



CROSSPOINT CHURCH

FAMILY
COMMUNION
GUIDE

2020

Crosspoint Kids Are Welcome to Take Communion

Children in the Church are Part of the Family of God

At Crosspoint, we practice believers' communion, meaning that communion participation is for those who are believers in Christ. We recognize, however, that for many who grow up in the church, you might not be able to identify when your "faith in Christ" moment began. Your conversion seems more like a process rather than an event. This is partly because, for those who grow up in faith homes, discipleship begins from the cradle onwards. While children of all ages might not be able to mark this identifiable moment, they are still part of the community of faith, and their parents' faith covers them. As children mature, we pray that they will come to a personal faith in Christ – that their faith will become their own.

Rituals are Rich for Learning

Communion is an affirmative act of faith, but it is also a formative experience. It is into this formative experience that we invite children to participate in communion as part of the family of God. Some people learn well by reading a book, but most people learn best through hands-on experience. Communion engages the senses and invites questions and curiosity. In observing the Passover feast the Israelites were instructed, "When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians'" (Exodus 12:25-27). We too need to be intentional about rich learning opportunities for our children.

Understanding Grows

One of Eugene Peterson's grown sons approached him one Sunday to say that he was worried about his kids taking communion because he didn't think they really understood it. "You're worried they don't understand it?" Eugene replied, "I don't really understand it... But we're still commanded to celebrate it, no?"

This story reminds us that if complete understanding was a prerequisite for taking communion, no one would be taking it. Our understanding expands with our cognitive development, life experience, and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. "Now [we] know in part; then [we] shall know fully, even as [we] are fully known" (1 Corinthians 13:12). We are responsible to pursue God and to ensure age-appropriate teaching of our children while accepting our own limitations and resting in God's sovereignty.

Children are Teachers Too

When Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14), he's reminding us of that while we want to mature (not remain childish) it's essential that we are child-like in our faith. We come to Lord's Table with nothing to offer and everything to gain. What can we learn from our children as they participate in communion with us?

What is the meaning of communion?

We are hoping that you will take the time to explain communion to your children BEFORE the Good Friday gathering. Before you explain it to them, it's important that you first have a clear understanding.

What do the Bread and the Cup symbolize?

Both are symbols of Christ's death on the cross. The bread symbolizes the broken body of Jesus. The cup symbolizes the blood of Jesus which includes his death, since the life of a person is in their blood.

The most important teaching on communion is found in 1 Corinthians 11:23-32 (ESV):

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷ So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. ²⁹ For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. ³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. ³¹ But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. ³² Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

How can I summarize the meaning of communion?

Each Sunday, as part of our communion liturgy, we express it in this way:

The Lord's Table is where believers in Christ **REMEMBER** what Christ did on our behalf. The **good news** is that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The Lord's Table is also a place of **REPENTANCE**. Forgiveness is received through faith and repentance. At the Table, we turn away from sin and turn toward Christ, who hears our prayers and gives us mercy and grace.

The Lord's Table is place of **RECONCILIATION**. It represents our fellowship with Christ and each other. We seek peace by forgiving others their sins, as we ourselves have been forgiven.

The Lord's Table is **SACRED**. Because of this, we heed God's warning not to partake in an unworthy manner, without first examining ourselves.

How do I explain the meaning of communion to children?

- Use language that they are familiar with and take time to explain the meaning of new words that you choose to introduce.
- Remember that children usually don't develop the ability to think abstractly until later elementary or junior high.
- Consider how you can faithfully explain the significance of communion based on their level of understanding. What's most important is that you *are* explaining communion to them *not* that you say all the right things. The very act of you talking to them about communion before they eat the bread and drink the juice will make the event stand out in their mind as something different than a snack.

If you have a 2 or 3-year-old, your communion conversation might look like this. . .

Today we are going to remember something very special: Jesus died and came alive again. Jesus loves you so much. Let's say thank you to Jesus for loving us (pray with child). Now let's eat this bread and drink this juice to remember that Jesus died and came alive again. Can you say, "Jesus is alive!"?

- Notice that this conversation references the sacred nature of communion as well as the element of remembrance but does not touch on repentance and reconciliation. However, by the time a child is 4 or 5 years old, they will have a clear sense of what it means to do something wrong and the importance of saying sorry.

If you have a 4 or 5-year-old your communion conversation might look like this. . .

Today we are going to remember something very special: Jesus died for our sins and came alive again. What is sin? Sin is when we disobey God. When we are mean to other people, when we don't listen to our mom or dad, when we tell lies. . .these are all sins. Can you think of sin in your life? Everybody has sinned. Only God is perfect. Are there any people that you need to say sorry to? Is there anything you to tell God sorry for? Does God still love us when we sin? Yes, God loves us so much that he sent his son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Jesus took the punishment for us. So, when we say sorry to God, instead of looking at our sin, he looks at the perfectness of Jesus. He forgives us and gives us a new start. Isn't that amazing news? Before we eat this bread and drink this juice, let's take time to say sorry to God for anything wrong we've done. Let's thank you to God for loving us so much and making a way for us to be forgiven.

- Notice that this conversation did include repentance and reconciliation but didn't touch on the symbolism of the bread and the wine nor eternal life. You may discern and decide however that your child is ready to talk about these topics.

If your child is in grades 1-6 your communion conversation might look like this. . .

Today we are going to celebrate communion. Communion is also called the Lord's Supper. Jesus did it with his disciples during a holiday called Passover. Do you remember what Passover is about? Passover is a yearly celebration when the Jewish people remember how God protected them while they were in Egypt; the angel passed over the homes of those that had been marked with the blood of a lamb. Today, we continue to do communion together at church to remember what Christ did when he died on the cross.

The Bible teaches us: On the night that Christ was betrayed, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said: "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." And then, after supper, he took the cup, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Does that mean that we are eating Jesus' body and drinking his blood? That sounds pretty gross. No, the bread and cup are symbols. Just like when you see a heart you might think of the word "love"; the shape is a symbol which reminds us of the feeling. In the same way, the bread and cup are symbols that remind us about Jesus' body and his blood.

*The Lord's Table is a place to **REMEMBER** what Christ did. The good news is that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*The Lord's Table is also a place of **REPENTANCE**. Forgiveness is received through faith and repentance. Repentance is turning away from the bad things we do and turning towards Jesus who has the best way for us.*

*The Lord's Table is a place of **RECONCILIATION**. What does reconciliation mean? It means making things right with someone if you've wronged them. We seek peace by forgiving others their sins, as we ourselves have been forgiven.*

*The Lord's Table is **SACRED**. What does sacred mean? Sacred means holy, set-apart, or important. Because of this, it's important that we don't just treat communion like a snack, but that we take it seriously and take time to make sure we're right with God and others before taking communion.*

Let's take time to pray and then let's thank God for what he's done for us as we eat the bread and drink the juice.

