

COMMUNION With CHILDREN



Some Ideas and Resources
for Including and Involving Children



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1. INTRODUCTION

Kids Friendly encourages churches to prayerfully consider how children are welcomed and included in the sacrament of Holy Communion. On our website (www.kidsfriendly.org.nz) you will find a range of articles, service outlines, liturgies, ideas and resources from books, websites and most importantly from YOU! Some of our best resources are the ones that YOU have shared with us, that have 'worked' with your congregations.

So here is a taster of some of these - put together in a booklet, initially as a giveaway at General Assembly 2018 – to encourage you to try some new (and old) ways of including and involving children in Communion services in meaningful ways at your church.

The PCANZ Directory for Worship states:

“All who are baptised are welcomed to the Table. None shall be excluded; it is a privilege for the undeserving. When we welcome, we recognise that our understanding will differ according to maturity, but we will all have some understanding. We can all understand that God loves us and invites us. We can all understand that we need to say sorry and renew our commitment to love and serve God. We can all understand that when we share this meal we share with the Church worldwide and across time.”

Front cover

A tablecloth created by the children of Leith Valley Presbyterian Church, 2017. Children helped set the table and serve communion as part of an All-Age service with drama, group activities, a new ukulele song & more.



2. WELCOME CHILDREN!

Children know they are welcome at the table when they are fed there. We don't sit children at the table at home and not offer them food. We would not think of holding back physical nourishment from our children because they do not yet understand its importance. And so the church, from ancient times, has learned that it cannot withhold the broken bread of God's love or the precious blood of Jesus from its children. As stewards of these amazing gifts, we are to share the richness of them with our children. Whether we hold their hand as we walk forward, or teach them to "make a cradle for Jesus" (overlapping hands, cupped) to receive the bread, we open the gifts of God to them.

Some Thoughts and Questions to Ponder:

- * Think about your own childhood or early experiences of Holy Communion.
- * What new thoughts have you had about children and Communion?
- * What messages might we be giving to children about their place in our churches, and God's kingdom, by our approach to Holy Communion?

3. A RESPONSIVE LITURGY FOR ALL-AGE COMMUNION WITH QUESTIONS

This is a responsive Communion liturgy where children (and others – we're ALL children of God regardless of age!) are invited to ask questions about what we are doing. It is inspired by the Jewish tradition of the Passover dinner, where the youngest Jewish child asks four questions. This tradition responds to God's commandment to His people to share their faith with their children: Exodus 13:8 (NIRV): "on that day talk to your child"; and the importance that Jewish people place on involving children in their faith practices.

All of the Congregation are invited to join the child and the minister around the Table (if possible) to tell the story of Communion.

Minister: *This morning we will tell each other the story because it needs to be told...but by whom? It ought to be a community story – that's you and I. We will ask questions and respond - up on the screen is our "liturgy" that is the work of the people – something we do together.*

Invitation:

Minister: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.



This is the table of the Lord.
He invites all who love him to come and share in this joyful feast.

CHILD OF GOD: Why have we come here today?

Congregation: We are here because Jesus has invited us.
When Jesus was on earth he often enjoyed meals with friends.

CHILD OF GOD: What happened on the night before Jesus died?

Congregation: On the night before he died, when darkness was beginning to fall, he sat at a table with his disciples, in an upstairs room in Jerusalem.

CHILD OF GOD: What did they do and say?

Congregation: At this last supper Jesus broke bread and took wine.
He told his disciples to remember him by following his example.

CHILD OF GOD: Why should we celebrate this today?

Congregation: Today we are his disciples and we are glad to do what he told us.

CHILD OF GOD: What is on the Table and what does it remind us of?

Congregation: On the Table we have this bread and this cup!
Jesus took the bread and the wine to be put aside for this special use.
And he gave thanks...so together, let us give thanks.

CHILD OF GOD: How can we give thanks?

Minister: We give thanks together....

Minister: The Lord be with you

Congregation: And also with you

Minister: Lift up your hearts

Congregation: We lift them to the Lord

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

Congregation: It is right to give our thanks and praise

CHILD OF GOD: What are some of the things God has done for us?

Congregation: Loving God, you made this world for us to enjoy
You gave us Jesus to be our friend and bring us to you.



You continue to send your Spirit to make us one family in Christ.

CHILD OF GOD: How can we respond?

Congregation: For these gifts of your love we thank you and join with angels and saints in this joyful song of praise.

Congregation sings/says:

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory
Hosanna in the highest
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord
Hosanna in the highest***

Congregation: We thank you too, God, for your kindness to us and your goodness to all for showing your love in the birth of Jesus. In him your reign draws near with the promise of justice, peace and compassion for all. Jesus has laid down his life for us and risen in newness of life, living to pray for us forever. In him all that separates us from you, God, has been taken away, so that we might be friends with you and with one another. Thank you that you bring us together at this Table.

Through your Holy Spirit, bless us and these your gifts of bread and wine, that we might be joined with Christ's life and strengthened to be his people by his love.

Breaking of bread:

Minister: On the night when he was betrayed, Jesus took bread and, after giving thanks to God, he broke it and said, 'This is my body which is given for you; do this in memory of me.'

In the same way, he took the cup and said 'this is the new covenant sealed by my blood, whenever you drink it, do this in memory of me.'

Congregation:

Jesus, Lamb of God, sharing our weakness ***have mercy on us***

Jesus, Lamb of God, bearing our healing ***have mercy on us***

Jesus, Lamb of God, sharing our story ***grant us peace.***

Minister: The gifts of God for the people of God

Distribution (as per your church practice)

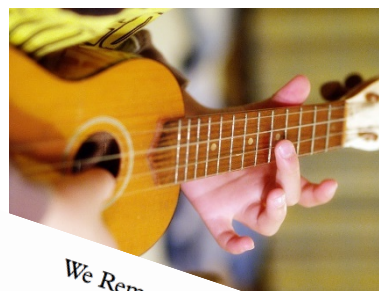


Prayer:

Congregation: We thank you, God of compassion, that you have nourished us with the bread of life and the wine of hope. As in Christ your love flowed out to those around him, So let your love flow through us to others. As in Christ your life was broken, so let your life meet us in our brokenness and release hope in us and others, through Jesus the bringer of hope, peace, Child of joy and love to the world. Amen

Thanks to Rev Leanne Munro of Wadestown Presbyterian Church for sharing this with us.

4. A SONG! "We Remember You"



We Remember You
 By Hannah Thompson-Holloway

Note: All of the chords/letters are held for a whole bar. Listen to the recording for the chord changes if you are having trouble following along. Also, when you see G7 you can play either a G or a C7 (Chord diagrams for Ukulele on last page)

Chorus

F C G Am
 We remember You, we remember You,

F C F G7
 We remember all You've done, and all that You will do.

F C G Am
 We remember You, we remember You,

F C G G C
 Through this bread and cup, together, we celebrate You.

Verse 1

C G F C
 You asked us to take, the bread and the cup

C F G7 G7
 As symbols of Your body and blood.

C G F C
 Give thanks to the Lord, together as one,

C F G7 G7
 "Do this in remembrance of me."

We Remember You
 Hannah Thompson-Holloway

Allegro ♩ = 130

Chorus

We re - mem - ber You, we re - mem - ber You, we re - mem - ber all You've done, and all that You will do. We re - mem - ber You, we re - mem - ber

This song was written by Hannah Thompson-Holloway (Leith Valley) who taught a combined ukulele group to share with the whole congregation at an All-Age Communion service.

Hannah has kindly granted us permission to include this song here.

We Remember You

Allegro ♩ = 130

Hannah Thompson-Holloway

Chorus F C G Am F

We re - mem - ber You, we re - mem - ber You, we re - mem - ber all_ You've

6 C F G⁷ F C G

done, and all that You will do. We re - mem - ber You, we re - mem - ber

12 Am F C G C

You. Through this bread and cup, to - ge ther, we ce - le - brate You.

18 **Verse 1** C G F C C

You asked us to take, the bread and the cup, as sym - bols of your

24 F G⁷ C G F C

bo - dy and_ blood. Give thanks to the Lord, to - ge - ther as one, "Do

31 C F G⁷ Am

this in re - mem - brance of_ me." So_ here we are_ to - day,

36 F G⁷ **Chorus** F C G

_ we lift our voice and say; We re - mem - ber You, we re - mem - ber

42 Am F C F G⁷ F

You, we re mem - ber all_ You've done, and all that You will do. We re - mem - ber

48 C G Am F C G

You, we re - mem - ber You. Through this bread and cup, to - ge ther, we

54 C Verse 2 C G F C

ce-le-brate You. Your bo - dy gi - ven, Your blood poured out, for

61 C F G⁷ C G

us, and all peo-ple 'round the world. Your new co-ve - nant, for-

67 F C C F G⁷

gi - ving our sins, we re-mem-ber, un - til Your king-dom come. So_

73 Am F G⁷ Chorus F

here we are_ to- day,_ we lift our voice and say; We re - mem - ber

78 C G Am F C F

You, we re-mem-ber You, we re mem - ber all_ You've done, and all that You will

84 G⁷ F C G Am F

do. We re - mem - ber You, we re - mem - ber You. Through this bread and

90 C G Chorus F C G

cup, to - ge-ther;_ Oh_ We re - mem - ber You, we re - mem - ber

96 Am F C F G⁷ F

You, we re mem - ber all_ You've done, and all that You will do. We re-mem-ber

102 C G Am F

You, we re - mem - ber You. Through this bread and

106 C G C

cup, to - ge- ther,_ we ce - le - brate You.



5. A Communion Checklist

This checklist was created by Mo Morgan while she was serving as an intern at St. James' Presbyterian Church in Whanganui. It could be given to children on a clipboard with a pencil. It's good to have them sitting next to an adult who can help them follow the liturgy.

Explain to the children: *Listen carefully, you'll recognise the words of the Last Supper from The Children's Story Book Bible. Tick off the parts of our Communion (Last Supper) service that you recognise.*

COMMUNION CHECKLIST

LUKE 22: 7 - 20



As we go through communion tick each part as you recognise it.

INVITATION <i>Welcoming people to communion</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONFESSION <i>We bring to GOD things we are sorry for</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
THANKS & PRAISE <i>The Great Thanksgiving Prayer Holy Holy Holy Song</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
THE HOLY SPIRIT PRAYER <i>(EPICLESIS) Asking the Holy Spirit to make Jesus real to us</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
THE STORY <i>Explaining what communion means Through Bible Stories and themes</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BREAKING BREAD <i>The Leader breaks the Bread</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EATING AND DRINKING <i>With God, and other believers around the world.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Download copies of this checklist and the service outline 'Communion Checklist'
<http://www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/worship-together/children-and-communion/>



6. A RESOURCE FOR PARENTS

Rev. Andrew and Christine Harrex developed a take home resource to offer parents to use at home with their children prior to their receiving Communion for the first time.

“We found it worked really well in our family with four children ages 5-10 years. We felt that after our discussions, our children had a really good understanding of what Communion was all about. We were happy for them to take Communion. This was really special and meaningful for our kids and helped them move on in their faith journey.”

Their **Family Preparation for All Age Communion** Resource can be downloaded from the Kids Friendly Website:

<http://www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/wp-content/Uploads/Lawrence-PREPARING-FOR-ALL-AGE-COMMUNION-take-home-resource.pdf>

7. A SPRINGBOARD OF IDEAS

What cues and clues can we give our young people so they can prepare and participate in Communion as fully as possible?

- Children help bake bread – at home as a family activity, or at church.
- Children make a Communion table cloth – see cover of booklet idea from Leith Valley.
- Children and youth help serve ‘Side by Side’ (alongside an adult) in the worship service. This could include ‘Call to Worship,’ greet, read scriptures, prayers, sing, as well as setting out the elements, holding alongside an adult.
- Have a Communion quiz to prepare children, everyone! for Communion (see resource on website)
- Use pictures, small symbols or a list of words to listen and look out for during the Communion
- Make a booklet or page in the bulletin for children to follow along with and use.
- Invite older children to research the symbols of bread and wine used in Passover and Communion. Help them make a presentation of their discoveries in a creative way during a Communion service.
- Encourage children to sit with parents/caregivers during Communion, especially if they have been at an activity table.



- Invite children and parents to the front so they can see what is happening.
- Provide craft materials for children to use as they respond to what they hear and see.
- Have an extra leader to sit with families to explain and encourage participation.
- Use shorter prayers and don't be afraid to explain as you go along.
- Use the Lord's Prayer and The Peace, maybe a simple chant or same song each time so children can learn and participate more with this repetition.
- Have good children's Bibles or storybooks of the Last Supper for children to look up.

To contact a Kids Friendly Coach or Advisor check our Website:

<http://www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/about/contact-us/>

or email us:

<mailto:admin@kidsfriendly.org.nz>

ORGANIC RESOURCES

All our Kids Friendly resources are ever-evolving "works in progress". So if you have ideas, websites, resources and stories to share or add please let us know.

And if you notice any mistakes in this resource please alert us.

This document is intended as a resource for the Church. The information it contains is not prescriptive. The Book of Order and its subordinate standards contain the Church's official rules and directions. Any perceived conflict between the information contained in this resource and the Church's Book of Order and subordinate standards is entirely unintentional.