

FOR THE ADMISSION OF CHILDREN
TO HOLY COMMUNION
BEFORE CONFIRMATION

Theology

- (a) Baptism is the full rite of Christian initiation. Through it we become members of the body of Christ, the Eucharistic Community.
- (b) Through baptism we are immersed in the whole activity of God. (We die and rise with Christ and are recipients of God's grace through the life-giving power of the Spirit.)

Pastoral Implications

- (a) All baptised people (especially children) are potentially communicant members of the church.
- (b) It is the responsibility of the whole church to nurture all its members.
- (c) It has been the tradition of our church to expect of those receiving Communion the capacity for faith and repentance.
- (d) It is therefore necessary for diocesan guidelines to be consistent with the General Synod Canon of 1985.
- (e) Children should be admitted to Holy Communion at approximately 7 years of age. (I am not overly concerned if children are presented at a younger age. I am more concerned when messages of rejection are given to baptised children.)

The Decision

The decision to receive Communion should be made by the child with the approval of parents and/or other appropriate sponsors. However, it is the responsibility of the clergy to continually remind the whole congregation of this opportunity.

The Preparation

The preparation should involve the child with as many members of the family as possible. It could be conducted in the child's home or with a group of other candidates. The material used could be "We Welcome You" or a similar resource.

Liturgy

The admission should occur at the normal Sunday Eucharist. Prior to the Greeting of Peace is an ideal time. The child (children) should come to the chancel step with their family and sponsors. They may present 'their story' through a banner or other material. They might re-light their baptism candle and leave it burning on the altar

for the rest of the service. (They could collect it at the conclusion of the service and carry it out in the procession.)

They could be the main 'carrier' of the Greeting of Peace to the congregation. A suitable prayer could be said. These and other expressions of welcome and affirmation should be kept as informal as possible. Avoid a set rite. Try to express that which is right for this child at this time in this congregation.

A certificate indicating communicant status should be issued.

Records

Records of admission should be kept in the manner of confirmation records and forwarded to the diocese annually.

If notice is given to the Bishop at the time of admission, a letter of encouragement will be sent by him to the child.

Confirmation

It is the expectation of our church that those who are baptised as infants and admitted to Holy Communion as children will be presented for confirmation. It is hoped such candidates be young adults, not adolescents.