

## **PREPARING FOR ALL AGE COMMUNION AS A FAMILY**

**Rev Andrew and Christine Harrex share how they talked with their children about communion prior to their receiving communion for the first time.**

*"In the past Lawrence Waitahuna Presbyterian church has not invited children to participate in communion. As our church strives to be Kids Friendly our leadership recently discussed this and following prayerful consideration made a decision to welcome children (with their parent's permission) at our communion table. We decided to prepare a "take home" resource for parents to prepare their children for their first communion.*

*The communion service was during the school holidays so we didn't have as many families there as we had hoped for. One family who used it, said that while they appreciated it, they decided that their children weren't ready for communion.*

*We found it worked really well in our family with four children ages 5-10 years. We felt that after our discussions our children had a really good understanding of what communion was all about. We were happy for them to take communion. This was really special and meaningful for our kids and helped them move on in their faith journey."*

They also attached an article to the "take home" resource for families to read. (**'In or Out? Children and Communion'** by Kaila Pettigrove of Somervell Presbyterian).

This can be downloaded from the Kids Friendly website: [www.kidsfriendly.org.nz](http://www.kidsfriendly.org.nz) under **"Worship Together/Children and Communion"**  
[http://www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/?page\\_id=5700](http://www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/?page_id=5700)

## **FAMILY PREPARATION FOR ALL AGE COMMUNION**

### **A “take home” resource**

A) Have a look at the symbols (on the attached sheet) and talk about what they mean.

1. McDonalds
2. Wheelchair access
3. Children/crossing/school
4. Recycling
5. Parking
6. Toilets (men’s/women’s)
7. Cross – Jesus, Christian

FOCUS ON:

8. Bread and wine – the bread and the wine are two very important symbols that Jesus used to explain to his friends what would happen to him.

B) Read the attached story of the Last Supper. (Choose the version to suit your family)

1. simple and brief (‘My Very First Bible’ p234-235)
2. longer and more detailed (The Christian Focus Bible p122)

Other Children’s Bible Storybooks are suitable too.

C) Explain:

- When Jesus shared this special meal with his friends in this way, he knew that he was going to die the next day.
- He told them to keep on sharing bread and wine after he had gone to help them remember him.
- We still do that today. We call it communion.
- Next Sunday we will be sharing bread and juice at church to remind us of Jesus’ death. There will be a table at the front and there will be a plate of bread and a cup of juice. Anyone who loves Jesus can come up the front and eat a little bit of bread and drink a little bit of juice. While they are eating and drinking they are remembering that the bread was broken and the wine was poured out to remind us of Jesus’ body being hurt and his blood being shed when he died on the cross.

D) Say these words together:

Get the children to practice saying: “To remind us of Jesus”

We break bread together

**To remind us of Jesus.**

We share a cup of wine

**To remind us of Jesus.**

Amen.

- E) Explain that when we have communion at church we remember that Jesus died on the cross so that we can be forgiven for the wrong things we do and by taking communion we accept the gift of forgiveness that Jesus gives us.
- F) Here's a verse from the Bible that tells us why Jesus died. Say it together doing the actions in brackets.

For God (*point up*)  
loved (*cross arms over chest*)  
the world (*make circle*)  
so much (*stretch arms wide*)  
that he gave (*hold out hands*)  
his only Son (*hold up one finger*)  
so that everyone (*point around group*)  
who believes in him (*hands clasped*)  
may not die (*sink to ground*)  
but have eternal life (*star jump*)

- G) Get everyone to curl up into a tight ball and think silently of any wrong things they've done. Invite them to say, '*Dear God, I'm sorry.*'  
Now stand up with feet together and arms spread (like a cross) and say, '*Thank you, Jesus, for loving me enough to die for me.*'

*Because the service next Sunday is an all-age service, the children will be with us for communion. Families will be encouraged to come to the front together and parents can decide whether they want their children to be served communion or not.*

*Last year the Lawrence-Waitahuna Church Parish Council agreed that the communion table should be...*

***"Open to all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ and seek to live a life of Christian commitment and fellowship. In the matter of children receiving the Sacrament, the decision will remain the responsibility of the parent/guardian in attendance."***

