



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

Admission of Baptised Persons to Holy Communion before Confirmation



Resource Pack

A resource pack for Parishes considering
Admission of Children to Holy Communion Prior to Confirmation

June 2017

This pack has information on the Admission of children to Holy Communion prior to Confirmation, including:

- Introduction from Bishop Stephen
- Outline of the process a parish should follow to discuss and decide on admission to Holy Communion
- Frequently asked questions
- Preparation Materials
- General Synod Regulations 2006
- Notes on Confirmation
- Parish Application Form
- Sample Holy Communion Certificate

If you would like to discuss things further please contact the Steve Kersys, the Diocesan Children's and Family Adviser, who has assisted incumbents, PCCs and parishes as they have considered this issue.

Steve Kersys (Children's & Family Ministry Adviser)

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Introductions

In the Gospel of Mark, as Jesus talks with the disciples, he takes a little child and has the child stand among them.

“Taking him in his arms, he said, ‘Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me’”.
(Mark 9:37)

The question of what it means to ‘welcome’ a child in the Eucharist lies at the heart of this resource pack, on ‘Admission of Children to Holy Communion, prior to Confirmation’. We know that children come to faith in Jesus Christ. But what is their involvement in worship to be? How are they to be welcomed into the life of the church? In the Chelmsford Diocese, admission of children to Holy Communion has happened in some places, but so far it has impacted only a limited number of children. And yet children are able to enter into the meaning and significance of Holy Communion; sometimes more easily than us. While we may be cluttered with sophisticated adult ways or weighed down with questions, children come freely into God’s presence with simple trust.

And so as we consider whether children have a place at the table, and reflect on the issues raised, it is important that we hear children’s comments on their experience of church, and listen to their understanding of Holy Communion. In this resource pack you will see the process by which children may be admitted to Holy Communion prior to confirmation. There are a series of reflections and a number of frequently asked questions which may help you to ascertain where you are in your thinking and current practice.

At present we have approximately 140 parishes in the Diocese that admit children to Holy Communion and this number is increasing. I would like there to be more. I think we are able to widen our ‘welcome’ at the communion table. I want children who worship with us regularly to be with us around the Lord’s table and receive the blessings of the sacramental life.

So I invite you to consider these helpful resources, with the view of keeping children at the centre of our worshipping church life.

+Stephen

Bishop Stephen Cottrell
Bishop of Chelmsford

Processes

The process for considering Admission to Holy Communion can be a wonderful opportunity for the whole church to discuss and discover more about the Eucharist. Here are some guidelines to help you;

Explore

Consider how you might provide the best possible spiritual experience and care for children attending church services and activities and consider how Holy Communion and Confirmation fit into children's nurture. Think about the opportunities for teaching and learning and also the opportunities for relevant service. Refer to the resources in the Useful Information section for more information.

Gather information From other parishes about their experiences with children and Holy Communion and Confirmation

Invite the Diocesan Children's & Families Adviser to offer guidance as you explore further

Discuss with the PCC and then with the wider church.

Make an Informed Decision

Having gathered information from a variety of sources and discussed widely, make an informed decision with the PCC about which way to proceed. Communicate your decision to the congregation. If not wishing to admit at this stage then set a date for children to be admitted to Holy Communion to be reviewed by the PCC. If you decide to proceed;

Complete the Application Form

Gather Materials & Prepare for Holy Communion

- Identify suitable Holy Communion and Confirmation preparation courses
- Identify appropriate people to lead a Holy Communion preparation course
- Through consultation with parents and children's leaders identify children who might benefit from this course
- Hold the preparation course and prepare a service of welcome for those who will receive Holy Communion for the first time

Celebrate!

- Celebrate the service
- Present certificates
- Keep records of those admitted to Holy Communion

Continuing Nurture

- Continue providing the best possible spiritual experience and care for children attending church.
- Encourage children to offer appropriate service in the church and wider community
- Consider how and when you will prepare children/young people for Confirmation

Frequently Asked Questions

Will children understand what they are doing when taking 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 and one that will never be fully complete however old we are. It is important that we do not view taking Holy Communion as a prize which we win by passing tests but 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 spiritual matters which some adults may 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 clergy will have been involved in preparing the children for admission. Should a new family with children admitted to Holy Communion join a parish, the vicar of the sending church should write a letter of recommendation to the new parish. In our experience, children know if they have been through a Holy Communion preparation course and will be able to articulate this to the vicar. It is good practice for a vicar to outline the parish position on the admission to Holy Communion prior to the administration of the elements.

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 there were concerns surrounding a situation where a child who had been admitted in one parish moved to a parish that didn't admit children. 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 Holy 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?

Those who are not baptised may not 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 Holy Communion

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 importantly, the individual children must make a free choice to be admitted.

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. The PCC will have discussed matter at length and sought the views of the wider church. Any decision taken will be based on these extensive discussions. Admission to Holy Communion does not disappear from the life of the parish should the vicar or families with children who have permission move elsewhere.

Will Confirmation seem less important to young people if we make this change?

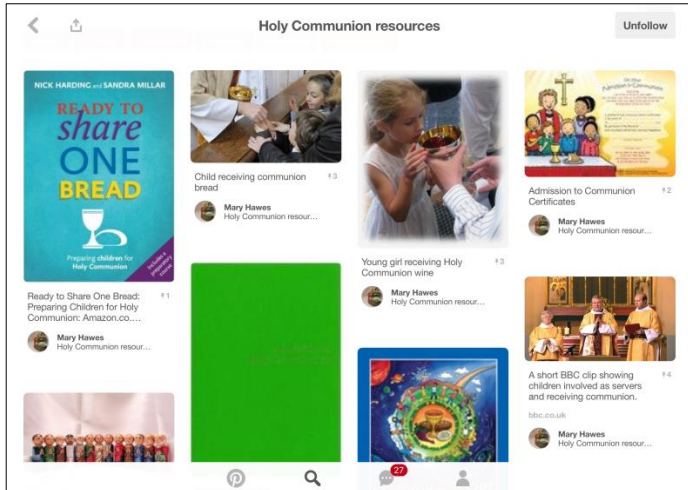
It can be an opportunity for you to make clear the value and seriousness of Confirmation as a personal affirmation of faith. Take the opportunity to revisit your Confirmation preparation and to think again about the best ways for the wider church to support young people and adults as they take this step.

What about other parishes in this and other Diocese?

Currently (May 2017) there are about 26% of parishes in this Diocese that have received permission for admitting Children to Holy Communion. The number of parishes is growing steadily. There are about 20% of parishes across the whole of the Church of England who now admit children. Southwell and Nottingham Diocese have about 56% of parishes now admitting children.

Preparation Materials

These resources are a collection of those recommended from a wide range of sources which approach Holy Communion from differing perspectives. They can be ordered through the Resource Centre at the Diocesan Office from resources@chelmsford.anglican.org



Holy Communion and Pinterest

Revd Mary Hawes

An excellent Pinterest board by Revd Mary Hawes, the National Adviser for Children & Youth. Content points to a range of books and articles relating to children and Holy Communion including material on:

- Linking the last Supper to the Eucharist
- Admission to Communion certificates
- All age Communion service outlines
- Holy Communion bookmarks
- Sieger Koder images
- Resources from other Diocese

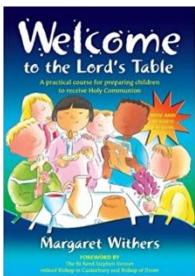
<http://bit.ly/2kJrOuK>



Ready to Share One Bread

Nick Harding & Sandra MillarISBN 9780281070534

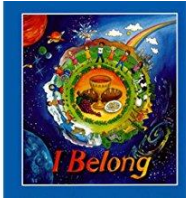
A 'one-stop shop' for churches considering the admission of children to Holy Communion. The Church of England has allowed the admission of baptised children to Holy Communion before confirmation since 1997 but currently only about 20% of parishes currently do so. There is therefore much scope for many more churches to explore the issue and this book contains all a church would need to do so, including resources for exploring the issue with a whole congregation, case studies from real-life churches, a preparation course, an admission liturgy and advice on including and involving children in Eucharistic worship. The book also includes theological reflection on children and the Eucharist from Michael Perham and considers the impact of receiving Holy Communion on children's discipleship.



Welcome to the Lord's Table

Margaret Withers ... ISBN 9781841010434

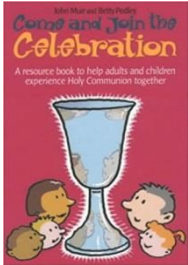
This is a teaching manual for all those seeking to welcome children to participate fully in the Eucharist. The introductory chapters explore the background to the question of preparing young children for Holy Communion, give guidance on preparing the congregation, training leaders and involving the family, 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.



I Belong

Aileen Urquhart ISBN 9780852311714

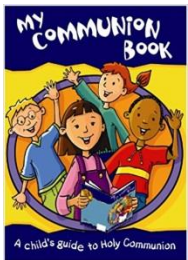
A programme for parents and children that includes themes, such as parenthood, mercy and glory, drawn from the celebration of Communion and firmly rooted in everyday experience. The programme includes a leader's guide, parent's guide and children's workbook. There is also an I Belong Special edition providing 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.



Come and Join the Celebration

John Muir and Betty Pedley ISBN:0715149474

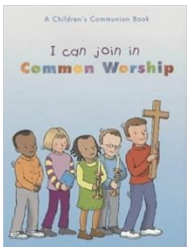
A resource book based on Holy Communion for both adults and children. Chapter titles include; The Liturgy, Helping Younger Children (2 – 6 years old) and Activity Sheets.



My Communion Book

Diana Murrie ISBN 9780715149461

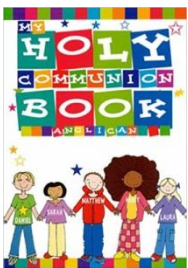
An all-age resource for children and families, primarily aimed at 4 to 8 year olds. It can be used initially as a sharing book, adult and child reading together, but children may use it at times on their own. Taking the child through the service, the book explains key words and asks questions that relate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

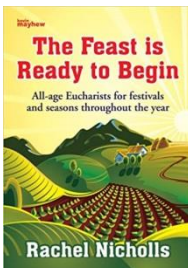
This work is aimed at children over seven years old, although it could be used by younger children with the help of an adult. It explains the outline of the Common Worship Eucharist and gives the words of the prayers so that children can actually join in.



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/re-writing of notes.



The Feast is Ready to Begin

Rachel Nicholls 9781848671768 £15.99

Book on All-Age Eucharist based on Common Worship. 14 outlines following the church year, with very good 'how to' material in the introduction.

Confirmation

Admission to Holy Communion is one step along a continual journey of Christian experience and service. We encourage all who explore Admission to Holy Communion prior to Confirmation to see the admission to Holy Communion as a precursor to Confirmation and preparation for Confirmation should begin straight away.

In the Church of England, Confirmation marks the point in the Christian journey at which the participation in the life of God's people begun at baptism is confirmed by the Bishop by the laying on of hands.

The candidates affirm for themselves the faith into which they have been baptised and their intention to live a life of responsible and committed discipleship. Through prayer and the laying on of hands by the confirming Bishop, the Church also asks God to give them power through the Holy Spirit to enable them to live in this way.

Who can be confirmed?

- Anyone who has been baptised
- and who is old enough to answer responsibly for themselves
- and who has received appropriate preparation

Confirmation Resources

You can find relevant information for Confirmation through these links, on the National Church of England Website and through these links:

An excellent Pinterest site with extensive links to resources and articles

<http://bit.ly/2kECX05>

Confirmation in the Church of England

<http://bit.ly/2qrfJO3>

The Confirmation service in the Church of England

<http://bit.ly/2pEtMN2>

Moving images, Changing lives: exploring the Christian faith through film

<http://bit.ly/2qrlBXm>

Reconnecting with Confirmation: a practical guide

<http://bit.ly/2qruAYz>

Our Archdeacons, Youth Advisers and Parish and Mission Advisers are able to offer you guidance and support as you consider Confirmation.

GENERAL SYNOD

ADMISSION OF BAPTISED CHILDREN TO HOLY COMMUNION REGULATIONS 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 such day as the Archbishops of Canterbury and York may jointly appoint.
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; and
 - (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.



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

Admission of Baptised Persons to Holy Communion before Confirmation

Application Form



Parish

Parish Number

Deanery

Incumbent

Consultation

Admission to Holy Communion prior to Confirmation has been discussed fully;

- By the PCC
- By the wider church congregation
- With people from other parishes who have already been through this process and/or with the Diocesan Children's & Family Ministry Adviser

- The PCC has passed a resolution to proceed with the application, as follows:
'The PCC requests the Bishop of Chelmsford for permission to admit children to Holy Communion before Confirmation under the Admission of Baptised Children to Holy Communion Regulations 2006.'

- The decision to proceed has been communicated with children and their families and the wider parish community

Practical Arrangements

- We have organised the preparation materials of children for Holy Communion
- We have arranged leaders for the preparation course
- We have made provision for children with learning difficulties who wish to receive Holy Communion
- We have taken into consideration children's nurture towards Confirmation
- We have discussed how parents will be involved in the preparation of their children for Holy Communion
- We have prepared Certificates of Admission to Holy Communion
- We have a Register for those to be admitted to Holy Communion

Application

This parish has agreed, in accordance with the Admission of Baptised Children to Holy Communion Regulations 2006, to offer Holy Communion to children who have not yet been Confirmed, provided that;

- the child has been baptised
- a person having parental responsibility for the child is content that the child should be so admitted
- children to be admitted will take part in a suitable preparation course. This should be part of a continuing programme for the nurture of children and their families from baptism, through the welcoming of children to Holy Communion and on to Confirmation and beyond.

We will maintain a register of all children admitted to Holy Communion under these Regulations.

Signed (Incumbent) :

Date :

Please return this form to;

Diocesan Bishop, Bishopscourt, Main Road, Margaretting, Ingatestone, Essex. CM4 0HD

Thank you



Diocese of Chelmsford

In the Parish of

By permission of the Bishop of Chelmsford
and in accordance with the Holy Communion Regulations 2006

(name of applicant)

Having been baptised, is admitted to Holy Communion prior to Confirmation

(incumbent's signature)

(date)