

Church of the Covenant

A Child's participation  
on

Communion Sundays

“...the primary standard and resource for the nurture of the church is the Word of God in Scripture. The central occasion for nurture in the church is the Service for the Lord's Day, when the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are celebrated. All members of the community, from oldest to youngest, are encouraged to be present and to participate. Educational activities should not be scheduled which prevent regular participation in this service....”  
(W-6.2006)

“...Baptized children who are being nurtured and instructed in the significance of the invitation to the Table and the meaning of their response are invited to receive the Lord's Supper, recognizing that their understanding of participation will vary according to their maturity..”  
(W-2.401f)

(Taken from the Book of Order)

## Children in Worship

We at the Church of the Covenant  
believe that it is very important  
for the children of our congregation  
not only to learn about  
Worshiping God with Joy,  
but to have opportunities  
to Worship God  
with others in the church family.

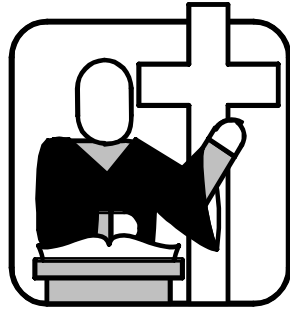
Because of this, children are present for the beginning of each service of Worship before leaving for their own Sunday school classes, and they Worship with their families on Communion Sundays up to five times a year.

We believe this opportunity is very important because:

- ✦ We are all part of the faith community. Worship gives children the opportunity to actively participate with adults in something that is both serious and celebratory. The Communion service is a chance to celebrate together the full community that we share as the household of God.
- ✦ We learn to Worship by the act of worshiping. A child needs opportunities to develop strong habits while they are still young.
- ✦ For all of us, meaning grows over time. A child does not need to have an adult's understanding of communion. The sacrament will continue to gain deeper meaning for a child as he or she matures, in the same way that other areas of a child's faith will continue to grow.
- ✦ A child who never enters the Sanctuary to Worship God becomes a young adult who does likewise.



Communion Schedule:



Children will celebrate Communion with the Covenant Family up to 5 times a year, Starting with World Communion in October

What to expect from young children:

- ✚ Expect fidgets and squiggles. They're natural and they're OK. Parents are much more likely than other members of the congregation to be concerned about fidgets.
- ✚ Children will probably not be "engaged" in the entire Worship experience. Whatever a child gets out of the "moments" is all right. They don't need to get it all.
- ✚ Adults have times when they phase into inward thoughts and daydreams. Children will too.
- ✚ Quiet activities that keep restless hands busy are OK, and do not indicate that a child is not "in the service". While hands are busy, minds are still alive and ears can still hear, and the child can still experience community as he or she creates an artistic offering to God.
- ✚ It is most likely that the hymns, music, and participatory parts of the service will be the most captivating for young children.
- ✚ As a part of the service catches the imagination of a child, he or she may want to ask a question or make a comment. That's OK too. We want to teach children how to use their softest voice in church, and when to comment, without extinguishing true moments of enthusiasm and insight.

Ways in which the Covenant  
is committed to aiding your child's  
Worship Experience:

- ✠ To compliment what the children are learning about Worship and the Sacraments in their Church School program, Christian Education will have special communion preparation as part of their Sunday School Workshop program in September and during Lent.
- ✠ Children will learn the traditional songs and prayers in choir and church school.
- ✠ In choosing hymns and other materials the church staff will try to remain sensitive to the special needs of children.
- ✠ For parents who are unable to sit with their children in Worship, Christian Education will provide a special pew and friendly adults to share Worship with your child.
- ✠ We truly hope that you will choose to let your child worship with the church family. If you honestly feel that this is impossible, contact the church office by the Thursday before communion, to make arrangements for your child to attend the 3-4 year old class.

Ways in which Parents can  
enhance their child's Worship experience:

- ✦ Give children the chance to find and mark the hymns. Show them in the bulletin where things will occur in the service. Walk them through the child's bulletin.
- ✦ If a child wants, follow along with them in the hymn book. For young readers it can be helpful to use your finger to point to where the congregation is in songs and prayers.
- ✦ Consider going through some of the texts and questions for the service at home the week before the service. Let the child know how excited you are that you will have the opportunity to Worship together on Sunday morning.
- ✦ Consider singing some of the hymns and standard songs at home.
- ✦ Consider where you sit. A place where children can see well, but where parents do not feel exposed is the ideal. Sometimes you may want to raise a child on your lap during special songs or other parts of the service that might be of particular interest to your child so that he or she can see better.
- ✦ Talk as a family after Worship, sharing some of your favorite insights and moments.

