

# Children and Communion

One of the sweetest experiences as a body of believers is to celebrate Jesus' sacrifice for us together through Communion. Jesus demonstrated the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine in His very last supper with His disciples before His death on the cross. He gave us the ordinance to repeat the act of Communion when He said, "Do this in remembrance of me." Communion demands our focus on the Lamb of God who gave His life for us so that we could have a way to know God the Father.

When teaching children about Communion, there are some key elements that will help them better understand the who, what, why, and when of this sacred experience.

## 1. Who is Communion for?

Communion is only for followers of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Jesus is talking to His followers about how Communion is something that should be done together as a community of believers. Explain to your children that the only requirement to participate in Communion is a commitment to be a follower of Jesus: someone who has asked God for forgiveness of their sins and who lets God lead their life. It doesn't require church membership, just a life that is committed to Jesus.

## 2. What is the symbolism in Communion?

Starting with upper elementary, many children have a greater capability to think about abstract concepts. Younger children may have a hard time understanding that the bread and drink are not literally the body and blood of Jesus. Explain to your child that the elements of Communion are just symbols. One way to do this is to find a memento, souvenir, or postcard from a trip or vacation you took. Show them that the souvenir is not the trip itself but a reminder of that experience. In the same way, the bread and drink in Communion remind us of Jesus' body that was broken for us, and of His blood that was shed for us. These symbols help us as we remember Christ paying the cost of our forgiveness from sin.

## 3. Why do we take Communion?

Look together at Matthew 26:26-28 and Luke 22:19-20, pointing out how Jesus' purpose for Communion is to pull our thoughts and attention towards remembering Him. It is a time for believers to come together to celebrate what Jesus did for us on the cross when He conquered death, sin, and the grave. But why do we keep participating in Communion? 1 Corinthians 11:26 says, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." Jesus told us to practice Communion because it reminds us of the Good News of the Gospel. Communion strengthens our commitment to Jesus even more as the day of His returning comes closer.

#### **4. When do we take Communion?**

In 1 Corinthians 11:27-29, we learn to prepare ourselves before participating in Communion. While the payment for our sin was finalized on the cross, it is important for us to continually remove any sin in our life that hinders our relationship with God. Prior to participating in Communion, it is necessary to go to the Lord and repent of any unconfessed sin. This allows us to fully celebrate and appreciate what Christ did on the cross for us.

#### **5. Leading your child in Communion**

In preparation for Communion, talk to your children and remind them what Communion is and who it's for. Make space to talk about the above questions. Read Scripture together to see where Jesus first modeled Communion (such as Matthew 26:26-28, mentioned above). Be intentional about making Communion a meaningful and sacred gathering with fellow followers of Jesus Christ.