

## Diocese of Leicester

### Admission of Children to Communion

Under the arrangements agreed by the House of Bishops and General Synod, parishes are encouraged to consider offering children the opportunity to receive Holy Communion before they have been confirmed. Regulations to allow this were passed by General Synod in February 2006 under Canon B15A.1(c).

Theologically, the basis for this is the interrelationships between the Rites of Initiation as we have received them in the Church of England. It is in the light of what God has done for us in Christ, and the clear undertaking made by parents and Godparents at a child's baptism to bring this person to confirmation, that it is possible to consider children receiving Holy Communion before their confirmation.

There is no minimum age for children to receive Communion, but the Regulations are very clear about the need for “preparation and continuing nurture in the Christian life” for children who are to be admitted (age appropriate). And there should be a commitment for them to be confirmed when they are ready. As a rule of thumb, the bishops have suggested that children are admitted to communion between the ages of 5 and 7, and then prepared for confirmation in their teenage years (generally the bishops will not confirm children under the age of 12). This process fits with the developmental needs of children and young people, as well as helping them feel they ‘belong’ in the local church.

#### How is this to happen?

- The Parish Priest initiates the process by requesting the PCC to agree, in principle, to children receiving Communion in the parish before they are confirmed. Before the Bishop gives consent, a clear (if not unanimous) resolution of the PCC is needed, indicating that this is their wish as well as that of the Parish Priest, and showing how children, young people and families have been involved in the decision-making process.
- Accompanying the PCC Resolution should be an outline of the parish programme for the nurture of these children and the support of them and their families. Ideally this will fit within the diocese’ approach to ‘Growing Faith’ where teaching and worship is connected across church, school, and household. Please contact our Intergenerational Communities Enabler Matt Long to explore this more: [matt.long@leicestercofe.org](mailto:matt.long@leicestercofe.org)
- The parish must also have in place a suitable programme which will bring children to confirmation when they are ready.
- A register should be kept of children who have been admitted to communion.

- Once all this is in place, the parish priest should write to the Bishop, outlining the process that has been followed, and the programme of nurture that is in place, and asking for the Bishop's permission to proceed.
- Once the Bishop (through his Chaplain) has confirmed that the parish may proceed, the church may proceed to plan a service of Admission of the Baptised to Holy Communion - see liturgical resources here:  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/christian-initiation/rites#mm045>
- Names of the children admitted are entered in the Register and their school may be notified to ensure that they play a full part in the arrangements for Christian worship in the school.

+Martyn Leicester  
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