

Communion for Children



Dear Parent,

Since you have expressed a desire to have your child(ren) participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we consider it important that you be in dialogue with your child(ren) about the benefits of this Sacrament, and the procedures by which this Sacrament is distributed at Galilee Lutheran Church. To aid you in this parental responsibility, we provide the following:

- a) Martin Luther's explanation of the Lord's Supper (from *The Small Catechism*), and
- b) Instructions in how to indicate desire for reception.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

What is Holy Communion?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

Where is this written?

The holy evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and St. Paul write this:

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you,

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant* in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

*Covenant means "promise."

What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

The words "given for you" and "shed for you...for the forgiveness of sin" show us

that forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament through these words, because where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking do such a great thing?

Eating and drinking certainly do not do it, but rather the words that are recorded: "given for you" and "shed for you...for the forgiveness of sin." These words, when accompanied by the physical eating and drinking, are the essential thing in the sacrament, and whoever believes in these very words has what they declare and state, namely "forgiveness of sin."

Who, then, receives this sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation are in fact a fine external discipline, but a person who has faith in these words, "given for you" and "shed for you...for the forgiveness of sin," is really worthy and well prepared. However, a person who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, because the work "for you" require truly believing hearts.

How to indicate desire for reception:

- Show your child(ren) how to extend their hands, palms up, toward the person distributing the elements.
- Teach them to say “Amen” after it is placed in their hand.
- Decide if you want them to have the regular wine or the grape juice and explain to them how to tell the difference. It is sufficient to have just the bread, if you wish, perhaps

reserving the wine for when they are a bit older

- Explain how to dip (not drop) the bread into the chalice before eating it.
- Teach them about the connection Jesus makes of himself and the elements, emphasizing that this is not merely ‘snack time’ at church.



Here are some guidelines for handling a child’s questions about matters of Christian faith.

- Give the child a chance to ask questions. Be available and attentive.
- Look for the meaning behind the words. People don’t always ask or realize what their deeper questions are. On the other hand, don’t answer questions that are not being asked.
- Be ready to grow in your own understandings. Try new ways of sharing your thoughts.
- Answer in terms meaningful to your child. An illustration from the child’s world may be most helpful.
- If you don’t know an answer, say so, then seek the answer together.
- Let the forgiving love of God be your model in answering questions.
- Check out from the Pastor or our church library the book *The Welcome Table: Holy Communion Instruction for Children* to read together.

