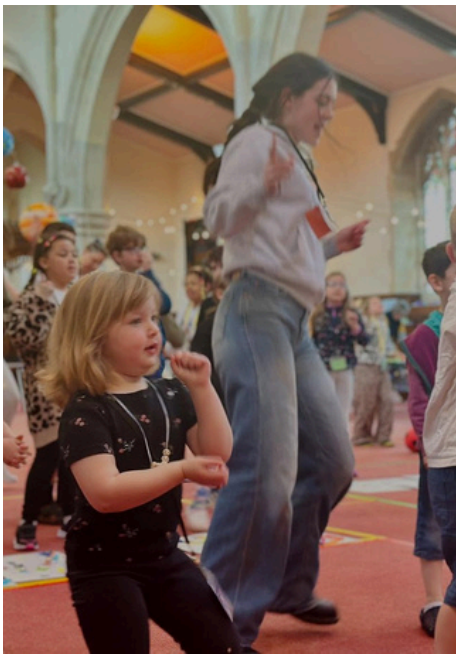








Children and Communion

A step by step guide

By the Go Team

Updated September 2025

www.bathandwells.org.uk/children-young-people

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Introduction

Admission to Holy Communion before Confirmation

This resource is for those parishes wishing to explore the admission of children to Communion before Confirmation. The decision to do this is a challenging, but exciting step. It is a decision that involves consulting with the PCC, those with parental responsibility, the children and indeed the whole congregation. It is important that this subject is discussed widely from a theological, historical, pastoral and educational perspective.

It is the PCCs responsibility to own the overall policy, this can be done in consultation with the Go Team (Youth and Children) Advisers and with reference to this booklet. In all instances, permission must be sought from the Diocesan Bishop.

Throughout this process, the PCC will need to consider the nurture and care of all its members. Issues of faith development, implications for rites of passage and patterns for worship will need to be considered as part of the process. This is not a decision that can be taken lightly. A considerable amount of time and commitment will be needed to ensure this is implemented correctly. It is well worth the effort and the Go Team Advisers are available to help you throughout this process.

This booklet seeks to help you in the process, acting as a guide through the regulations and diocesan procedures.

Acknowledgments and grateful thanks to: Diocese of Bristol, Diocese of Leeds, Diocese of Oxford and Diocese of Truro whose Children and Communion resources have been used in collating this pack.

Suggested step-by-step process

A number of steps need to be followed when considering admitting children to Communion prior to Confirmation. This flow chart provides you with a simple step-by-step guide to follow:

Interest shown by a parish/benefice
Initial discussions within PCC
Contact your Go Team adviser expressing interest, you may wish to invite them to share with your PCC
Preparation and consultation with congregation(s)
PCC to discuss in detail and vote on moving the process forward
Draft Parish Policy to be written and application form to be completed and sent to your Go Team adviser
Once approved by your Go Team adviser, the policy must be agreed by your PCC. For the adoption of the policy there must be a two-thirds majority in favour. If carried, your Go Team adviser will forward your documents to the Diocesan Bishop.
Diocesan Bishop writes to the parish/benefice to give permission.
Parents informed, children identified, materials selected and preparation sessions for the children held.
A record of children being submitted to Communion needs to be kept by the parish/benefice.
Admission service arranged and certificates given out.
Process reviewed after 1 year, then every 3 years.
Additional children can be prepared in the same way, and records of children submitted must be updated regularly.

N.B. If any children who have been admitted to Communion prior to Confirmation move out of your parish/benefice, you can send a letter of commendation to their new parish/benefice so they can be admitted without going through preparation again.

Consultation

1. Open the discussion with your PCC, having completed some initial research (reading around theological and historical perspectives).

2. There should be a period of preparation and discussion with the congregation with adequate time and opportunity for questions, concerns and pastoral issues to be addressed.

3. You may wish to invite your Go Team Adviser to lead a session on admitting children to Communion prior to Confirmation to help facilitate your conversations.

4. Provide an opportunity for the leaders of the children's work in the parish to discuss the issue.

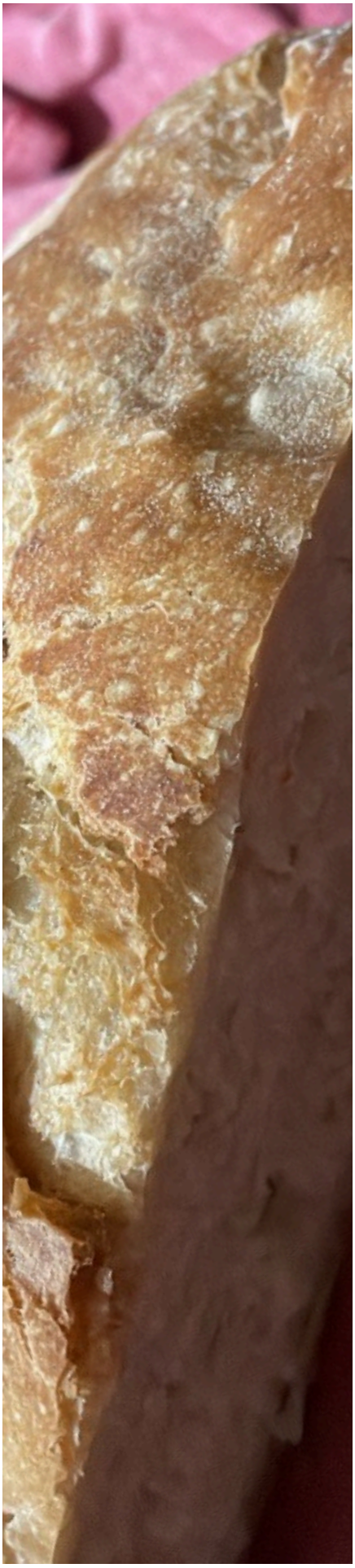
5. After the consultation phase, the PCC needs to vote on a formal resolution, which must be passed by a two-thirds majority in favour and minuted.

6. Communicate the decision to the congregation.

Key Questions for Discussion

- How does admission to Communion fit in with the overall parish policy on the nurture of children within the framework of Baptism, Communion and Confirmation?
- What are the earliest ages deemed appropriate by the parish for admission to Communion, and for Confirmation?
- In what ways can the whole congregation be involved in exploring the issue of Communion before Confirmation?





Preparation

1. Undertake the writing of a policy, taking into consideration the following key points:

- Decide what provision will be made for the preparation of children to receive Communion. Who will be responsible for the preparation and what materials will be used?
- The PCC or a sub-committee should look at the implications for worship, how much of the liturgy communicate children will attend; their involvement and participation in worship (particularly if they have been in children's groups separate to the service); how frequently they will take communion.

2. The policy and procedures should be presented to the congregation for their information and prayerful consideration.

3. Once the above is complete, the PCC submits the policy and procedures to the Diocesan Bishop for their approval. This is done through your Go Team Adviser, who will advise the Bishop as to whether the parish has implemented the necessary support and ongoing nurture for children.

Key Questions for Discussion

- Who will be responsible for maintaining the register of people admitted to Communion before Confirmation and communicating any updates to the Diocese?
- Is the worship of the church accessible to all its members?
- How might children be meaningfully involved in the Eucharist?

Pastoral matters

1. Consider which children are expressing an interest in receiving communion (children must have been baptised).

2. Meet with those with parental responsibility of the eligible children to discuss the issues and look at the teaching material.

3. Ideally at least one parent should attend church regularly and be a communicant member. Where this is not possible, a suitable sponsor should be identified. In these cases the parents' permission must be sought.

4. Consider how the children will receive ongoing support and nurture. This may be through the regular Sunday or midweek children's teaching programme. At the appropriate time, this should lead to confirmation.

Key Questions for Discussion

- How will parents/guardians be involved in the process of deciding whether and when individual children are ready to receive Communion?
- How will the circumstance of families where the parents do not normally attend church be addressed?
- How will parents/guardians be included in the preparation?
- What will you do for families who do not wish for their children to be admitted to Communion?
- How will you meet any additional needs of children/young people who want to receive Communion before Confirmation?
- How will children be involved and affirmed as members of the Christian community:
  - Within the service of Holy Communion?
  - In non-Eucharistic worship?
  - In other ways?





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