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For parents/care-givers: Background to children celebrating Communion

In 2010 the elders at Westminster decided to allow children to participate in the Sacrament of Communion (also called The Lord's Supper or the Eucharist). This is done in a growing number of Presbyterian congregations across the country.

It is biblically motivated. Children are included in God's 'covenant' people throughout Scripture. We celebrate the Sacrament together as a church family, and are thankful and mindful of how Jesus welcomed children into his ministry.

Meaning

This Sacrament was given by Jesus himself. "Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:24). It is a remembrance of Jesus' saving sacrifice for us, and therefore, about the good news that we are reconciled to God and given forgiveness because of what he did for us on the cross.

The bread symbolizes his body and the wine (or, in this context, juice) symbolizes his blood. It nourishes us with the spiritual presence of Christ himself and strengthens us as his people. It is a thanksgiving celebration and reminds us of our common-union as believers, and of our commitment to the Lord.

When children participate, they do so with a believing parent (or grandparent or guardian). It is their responsibility to explain it's meaning in a way that is appropriate to the child's age.

When we partake, the pastor reminds us about this meaning and provides an opportunity for self-examination and for confessing our sins to God.

Some suggestions when explaining Communion to young children

Simply do your best to communicate in a way they can best understand.

Note: When celebrating with children, remember to use juice and not wine.

- Jesus specifically told us to remember what he did for us in this way.
- He saved us and loves us. He paid the price for our sin on the cross so that we could have peace and forgiveness with God.
- The bread represents Jesus' body that was broken/hurt for us on the cross.
- The juice represents Jesus' blood that was shed (spilled from his body) on the cross.
- Communion feeds us and strengthens us in a way we can't see, but is still very real.
- When we have Communion we say Thank You to God and we recommit to serving him.