

Our pastors and educational staff members are always happy to discuss communion with you or your child! Contact us.

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SAINT LUKE'S
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Welcome to the Table.

Children & Communion at Saint Luke's Presbyterian Church



What We Believe.

It is always a joy to include children in worship at St. Luke's! For us, that also means that children are welcome to receive the Lord's Supper whenever their parents feel that the time is right.

So when is the right time? This guide can be a resource for all families trying to make that decision. Of course, children and their parents are always encouraged to take advantage of our communion education opportunities and to speak with a pastor or staff member for further discussion.

To put things in perspective, in the early church communion was offered to those who wanted to discover the meaning of Christianity. It was an introduction of faith for inquirers, a sustenance in the faith for believers, and a strengthening of the community for the congregation. We pray that participating the Lord's Supper will benefit your child in all of these ways.

Ways to Teach at Home.

Describe to your child in advance what happens when we go up to the front to receive the Lord's Supper.

Point out the various meanings of the Lord's Supper, depending on your child's age:

- the Lord's Supper is a meal for God's people.
- God's grace nourishes and refreshes us and is food for our souls.
- The bread and the juice we receive at communion are symbols of Jesus' body and blood.
- The Lord's Supper is the church's "Thanksgiving Dinner" in that we give thanks for Jesus Christ and for the continued blessings of the Holy Spirit.
- The Lord's Supper is a sign of the church's unity and fellowship—we commune with each other and with God.
- The Lord's Supper is a call to sacrificial service—to give ourselves up to God, following the example of Christ.
- In the Lord's Supper, the spirit of Jesus is present and serves as host.
- The Lord's Supper is a celebration that looks forward to the coming of God's eternal kingdom.

Talk with your children about other times that Jesus shared meals with others...the miracle of the boy with the loaves and fish, dining with Zacchaeus and other sinners, in Mary and Martha's home, etc. Talk about how Jesus used each of these meals to teach something important.

Share with your children some of your own experiences with communion: how old were you when you received it, how did your church serve communion, etc.

Explain that though other churches may observe the Lord's Supper in different ways, all Christians are united in the act of communion.

How the Bible Tells It.

No matter whether your child is using a Children's Bible or a standard one, families can use the following scripture passages to learn and review the story of the Lord's Supper:

Matthew 26:17-30

Mark 14:12-26

Luke 22:7-23

1 Corinthians 11:23-26



How Our Denomination Encourages Us.



"Baptized children who are being nurtured and instructed in the significance of the invitation of the Table and the meaning of their response are invited to receive the Lord's Supper recognizing that their understanding of participation will vary according to their maturity."
(W-2.4011)

"It is the responsibility of the whole congregation, particularly exercised through the session, to nurture those who are baptized to respond to the invitation to the Lord's Supper. When a person is baptized as a child, the session shall equip and support the parent(s) or those exercising parental responsibility for their task of nurturing the child for receiving the Lord's Supper."
(W-4.2002)

From the Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

What We Teach.

Toddlers

With the development of language, we can explain that communion is a special meal, God's meal. We say that communion helps us remember Jesus and how much he loves us. Even though your child may not be ready to actually receive communion, now is a great time to allow them to develop the routine of communion by bringing them to the front with you as you receive the Lord's supper.

Preschool

As these children begin to notice the table, the cups, the bread and the words spoken before each time communion is celebrated, they can grasp a concept of the church as a family sharing a meal together. They can begin to understand that the physical things we use are special, and that they can help us remember an important story about Jesus.

Early Elementary

As children learn to think historically they can begin to grasp the relationship between the Last Supper and the sacrament of communion. These children are developing the ability to think symbolically so they can make the association between the bread and Jesus' body; the wine or juice and Jesus' blood. However, we are careful to teach them that the elements are not special by themselves...they only become holy when the presence of our Lord enters the experience of gathering at God's table. We teach that God can use anything—and anyone—to share his love with others. These children particularly enjoy the sense of "belonging" communion brings.

Later Elementary

Older children, with their improved reading and listening skills, can begin to appreciate the prayers and words associated with the sacrament. They can begin to pray silently while at the rail or in the pew. We teach them that prayers can be as simple as "thank you for loving us so much that you gave your only Son" or "thank you for always forgiving us". They can understand the concept of "grace" and why it is something to be celebrated.

When We Teach It.



Godly Play Sunday School

In this preschool class, the story of the Lord's Supper is told in the fall on World Communion Sunday and then in the spring during the season of Lent. This class uses manipulative wood play figures to tell the story, and they are encouraged to imagine what it would have been like to be there with Jesus and his friends at that special meal.

Faithful Friends

In this worship education class for Kindergarten - 2nd grade children we explore the sacrament of communion in the fall on World Communion Sunday, when we emphasize that Christians everywhere share this special meal. We also explore the Last Supper during Lent.

Holy Moly

Our elementary children explore the story of the Last Supper as part of their Holy Moly Sunday School story video and class discussions during Lent.

All Ages

We offer an annual communion workshop during 11:00 worship which is open to children of all ages and their parents. Usually held in the spring, this event is announced well in advance. During this session, one of our pastors explains the history, the meaning, and the physical process of how we receive communion. Children then experience the story through art, games, and other age-appropriate activities.