



The admission of Children to Holy Communion

The Eucharist is at the heart of the practice of the Christian faith, making Christ present in the midst of his people as he commanded us to do. Because of that it is important that children, an equal part of the Christian community, the body of Christ, are part of this central act of the Christian faith by being present and, where appropriate, by receiving communion.

Traditionally young people were only permitted to receive communion once they had been confirmed around the age of 13. On the one hand we feel as a Parish that that is too soon to be confirmed (which should be a more adult affirmation of Christian belief), and on the other hand too late to be admitted to receive communion (which younger children can adequately understand). So, as many Church of England parishes now do, we prepare children in Key Stage 2 to be admitted to receive communion.

We encourage teenagers who are active members of the church to think about being confirmed around the age of 16. In confirmation the person 'confirms' the promises made by his or her parents at baptism about following the Christian faith, and the bishop conducting the service prays for the gift of the Holy Spirit in the person's life. It is an adult assertion of faith.

Full details of the course are inside. Please talk to **Chris or Laura** if you have any questions, or come to the first meeting on 3rd December to learn more.

Do take time to consider whether this is the right moment for your child and resist pressure to do it merely because others in the class are doing this. As a Parish we put considerable resources into the course which we ask both parents and children to attend on Sunday afternoons as well as to prepare in various ways over the weeks at home. Each child chooses a 'sponsor' - an adult friend in the congregation as someone who will pray for them and be available to talk to them during the weeks of preparation.

GUIDELINES FOR THE ADMISSION OF CHILDREN TO COMMUNION

- Children to be admitted **must** be baptised and provide proof of baptism or be willing to be baptised at the admission service.
- They must be in Year 3 or above
- The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the children must agree to their children being admitted and must themselves attend the course of preparation alongside their children

The preparation course will be 5 sessions. The first session is an information and preparation session intended both for those families whose children have decided to take the course, and for those who would like to know more.

This first session will be on Sunday 3rd December 4pm in the Cromwell Room at St Mary's and will last an hour.

The main sessions take place in 2018 on Sundays 4-5.30pm at St Mary's:

7th January

14th January

21st January

28th January

The course ends with the Admission Service, an all-age Eucharist in which the children will take a prominent role. The service will be on:

Sunday 4th Feb at 4pm at St Mary's

Family members—especially God-parents and grandparents are most welcome to come. The service will be suitable for younger siblings too.

THE COURSE

The course is designed to help children learn about belonging to God and to appreciate the significance of Holy Communion in the life of a Christian as well as to reflect on their own experience of God.

Among other things the children will be expected to know the Lord's Prayer by heart and will learn the value of praying for each other as they prepare together.

