

Norwalk Alliance Church

Living the Call Together

The Question

“Can I take communion today?”

The trays of bread are being uncovered. You have only a few moments to respond.

What do you say?

Who is invited to the Lord’s Table?

As parents, grandparents and spiritual guardians to children we must be ready to respond to children’s questions about communion and their desire to participate in this regular worship activity of the church.

What should we say?



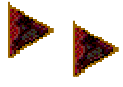
Children and Communion



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Who is invited?

A simple answer to the question of who is invited is “all believers”, that is, people who

“confess Jesus Christ as Lord in word and life”. Additionally we emphasize that participants “understand its meaning”, and are



“accountable to their congregation”. Children who believe and confess that Jesus is Lord have an authentic faith. However, they may have a limited understanding of the meaning of communion or what accountability to a congregation involves.

What does communion mean?

To participate in the Lord's Supper is to declare that God's gift of grace and forgiveness has been accepted and a relationship with Christ and his Body, the church, has been established. Participants have a 360-degree perspective of salvation. Looking back, we are able to remember the salvation history described in scripture, and our personal salvation story. Looking to the future, followers of Jesus anticipate Christ's triumphant return. Participating in the Lord's Supper expresses that memory and anticipation.

What is meant by “partake in a worthy manner”?

Followers of Jesus are warned to partake of the Lord's supper in a worthy manner. They are

called to reflect upon their spiritual walk and their relationship with Jesus. This involves self-examination, confession and the recognition of forgiveness received.

Giving guidance to our children.

There are times in life when the best learning experience is participation.

Communion is a celebration that may be enriched by opportunities to learn before participation. The following are some basic steps to assist you in preparing a child for communion.



Observation

The most basic form of participation is watching others take part in communion. The observation stage engages children by raising questions (Exodus 12:26-27). Often the questions are asked during a service, a time when adequate answers cannot be given. Take another time to sit down with your children and answer their questions. It is particularly helpful to tell the story of when you first took communion.

Inclusion

As observation increases understanding, make a point of including your children. Allow them to walk with you as you receive the elements. Take their hand as you partake of the Bread and Cup. Encourage them to ask questions of grand-

parents, pastor, teachers and others.

Involvement

As understanding increases, the desire to participate may also increase. Children often understand much more than adults realize. However childlike there is a need for them to be able to express their meaning of communion and their understanding of partaking in a serious, reflective manner. Allow your child opportunities to share his understanding with you in different settings and at different times. Talk about the fact that they are getting ready for the big step of participation.

Participation

A child who has been actively engaged will demonstrate their readiness to participate. The question, “Can I take communion today?” will not come as a surprise. You will be able to respond with confidence that your child has understood the significance and meaning of communion.

Where do I go for further guidance?

This pamphlet is only a first step. Discuss your questions with your pastor. Ask for teaching and guidance for yourself and your children.

