



We are often asked “When can my child take communion?” This question usually comes up as your child is able to participate in the worship service. The question also comes up as a response to the child’s question to the parents: “Can I take communion?” What a wonderful request for a child to make! It means that the Lord is drawing him or her closer to Himself and they are responding.

At First Pres., we have not set a particular age or grade as the boundary for participating in communion. The final decision about when a child is ready to participate in communion is yours, the parent. We encourage you to make sure that your child has a good grasp of the gospel message of salvation through Jesus and understands the basic meaning of communion. Many parents have found that 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade is a good benchmark for their child, while many others find that 5<sup>th</sup> or middle school is more appropriate.

While the parent is the primary person called to teach children about salvation and the sacraments, as the church, we want to take our role to equip you and to nurture children seriously. This is why we teach children about worship and communion in Sunday school and in Children’s Church. In addition, we are starting a special communion class that we will offer twice a year in the fall and then spring. The class will be open to 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and their parents. As the parent, you can decide what the proper grade is for your child to come to the class. Though a communion class is not a requirement for participating in the sacrament of communion, the class is designed to help children and their parents come to the table with a greater understanding. It can also help parents determine whether or not their child is ready to participate in communion. Finally, by going to the class together before a child starts participating in communion, it makes their first experience at the table a more special and memorable occasion.

### **Frequently asked questions:**

1. *When does First Pres celebrate communion?*

Communion is celebrated the first Sunday of each month at each worship service.

2. *If my child isn’t ready to receive communion and is in the worship service, what do we do when we are invited to come up for communion?*

If you believe that your child is not ready to celebrate communion, it is okay for your child to come up front with you. The child can fold their hands in prayer. This will indicate to the elder to give a blessing, placing their hand on the child’s head and saying “Jesus loves you” or “the Lord bless you keep you and make His face shine upon you.” It’s also okay for your child to stay seated during communion. Either way, use the opportunity as a way to begin more conversation with them about the meaning and significance of communion.

3. *What is a good way to explain communion to my children?*

We use two words to describe communion:

- Remember – in communion, we remember that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead, so we could be friends with God forever. Jesus knew that we would need reminders of His real and present love for us.
- Celebrate – Communion is more than remembering something about the past though. It’s also a celebration that God is with us right now, through the Holy Spirit. Jesus is always with us, but He promised to be with us in a special way during communion, through the Holy Spirit. When we celebrate communion, we are celebrating that God loves us and is with us.

4. *What Scripture tells us about communion?*

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

5. *What are other names for the Sacrament?*

- Communion – emphasizes what we have in common. In the sacrament we are together not only in our shared faith but also in our common need for Christ’s grace and truth in our daily lives.
- Lord’s Supper – reminds us that we share this meal in the memory and Spirit of the risen Christ who so often shared table fellowship with His followers and many others.
- Eucharist – an expression which means “good grace.” The sacrament is a gift of grace that God has given to His people.

6. *What is a sacrament?*

A sacrament is a sacred sign, instituted by Jesus that reveals the gospel in which the Holy Spirit communicates to us the forgiving, renewing, and promising love of God in Jesus Christ and encourages us in faith. There are two sacraments: baptism and communion.