

whole Body of Christ. This especially includes children, for Christ said: “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs” (Mark 10:14 NRSV).

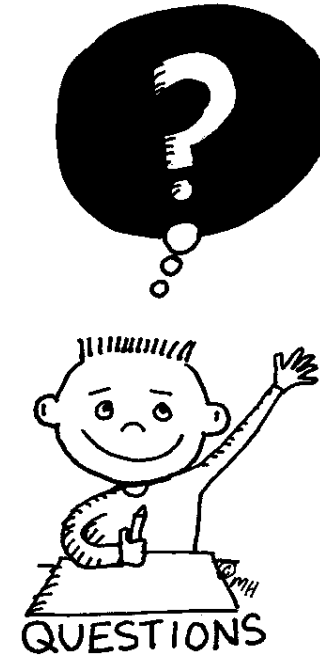
7) Must my child receive instruction prior to receiving Holy Communion?

“First Communion” or confirmation is not required, although some advance education on the part of parents is helpful. As with adults, children are more comfortable if they have some understanding about Holy Communion and worship. Also, children are better able to understand its significance the more frequently that they participate in worship. Keep in mind: none of us, adult or child, can fully understand the Divine Mystery of Holy Communion, and our lack of understanding does not restrict our ability to participate.

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Adapted from a document written by Leila Denton, Director of Children’s Ministries at Trinity United Methodist Church (Richmond, VA). “Frequently Asked Questions about Communion and Children,” published in *Faith Steps*, Fall 1995 (11:3) by the Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

WHAT IS HOLY COMMUNION?



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FAMILIES
ABOUT THE SACRAMENT

1) Are United Methodists the only Christians who celebrate Holy Communion?

No, nearly every Christian denomination or group celebrates the sacrament of Holy Communion. [The word sacrament means using physical things like bread and wine (grape juice) to represent God's love for us.]

2) What are the different names used for the sacrament of Holy Communion?

Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, and Holy Eucharist are the names most commonly used within The United Methodist Church. [The word Eucharist means to give thanks.] All these names refer to the same practice: the eating and drinking of blessed bread and wine (grape juice) within the worshipping community.

3) How often do United Methodists celebrate Holy Communion?

Jesus tells us we are able to celebrate Holy Communion as often as we gather in his name. Different local United Methodist congregations have different practices. Some choose to celebrate the Holy Eucharist every Sunday, some once a month, and some once a quarter or even once a year.

4) How do United Methodist congregations celebrate Holy Communion in different ways?

There are many different methods of celebrating Holy Communion that vary among, and even within, United Methodist congregations. Depending on which worship service you attend at St. Luke's, you may receive the elements of bread and juice kneeling at the

communion rail or standing. You may receive bread cut into small cubes or broken from one loaf. You may receive the grape juice in individual cups or dip the bread into a single cup of grape juice. [This practice of dipping is called intinction.] Practices differ among and within United Methodist congregations.

4) What is the meaning of Holy Communion?

The celebration of Holy Communion is a joyful celebration of Christ and his teaching that we are to love and serve one another. We remember Christ and give thanks when we join others in sharing the bread and cup. Holy Communion is also a way to connect our faith with the past, present and future. It is a remembrance of God's love for us in the self-sacrifice of Jesus (past). It is a sign of God's presence with us today in the sharing of the bread and cup, and a reminder that we are called to share ourselves with the world (present). Finally, it helps us look forward to the time when Christ returns, when God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven, and we will all eat together as one community (future).

5) Who may receive Holy Communion?

Holy Communion is a gift of God to the Church, and the invitation to the Holy Table comes from Christ. He invites to his Table all those who love him, repent of sin, and seek to live as his disciples. Therefore, all Christians are invited to participate.

6) At what age is my child allowed to receive Holy Communion?

The United Methodist Church does not restrict participation on the basis of age. Our invitation to come and receive the bread and cup is made to the