

Home Communion Training

Administration of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament

The Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island
An initiative of the Missional Program Team



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Home Communion Training Program

In the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, the celebration of the Eucharist is a sacred and communal act—an expression of our unity in Christ and our shared life as the Body of Christ. Yet, we recognize that not all members of our community are able to gather physically for this celebration. Whether due to illness, age, or circumstance, many faithful members remain deeply connected to our worshiping life, even from afar.

The practice of bringing the consecrated sacrament to those who are shut-in, hospitalized, or living in care facilities is a cherished and ancient tradition of the Church. It is a ministry of love, hospitality, and inclusion—an extension of the gathered community's worship into the homes and hearts of those unable to be present.

This training program is designed to equip deacons, Licensed Lay Ministers and other lay leaders, in accordance with **Bishop's Policy 1.1.4**, to carry out this ministry with reverence, care, and pastoral sensitivity. Through this ministry, communicants are not only receiving the sacrament—they are being spiritually included in the worship of the Sunday congregation.

Whether you are new to this ministry or seeking to deepen your understanding, we thank you for your willingness to serve. May this training program guide you in offering Christ's presence with grace and compassion, and may those you visit feel the embrace of their church family through your faithful service.

To be clear, this is not the only training program that may be used in our Diocese. Other courses may also be suitable. The expectation of the Bishop (Policy 1.1.4: Administration of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament) is that all those who are engaged in home communion ministry be prayerfully selected, trained and officially approved for this ministry.

This kit is designed to be used by individuals, small groups in parishes or in regions to offer a fulsome educational background and practical pastoral guidance for ministering to those who are not present at Sunday worship. Leaders who are being trained for the first time in this important pastoral work would benefit from a session or two to *practice* a full visit – from the first greeting, preparing the sacred vessels, leading the worship service, administering communion, etc.

The entire Home Communion training package takes approximately 5 hours or more to complete. For training purposes and hosting group learning sessions here's a suggested order and timing for each resource:

- **Bishop's Policy 1.1.4: Administration of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament**
Read in advance (20-30 minutes)
Reflect and discuss (20-30 minutes)
- **CHECKLIST: Home Communion Ministry - Permissions & Protocols**
Read and discuss how this program can be implemented in your parish (10-15 minutes)
- **Preparatory Questions and Reading**
Reflect on the questions and write down responses (20 minutes)
Read: "Eucharist", Being Christian. Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer, by Rowan Williams (20 minutes)
Small group discussion
- **VIDEO Teaching:** via YouTube link - 54 minutes total
 - **Eucharistic Theology** – Rev. Ian Wissler (27 minutes)
Discussion (30 minutes)
 - **Pastoral and Practical Implications** – Rev. Tammy Hodge Orovec (27 minutes)
Discussion (30 minutes)
- **Liturgy Resources**
The Book of Alternative Services – including instructions in rubrics
The Book of Common Prayer – including instructions in rubrics
Bulletin Outline #1 - Order of Service from the B.A.S.
Bulletin Outline #2 – Order of Service from the B.A.S., B.C.P. and other prayers
Review and briefly discuss (10-30 minutes)
- **PREPARING for Home Communion Visits** – prayers, visit checklist, devotions
Review this and discuss (15 minutes)

- **Concluding Questions**

Reflect on the questions and write down responses (20 minutes)

*Discuss with the group and/or with your rector/priest-in-charge/pastoral leader
(30 minutes)*

OTHER RESOURCES are supplied for use:

- **Letter of Permission Request form (for the Bishop's Office)**
- **OPTIONAL: Lay Pastoral Visiting resource**



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CHECKLIST: Home Communion Ministry: Permissions & Protocols

1. Parish Preparation

Parish must discuss and study the practice of lay distribution before requesting permission.

A congregational meeting is recommended to ensure understanding and support.

Submit a request* to the Bishop including:

- ☐ Description of parish preparation.
- ☐ How this ministry is communicated to parishioners receiving Home Communion.
- ☐ Information about the character, calling and competency of the lay minister(s) requesting licensing.

2. Rector's Authorization (or Priest-in-charge)

- ☐ Rector must authorize the distribution each time Communion is offered.
- ☐ Preferably, Communion is distributed on the same day as the parish Eucharist.
- ☐ Elements should be taken directly from the parish celebration, reinforcing the connection to the gathered community.

3. Licensing Lay Distributors

- ☐ Lay distributors may be Licensed Lay Ministers and other trusted parish lay people.
- ☐ Apply* for the specific license for ***Administration of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament*** (not included in standard licenses).
- ☐ License is valid for 3 years and renewable with written request from Rector and Parish Council.

4. Requirements for Lay Distributors

- ☐ Must be acknowledged by the congregation and approved by Parish Council.
- ☐ Provide a Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Check.
- ☐ Comply with SaferChurch policies for home visits.
- ☐ Be a regular communicant, at least 16 years old, and sincere in faith.
- ☐ Be commissioned publicly and receive the Bishop's license during worship.
- ☐ Have pastoral skills and be willing to serve as part of a ministry team.

* A Bishop's request form is included with this package.



Home Communion Training

PREPATORY QUESTIONS & READING

Prayerfully reflect upon your past experiences of Holy Eucharist. Then answer the following questions. Write down at least four sentences for each question.

- What was your earliest memory of Holy Communion? Describe it with some detail.

- Share about what is your experience of Holy Eucharist today? Has anything changed for you over the years? If so, what?

- How does sharing Holy Eucharist in worship with others feed and sustain you through the week? What difference does it make in your life? Be specific.

- When participating in Holy Eucharist what is the atmosphere you prefer that is most helpful as you receive? What conditions make this sacrament meaningful?

READ:

“Eucharist”, Being Christian. Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer, by Rowan Williams (2014, Cambridge University Press).

- What aspects of the reading about Eucharist stood out to you as especially meaningful for those who are homebound?

- How does the article shape your view of your role as a minister of Communion outside of Sunday worship gatherings?

LITURGY: The Book of Alternative Services
Communion under Special Circumstances
- for those not present at the celebration.
pages 256 - 260

This service may be conducted by a priest, or by a deacon or lay person authorized by the diocesan bishop.

This form is intended for use with those who for reasonable cause cannot be present at a public celebration of the eucharist. When persons are unable to be present for extended periods, it is desirable that the minister arrange to celebrate the eucharist with them from time to time on a regular basis, using the Proper of the Day.

(Propers of the church year can be found in the BAS from page 262 to 397. These offer an opening sentence, prayers before and after communion and a list of readings. You can likely get this same information from the church bulletin from Sunday. The bulletin can make a nice gift and a tangible symbol of the worshipping community's fellowship with them through the shared special communion.)

When desired, persons may receive communion brought to them from a celebration of the eucharist, or from the reserved sacrament, using the following form.

It is desirable that fellow parishioners, relatives, and friends be present, when possible, to communicate with them.

(If the family can be present, it is best from a SafeRchurch perspective. One on one visits, especially with vulnerable individuals can be a risk of harm and or accusation. When possible, have others gather with you. If not possible, take every safeguard to protect the vulnerable and guard from false accusations of misconduct through documentation and reporting.)

The minister conducting the service greets those present in these or similar words.

Siblings in Christ, God calls us to faithful service by the proclamation of the word and sustains us with the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. Hear now God's word and receive this holy food from the Lord's table.

A passage of scripture appropriate to the day or occasion, after the reading, the minister may comment on it briefly.

(Preparation is required. Use the readings from the previous Sunday service, or tailor pick scriptures that match the perceived needs of the person you are visiting. You can share a truncated version of the Sunday's service sermon message or enter into a dialog about what the scripture passages might be saying for their real life experience. Keep readings to a manageable length, and reflections to match the abilities of those gathered.)

Or one or more of the following passages can be read.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3.16

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." John 6.35

Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him." John 6.51, 55-56

Jesus said, "Abide in me, as I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love." John 15.4-5a, 8-9

Suitable prayers may be offered.

(You may use one of the responsive litanies BAS p. 110 to 128. Or even more meaningful, pray extemporaneously about what has been shared.)

Dear God Thank you for this time together with ___N_____. We are blessed to be members of _____ Parish__, and the _____ community.

God you tell us that when ever two or three are gathered together in your name, you are in the midst of us. Thank you for being with ___N___ and I today.

God of creation Thank you for the beauty of this world. For the season of _____ and the opportunities it offers us to _____.

God the Son, who showed us the depth of God's love for all people. Jesus our pattern and our friend, you know the struggles of our heart before we ask, but we ask your help/healing/strength with the _____ situation _____N_ is facing. Guide _____N___ with your life giving Spirit, and let them feel the arms of your constant presence around them.

God, you know us better than we know ourselves, help us to recognize that we are your children, precious and loved. Help us to accept your love and come to love ourselves more fully, allowing your love to flow through us to offer loving service to others. Especially help us support _____N___ who is on our hearts today.

*God, help us connect with Jesus through this offering of bread and wine at your table. Help us feel a part of the worshipping community of _____ and thank you God, for making each one of us a member of your heavenly family. **Amen.***

A confession of sin may follow. The following or some other form is used.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Peace may then be exchanged.

(You may add the Prayer Before Communion from the Propers of the church year, BAS p.262-397.)

**And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And**

lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The minister may say the following invitation.

The gifts of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

The sacrament is given with the following words.

The body of Christ (given for you). The blood of Christ (shed for you).

Or

The body of Christ, the bread of heaven.

The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

The communicant responds each time, Amen.

(You may add the Prayer After Communion from the Propers of the church year, BAS p.262-397)

The following doxology may be said.

Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

Only a bishop or a priest may bless those present, so in their absence the service concludes with a dismissal.

Alleluias are not used during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Let us bless the Lord. (Alleluia!)

Thanks be to God. (Alleluia!)

Liturgy: Communion under special circumstances
for those not able to be present at Communal Worship in the Parish,
using an order adapted from *The Book of Common Prayer*

Introduction

This service may be conducted by a priest, or by a deacon or lay person authorized by the diocesan bishop.

This form is intended for use with those who for reasonable cause cannot be present at a public celebration of the eucharist. When persons are unable to be present for extended periods, it is desirable that the minister arrange to celebrate the eucharist with them from time to time on a regular basis, using the Proper of the Day.

(Collects and Readings (“the Propers”) can be from either the Revised Common Lectionary and the BAS, or from the lectionary and Collects found in the BCP (pages 95-330). Generally, it is preferable to use the Propers which would have been used during the previous Sunday’s worship. You can likely get this information from the church bulletin from Sunday. The bulletin can make a nice gift and a tangible symbol of the worshipping community’s fellowship with them through the shared special communion.

You may wish to vary from the previous Sunday’s Propers when ministering to a person suffering serious illness. Propers for Communion of the Sick are found starting at the bottom of page 582 of the Book of Common Prayer. Suggestions for other readings are found on page 587 of the BCP. The Collect used for Communion of the Sick may be used in addition to the Collect of the Day.

Another instance in which you may wish to use Propers other than those used on the previous Sunday would be in celebration of Christmas Day and Easter Day. Throughout their respective liturgical seasons, Communion may be distributed among parishioners who are unable to attend services on those days, using their

respective Propers. This helps to connect them to these key celebrations observed by the family of the Church, of which they themselves are members.

When desired, persons may receive communion brought to them from a celebration of the eucharist, or from the reserved sacrament, using the following form.

It is desirable that fellow parishioners, relatives, and friends be present, when possible, to communicate with them.

(If the family can be present, it is best from a SafeRchurch perspective. One on one visits, especially with vulnerable individuals can be a risk of harm and or accusation. When possible, have others gather with you. If not possible, take every safeguard to protect the vulnerable and guard from false accusations of misconduct through documentation and reporting.)

The Order for Communion

The Minister may begin by saying:

PEACE be to this house, and to all that dwell in it.

THE eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.
Deuteronomy 33. 27.

They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength. *Isaiah 40. 31.*

In nothing be anxious: but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4. 6, 7.

Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All: Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Minister: Let us pray.

Then follows the Collect of the Day, or the Collect for the Holy-Day (Christmas or Easter), and/or the following for the sick, if desired.

GOD of all grace and power: Behold, visit, and relieve this thy servant; look upon (N.) with the eyes of thy mercy, give (N.) comfort and sure confidence in thee, defend (N.) in all danger, and keep (N.) in perpetual peace and safety; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Readings for the Day, or those to be used in Communion to the Sick (see the "Introduction" for information as to where to find them in the BCP) are read. One or two lessons are read. If only one is used, it should be a selection from the Gospels.

The Minister introduces the lesson:

Minister: The Lesson is written in the (*Book of*, or *Letter to*, as the case may be), the ___ chapter, beginning at the ___ verse.

At the conclusion of the Lesson:

Minister: Here ends the Lesson

The Minister introduces The Gospel Lesson:

Minister: The Holy Gospel is written in the _____ chapter of the Gospel According to _____, beginning at the _____ verse.

All: Glory be to thee, O Lord.

At the conclusion of the Gospel Lesson, the Minister says:

Minister: The Gospel of Christ.

All: Praise be to thee, O Christ.

In Book of Common Prayer tradition, Intercessory Prayers are not normally a part of "routine" Home Communion. However, on such visits, offering extemporaneous prayer

for the particular needs of the recipient are appropriate. In the case of Communion to the Sick, any, or all, of the following may be said:

Minister: Let us pray.

For the recovery of a sick person.

O LORD and heavenly Father, who dost relieve those who suffer in soul and body: Stretch forth thine hand, we beseech thee, to heal thy servant N., and to ease his pain; that by thy mercy s/he may be restored to health of body and mind, and show forth his/her thankfulness in love to thee and service to his/her neighbour; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For a blessing on the use of means.

O LORD Jesu Christ, thou great Physician: Look with thy gracious favour upon this thy servant; give wisdom and discretion to those who minister to N in his/her sickness; bless all the means used for his/her recovery; stretch forth thy hand and, according to thy will, restore him/her to health and strength, that s/he may live to praise thee for thy goodness and thy grace; to the glory of thy holy Name. **Amen.**

For submission to the will of God.

O GOD our heavenly Father, in whom we live and move and have our being: Grant to this thy servant grace to desire only thy most holy will; that, whether living or dying, s/he may be thine; for his sake who loved us and gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE Almighty Lord, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, do bow and obey: Be now and evermore thy defence; and make thee know and feel that there is none other name under heaven given to man, in whom, and through whom, thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession follows. When led by anyone other than a priest or bishop, the prayer which follows uses the term “us”, instead of “you”, as the prayer is, in those instances, not a pronouncement of Absolution, but an affirmation of God’s forgiveness.

Minister: Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all people: We acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness, Which we from time to time most grievously have committed, By thought, word, and deed, Against thy Divine Majesty. We do earnestly repent, And are

heartily sorry for these our misdoings. Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; For thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, Forgive us all that is past; And grant that we may ever hereafter Serve and please thee In newness of life, To the honour and glory of thy Name; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him: Have mercy upon us; pardon and deliver us from all our sins; confirm and strengthen us in all goodness; and bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *All: Amen.*

Minister: The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: And with thy spirit.

All: WE do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, Trusting in our own righteousness, But in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy So much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord, Whose property is always to have mercy: Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, So to eat the Flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, And to drink his Blood, That our sinful bodies may be made clean by his Body, And our souls washed through his most precious Blood, And that we may evermore dwell in him, And he in us. Amen.

The following may be said:

O LAMB of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us thy peace.

Communion is then received.

At the distribution of the bread:

THE Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life: Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.

Recipient: Amen.

And the Minister that delivers the Cup shall likewise say:

THE Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life: Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

Recipient: Amen.

Prayers after Communion:

Minister: Let us pray.

OUR Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

The Minister may lead all those present in saying The Grace:

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.

Minister: Let us go forth from this time of worship in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

PREPARING for Home Communion Visits

EUCCHARISTIC VISITOR PRAYER for SUNDAY WORSHIP:

Typically, the minister for Home Communion will go to the holy table (altar) to be commissioned following the administration of Communion and before the Blessing and Dismissal. The priest will hand the blessed sacrament to the Eucharistic visitor with these words:

In the name of this congregation, I send you forth bearing these holy gifts, that those to whom you go may share with us in the communion of Christ's Body and Blood. We who are many are one, because we all share one bread, one cup. Amen.

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS WHEN PREPARING FOR A VISIT:

When making a pastoral visit, including for home communion, the minister needs to be spiritually and emotionally prepared. Central in that preparation is praying beforehand to ensure that you are grounded in faith, recognizing that it is God's Spirit at work within us that enables our ministry to be effective. Take time to pray that anything that may be troubling you may be set aside in order to be fully present to the person you are visiting. Be sure to include a prayer of personal forgiveness and also for the presence of the Holy Spirit during the visit.

Lord God, bless the person(s) whom I will be visiting today. May I have your spirit of compassion so that I may enter places of pain and hurt with sensitivity and bring to others who suffer a presence that comforts, sustains and heals. Amen.

Guide me Lord God, and help me to accept my own imperfections and brokenness, and to share in the imperfections and brokenness of others. May I share their needs for healing and wholeness. Amen.

Heavenly Father, may my presence, my touch, my eyes, my tone of voice, my whole being echo Your love, assurance, and peace. May I be an agent of Your support and comfort. Above all may he/she/they turn to you for spiritual, emotional and physical strength and comfort. Amen.

Healer's Prayer

I am here only to be truly helpful.

I am here to represent You who sent me.

I do not have to worry about what to say or what to do,
because You who sent me will direct me.

I am content to be wherever You wish, knowing You go there with me.

I will be healed as I let You teach me to heal. Amen.

Prayer Attributed to St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow your love;

where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union;

where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive; it is pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

HOME COMMUNION MINISTRY VISIT CHECKLIST:

- ☐ Communion Kit containing a corporal, purificator, chalice and paten, and vessels containing blessed elements of Bread and Wine
- ☐ Copies of the Home Communion order of service for each participant
- ☐ Lectionary readings of the day, printed or marked in your Bible
- ☐ Sunday service bulletin or other printed material from the Parish
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Parish name badge (optional)



AFTER THE VISIT

- Reflect on how God was present in your visit and thank the Lord for the privilege of serving your siblings in the power of Christ's name and being part of a holy encounter.
- Pray for the person/people you visited, especially that they will grow in faith and deepened love of God.
- Follow the guidelines set by your parish for recording your visit (Vestry Book). Make sure to share any special needs or pastoral concerns noted during the visit with the clergy.

Home Communion Training

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

- In light of what you have learned with this Home Communion training program, what has changed for you (if anything)? Be specific.

- Reflecting upon the video teaching and readings, what do you think are three main aspects of home communion ministry that meet the needs of those being visited? Expand on your answers.

- As you imagine yourself as a minister for Home Communion visits, how would you approach and endeavour to create a sacred experience for someone you are visiting? Of what would you be mindful as you prepare yourself, the space and the recipient (parishioner)? Provide some detail.

- Do you sense that this is a ministry with which you are feeling called? If so, how do you know? Describe this ministry calling as best you can.