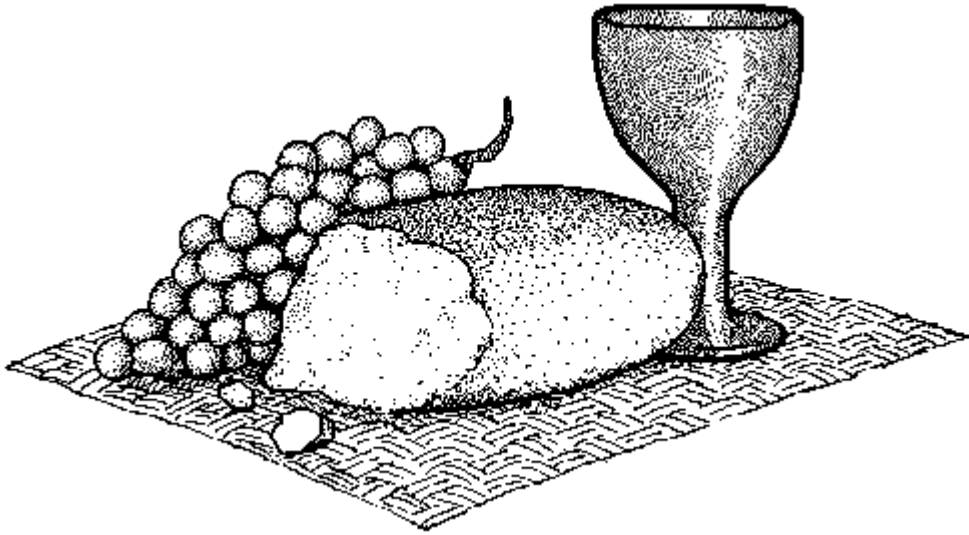


**WELCOME TO THE LORD'S TABLE**



**YOUNG CHILDREN AND COMMUNION**

**AT SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH**



Saron Lutheran Church  
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Big Lake, Minnesota 55309  
(763) 263-2209

Rev. Jim Lindekugel

***When do children begin to receive the Sacrament?***

We do not have a set age or grade level at which children begin to receive the Sacrament. The decision to admit a child to Communion is made by the parent, the pastor and the child.

***How will I know when my child is ready?***

From birth on, children come to the communion rail each Sunday. At some point they begin to show interest in receiving the Sacrament. They hold out their hands for the bread, like those around them. Or they will begin to ask questions like: "Why can't I have some 'Jesus bread'?" When they do this children are telling us that they already know something very important about the Holy Meal. They understand that to eat the bread and drink the wine means that they are a part of the family of God. It is only natural that they do not wish to be excluded from such an important event.

Their desire is an opportunity to discuss the Sacrament.



*They knew him in the breaking  
of the bread.*

***How should I instruct my child when he/she begins to show signs of interest in participation?***

Fifth graders have a different understanding of Holy Communion than 30 year old adults. Younger children have a different perspective than 50 year old adults. As we grow in years, maturity and life experiences, our understanding deepens and changes. We need to teach children on a level that they understand.

After a child has shown a desire for Communion, talk to him/her at home after the service. Explain that Holy Communion is a very special time in the service. When we eat the bread and drink the wine we know that Jesus is very near.

Notify the pastor that you have begun talking with your child about Communion and that you and he/she would like to talk with a pastor about participation. The pastor will welcome the discussion and your child's interest, and will give you materials to aid in that discussion. Then - you, your child and the pastor will meet to discuss his/her understanding and participation. Your child will be welcomed to Holy Communion when parent and child and pastor agree. On that Sunday, his/her name will appear in the bulletin - as they are welcomed in a special way to their first sharing of the bread and wine; body and blood.

As a parent, you may desire your child's participation from baptism. Please discuss this with the pastor.

The Lutheran answer to the question of "readiness" is always answered by this: That God is ready for us; he longs for us - he seeks after us. He does so in his Supper and through it, gives his Holy Spirit in his presence, in forgiveness, and in empowering us to "new life." His Table is the birthright of the baptized.

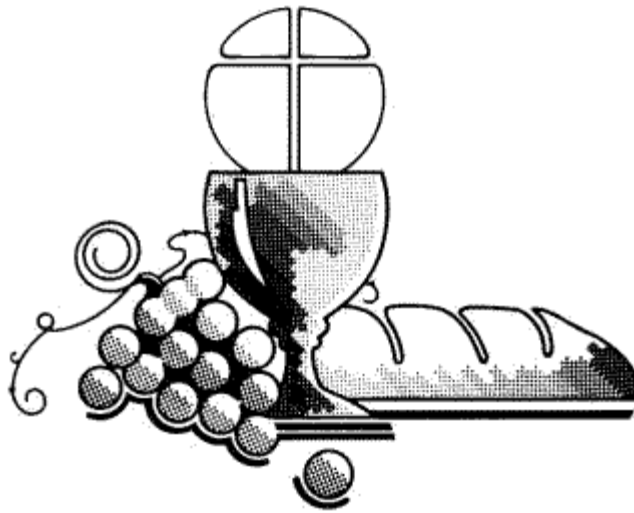
Explaining what Holy Communion means should not be done just once, but on a regular basis. Family meal times might be a good time to talk about what the Sacrament means. Parents and older brothers and sisters can offer their own insights. Children should be encouraged to tell you what they think about Communion as well. Some conversation starters follow, to help you in instructing your child.

***Some ideas for teaching children about Communion:***

It might be best to use these one at a time.

The last three are for children over five or six years, the first would work with younger children.

1. Communion is a celebration of Jesus' love. At the communion rail we remember Jesus' love. During Communion, he feeds us with his love.
2. Mom / Dad provide food for us because they love us. God feeds us with this special food to remind us that God loves us.
3. Eating together is a pleasant family time. We eat this special meal to remember that we are all a part of God's family.
4. The food we eat at home helps our bodies to grow and give us energy. This special food helps us to grow to be like Jesus and gives us energy to do good things that Jesus wants us to do.
5. When we misbehave, our parents become angry with us. It feels good to be hugged and reminded that our parents still love us. Communion is a reminder that God forgives us any wrong that we have done. Like a hug, it tells us that God loves us and always will.
6. When we receive the Sacrament, we remember that Jesus gave his life for us on the cross. He shares this life with us each time we receive the Sacrament. This is why we say that we eat his body and drink his blood -- because he gives us his life!



***Children at the communion rail:***

Others at the communion rail may need this time for quiet thought or prayer. If the child is to join these people, he/she will want to have the same happy, but quiet attitude. We believe that the bread and wine are blessed by God in a special way. Your child will want to be careful not to grab the elements, or fight with brother or sister over them, but wait patiently until the bread and wine are given to him/her.

***Further instruction:***

In order that our church family may continue to grow in their understanding of the Holy Meal, we will provide instruction to supplement your teaching at home. Many sermons will focus on Communion. In the fifth grade, children will receive three or four weeks of "Communion Instruction." Learning about worship and Holy Communion remain an important part of our confirmation curriculum. Adults will have opportunities to learn more about the Sacrament through adult Bible classes and discussions.

***A word about children and communion:***

The Bible says nothing about requirements of age, ability, maturity, or anything else to receive the Sacrament - it's the privilege of all the baptized. In the Bible, Jesus welcomed children and commended their faith, saying:

**"Unless you receive the kingdom of God like a little child, you shall not enter it."**

**Mark 10:15**

Making Communion open to all who are baptized makes a strong witness to what we, as Lutherans, believe about God's grace. We believe that the gifts we receive in the Sacrament are given freely by God. That is, that God doesn't demand that we earn or deserve them as the "price of admission" -- they are gifts! They are gifts - to which God calls his people; touching each where they are - and bringing them to where he wants them to be. All God asks is that we believe that they are "for us."

Communing younger children is biblically sound, faithful to our Lutheran heritage, and clearly expresses the heart of the Gospel, the love of God given to all of us freely in Christ.

Jesus, our host at the communion table, told the disciples:

**"Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Mark 10:15**

If the kingdom belongs to them, it is right that they share the meal of the kingdom.