

---

# COMMUNION FROM THE CUP AND CHILDREN

## *PURPOSE OF THE PAMPHLET*

This pamphlet is intended for pastoral staffs as a resource to help parents and catechists prepare children to receive communion from the cup when they come to the Lord's table. Also reference is made to the practice of fasting before the celebration of Eucharist. Other points are outlined to elicit a spirit of joy and reverence.

## *A SHIFT IN OUR PRACTICE*

When children are welcomed to the banquet table of the Lord, the full experience of that banquet should be available to them. It is the practice of the church to offer communion under both forms on certain occasions as outlined in the General Instruction on the Roman Missal.

Presently in the Diocese of London both the consecrated bread and wine may be offered at every celebration of Eucharist, thus the assembly renews its covenant with the risen Lord by eating and drinking of the Lord's banquet.

For the past ten years our Diocese had a restriction that children could only receive from the cup once they had celebrated Confirmation. This decision was made for pastoral reasons: children might not be adequately prepared to handle the cup; children might not be comfortable with the taste of wine. A study of the theology of Sacraments of Initiation would not lead us to that same decision. There is no indication that an age is required to receive communion from the cup.

Consequently beginning in the year 2000, when children are being prepared to receive Communion for the first time, they will be prepared for communion under both forms. Since parents are the first teachers of the faith it is appropriate that family members help the children learn how to receive communion.
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## *CATECHESIS*

- × Family members are asked to talk to their children about our belief and our practice. The following concepts will help establish a sense of joy and reverence.
  - × Jesus is present in all the people who gather for Mass.
  - × God speaks to us in the scripture readings.
  - × We participate in the Mass by gathering, praying, listening, singing, standing, kneeling, processing, eating, drinking, and going forth.
-

- 
- × During Communion we show that we want to be one family in God by singing the hymn, walking with dignity to the communion station, and standing in procession with all the other people.
  - × When we say "Amen" we say "Yes, so be it". We say we want to be friends with Jesus.
  - × The consecrated host and consecrated wine are Jesus.
  - × As we participate in communion we become what we eat and drink **B** the Body of Christ, Jesus lives in us.
  - × As friends of Jesus we live life with joy and the knowledge of God's love for everyone.

### *RITUAL GESTURES*

Teach the children the ritual gestures.

- × Look at the communion minister who will say to you "The Body of Christ". Then say "Amen". Respond the same way when the Communion minister offers "The Blood of Christ".
- × To receive the consecrated bread, hold your left hand in the right hand (or the other way if left handed). Pick up the host with your lower hand, then put the consecrated bread in your mouth and eat.
- × To receive from the cup: take the cup from the communion minister and sip a small amount of the consecrated wine, remembering this is Jesus.
- × It is helpful to show the child how to hold a special family glass or goblet, with care and reverence. Let the child take a sip of wine to become used to the taste. The home is the best place to expose children to new tastes ego food and drink.

### *WHY RECEIVE FROM THE CUP*

We know from the scriptures that on the night before he died, Jesus blessed, and shared both bread and a cup of wine with his friends. We have recorded his words, "Take and eat", "Take and drink". Because of both these words and the actions with the bread and the cup the church has celebrated communion from the earliest

times with both bread and wine. Early Christians only knew this method: eating and drinking of the Body and Blood of the Risen Lord. We now have that opportunity returned to us. We are invited to eat of the bread of life, and to drink from the cup of salvation: the Body and Blood of Christ.

---

---

## *OTHER POINTS*

- × For one hour before receiving Communion we refrain from taking anything by mouth except for water. Fasting is one way that we prepare to take part in the Eucharist. It helps us enter into the whole celebration with full intention. Fasting helps us long for the risen Lord, and to greet Christ in the gathered community, the presiding minister, the Word proclaimed, and in Communion. Of course, for medical reasons exceptions are made to the fast.
- × To help us experience the great feast of Jesus's triumph over sin and death refrain from food before Mass and relax your schedule on Sunday. Try to make Sunday, the Day of the Lord, different from other days of the week. Refrain from non-essential work, and find ways to rejoice and give thanks.
- × Come to communion with clean hands. This is a sign of respect and it expresses the dignity of this great act. Chewing gum is not appropriate.

## *WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM PARISHES ALREADY ENCOURAGING THE PRACTICE*

A few parishes in the Diocese of London have invited children to receive communion from the cup. These parishes have learned that parents are apprehensive about two things:

- × the transmission of disease
- × that the child might spill the Precious Blood.

The medical profession continues to monitor the risk of contacting disease from using the common communion cup. Research reminds us to carefully wipe the rim of the cup and to rotate the cup between communicants. More bacteria is passed on by the hand than by drinking from the communion cup.

Teaching children how to receive communion from the cup, inviting them to watch how other members of the community hold the cup, and practicing are the only ways to ensure the children will be at home with this practice.

## *WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OTHER DIOCESES REGARDING CHILDREN AND COMMUNION FROM THE CUP*

A cursory contact with other Dioceses indicates that where communion from the cup is offered there is no restriction placed on any member of the assembly. Likewise the Church's law does not restrict the cup when it has become a common communion practice. Rather it lists when the cup

---

---

should be offered to certain persons on occasions when communion under both forms is not common practice, ego the bride and groom at a celebration of Marriage.

*RESOURCES FOR FAMILY SESSIONS*

- × We Belong to the Lord Jesus, Year 2 Parish/Family program from the CCCB
- × Come Join Us At The Table, Novalis

*Published by the Liturgical Commission, Diocese of London, June, 1999.*