.
This is my blood,
the new promise of God's unfailing love.
Do this to remember me.

Jesus Christ has died.

All Jesus Christ has died.

Jesus Christ is risen.

All Jesus Christ is risen.

Jesus Christ will come again.

All Jesus Christ will come again.

Or

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Father, as we bring this bread and wine,
and remember his death and resurrection,
send your Holy Spirit,
that we who share these gifts
may be fed by Christ's body and his blood.

[*Amen*, Amen, **Amen.**]

Pour your Spirit on us
that we may love one another,
work for the healing of the earth,
and share the good news of Jesus,
as we wait for his coming in glory.

[*Amen*, Amen, **Amen.**]

For honour and praise belong to you, Father,
with Jesus your Son, and the Holy Spirit:
one God, for ever and ever.

[*Amen*, Amen,] **Amen.**

The service continues with the Lord's Prayer.

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Prayer Two

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

(or)

The Lord is here

All His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

[Question] Why is it right to give thanks and praise?

Answer Listen, and we will hear.]

Lord of all life,
you created the universe,
where all living things reflect your glory.
You give us this great and beautiful earth,
to discover and to cherish.

One of the following or another Short Proper Preface may be used

You give us sun and moon and star-lit sky,
everything that gives us light,
light for our eyes, our hearts, our minds.

Or

You give us the fish in the sea,
the birds of the air,
and every plant and tree;
the life that sleeps in the winter earth,
and awakens again in the spring.

Or

You give us friends and families
busy streets for young and old,

the life of an earthly city
fulfilled in your city to come.

Or

You give us your love,
even when things go wrong.
Jesus knew hurt and pain.
Through him you wipe away our tears,
and fill us with your peace.

Or

You give us happy times
and things to celebrate.
In these we taste your kingdom,
a feast for all your children.

You made us all,
each wonderfully different,
to join with the angels
and sing your praise:

All

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
[Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.]**

We thank you, loving Father,
because, when we turned away,
you sent Jesus, your Son.
He gave his life for us on the cross
and shows us the way to live.

Send your Holy Spirit
that these gifts of bread and wine
may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

[Question Why do we share this bread and wine?

Answer Listen, and we will hear.]

On the night before he died,
when darkness had fallen,
Jesus took bread.
He gave thanks, broke it,
and shared it with his disciples, saying:
'This is my body, given for you.
Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine,
gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying:
'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many,
for the forgiveness of sins.'

So Father, with this bread and this cup
we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.
As you feed us with these gifts,
send your Holy Spirit,
and change us more and more
to be like Jesus our Saviour.

[Question How do we follow Jesus Christ?

Answer Listen, and we will hear.]

Help us, Father, to love one another,
as we look forward to that day
when suffering is ended,
and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.

And now with [N and] all your saints
we give you glory,
through Jesus Christ,
in the strength of the Spirit,
today and for ever.

All Amen.

The service continues with the Lord's Prayer.

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