



When Is My Child Ready To Receive Holy Communion?

*A Guide for
Parents & Church Leaders*

Background to the New Policy Change

The fortieth session of the meeting of the provincial synod approved a change so that baptism is to be the only requirement for persons to be allowed to receive communion. A transition resolution will occur before this becomes the practice. This means that persons do not need to be confirmed before they will be admitted to Holy Communion. Baptized children are allowed to receive Holy Communion.

For members of Clergy: How can we help parents with the decision about their child receiving Holy Communion?

1. Build a relationship with the family

Get to know the parents and guardians, and their children. Understand where they are coming from and how they are growing spiritually as a family unit.

2. Find out the background of the parents and guardians.

Parents and guardians who have grown up in the Anglican church may have the expectation that their children would participate in a structured course of Christian formation as given in confirmation class.

However, confirmation will not be required for children to receive Holy Communion, and may become an adult affirmation of faith. Therefore, parents and guardians will have to exercise a greater role in the faith formation of their child and encourage them to make an adult affirmation of their faith.

3. Find out about their social and cultural background

Confirmation is a rite of passage in the life of a child. Not only does it carry religious significance, it may also carry social and cultural importance.

The special celebrations that accompany confirmation do not need to be abandoned. They can be adapted for the occasion when the child first receives Holy Communion.

For Parents: How can you know when your child is ready?

We do not fully understand the mysteries of the sacraments, and therefore our absolute “knowing” may be difficult to determine.

1. Does your child recognize that something special and different is happening in the Holy Communion.

That the bread is not ordinary bread. It is 'special bread'.

They may not be able to verbalize it, but you can see it in their demeanor as they approach communion.

2. Does your child want to receive Holy Communion?

Children can express their desire with outstretched hands and bright expressions.

What about Confirmation?

The decision to wait for confirmation resides with parents and children.

Children need instruction and training, but we must also recognize that faith formation is about the movement of the Holy Spirit and the embrace and nurture of a relationship with Christ rather than an ability to remember odd facts and tidbits.

Holiness cannot be taught; it is a lifestyle enabled by the Holy Spirit.

Last Word:

All these decisions must be grounded in a lifelong relationship with Christ. Therefore the decision to receive Holy Communion is only one aspect. Our prayers, support, teaching, and good examples will help our children grow into their personal relationship with Christ. As we prepare them, may we remember to prepare ourselves—so that our children may follow us as we follow Christ.

