

Children and Communion: Summary Issues

Some values:

- Baptism is full initiation into God's family in the context of personal and family faith
- Holy Communion is a spiritually nourishing encounter with God
- Children are to be valued and accepted as full worshipping members of the church
- Receiving Holy Communion should be on the basis of relationship with Christ
- Some degree of understanding of it is required in receiving Holy Communion

Implementation:

- Not 'imposed' on every child but a decision by individual families in consultation with clergy
- Regular cycle of courses and opportunities to enable families wishing to explore admitting their children to Holy Communion to do so at a time that is right for them, recognising that some will choose the traditional pattern of Confirmation before Holy Communion

Preparation:

- Initial structured course of 3 sessions on Sunday afternoons at which children and parents will both be expected to attend, growing together as a family in their understanding of Holy Communion
- Includes specific teaching for the children on an age-appropriate basis
- Regular cycle of courses or ad hoc opportunities as numbers and interest require

Confirmation:

- Takes on a meaning independent of acting as a 'gateway' to Communion
- In its own right it will serve as a valuable 'rite of passage' providing opportunity for young people to 'go public' in affirming their faith, and receive confirmation of their faith from the church community standing alongside them
- It will continue to form an important focus within the youth programme as a step along the journey of faith, representative of moving from a 'family faith' to a more 'independent' and mature faith

Children who come to church without their parents:

- Liaison with the child's parents will be an essential requirement
- Provision of a sponsor in absence of parental involvement, subject to Child Protection Policy

Children with special needs:

- Appropriate provision made for this in the preparation
- Preparation and decision making more strongly mediated through parents where appropriate