

## Frequently Asked Questions about children and communion

**Does my child need to do anything to take communion for the first time?**

There is no specific rite for first communion. All baptized children are welcome to partake in communion.

**Can a child really understand the meaning of communion? When will I know if he/she is ready?**

We leave it to parents to make the decision as to whether a child is ready. We would offer the following guideline. If your child understands that this is a special time when we eat together in church to remember Jesus (and not a snack!), they most likely understand enough to begin a lifetime of exploring this wonderful, mysterious practice of our faith. In truth, how many of us fully comprehend this sacrament?

**I did not grow up Presbyterian and in my church we were taught that the communion elements became the body and blood of Christ. Is this what Presbyterians believe?**

As Presbyterians, we do not believe in "transubstantiation". We believe that ordinary, everyday bread and juice are set aside for this sacrament, but they remain symbols. We do believe, however, that Christ's spirit is present with us making communion more than a mere memorial.

We hope that this brochure has been helpful, yet we realize that it will not hold all of the answers for families.

The pastors and other members of the program staff are always available for questions and conversation with families.

For further personal study, we highly recommend the book, [Come Unto Me: Rethinking the Sacraments for Children](#) by Elizabeth Francis Caldwell (United Church Press).

This book is available in the church library.

For questions about this or any other aspect of the Children's Ministry programs at Third Presbyterian Church, please contact Children's Ministry Coordinator Becky D'Angelo-Veitch at 271-6537 ext. 118 or [rveitch@thirdpresbyterian.org](mailto:rveitch@thirdpresbyterian.org)



# Talking with your child about Communion



Anyone who walks through the doors of Third Presbyterian Church on a Sunday can see that children are an important part of this community.

We have a full and active Sunday school, a thriving music and Wednesday night program, and a wide variety of fellowship programs. Children are not only the future leaders of this congregation and this church, but a very vital and important part of the present ministry here.

One of our goals is to help our children to learn about and understand worship. We have done this in many ways at Third Presbyterian Church. Children in our choirs share their gifts of music in worship regularly. In Sunday school, students not only learn about worship, but prepare aspects of worship and worship together in our tri-annual Church School Chapel services. Another vital part of our Christian education program is when we invite school aged children to be in the sanctuary when we celebrate the Lord's Supper. At Third Presbyterian Church, the sacrament of communion (or the Lord's Supper) is celebrated every other month in the Sanctuary. We hope that this brochure will help your family prepare and understand this important practice of our faith.

## Words associated with Communion:



**Sacrament**—In the Presbyterian Church, there are two sacraments that we celebrate—Baptism and Communion. A sacrament is “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual blessing.” Sacraments are things that Jesus did that we can also do to remember him.

**Lord's Supper**—This is another term that means communion. It comes from the last supper when Jesus first shared this special meal with his disciples.

**Eucharist**—Yet another term for communion that comes from a Greek word meaning “Thanksgiving”. Some traditions use this term for communion.

**Elements**—the bread and the cup

**Chalice**—the big cup on the communion table.

**Bread and Juice**—When we talk about the bread, we might also use the word body because we look at the bread as a symbol of Jesus' body. When we talk about the cup we sometimes use the word wine (which is a different form of the liquid from grapes), or blood, because the juice is a symbol of Jesus' blood. Sometimes we also use the word covenant because communion is a reminder of the promises that Jesus made.

## Where to find the story of Jesus sharing the Lord's Supper with his disciples in scripture:

- Matthew 26:17-30
- Mark 14:12-26
- Luke 22:7-20
- I Corinthians 11:23-26

## What the Presbyterian Book of Order says about children and communion:

“Baptized children who are being nurtured and instructed in the significance of the invitation to 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-2.4011b)

*Families who are interested in learning more about baptism are invited to contact John Wilkinson at 271-6537 ext. 105 or [jwilkinson@thirdpresbyterian.org](mailto:jwilkinson@thirdpresbyterian.org).*