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For parents/care-givers: Background to children celebrating Communion

In 2010 the elders at Westminster decided to allow children to participate in the Sacrament of Communion (also called The Lord's Supper or the Eucharist).

This practice is done in a growing number of Presbyterian congregations (approximately half) across the country. It is done so that we can celebrate the Sacrament together as a church family, and is motivated by Jesus welcoming of children into his ministry. The General Assembly of the denomination (the highest court and decision-making body) made the decision in 1987 and invited each congregation's elders to study the issue and decide in favour of it if they thought it the right decision in their context. They recognized that: "Children are capable of the same childlike faith that Jesus required of adults; the faith of children may be nurtured by participation in the Lord's Supper; and the participation of children affirms their place in the fellowship we share as a spiritual family at the Lord's Table." Westminster agreed to make it their practice in 2010.

Communion is a 'remembrance' or 'memorial' of Jesus' saving sacrifice for us. In the Bible he breaks the bread saying "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11: 24). Unlike some traditions, we don't feel that the bread and juice (or wine) actually turn into Jesus' body and blood. But when we celebrate the meal properly and with integrity, Jesus is really and powerfully present with us.

When children participate, they do so with a believing parent (or grandparent or guardian).

Some possible questions and guidance with/for children

Simply do your best to communicate with your child(ren) in a way they can best understand.

What is Communion (or The Lord's Supper)?

- "Communion" is a word that means *togetherness*. So when we have communion, we become closer (and more 'together') with Jesus. It is also something we do together as a church family.
- Jesus died for us and for our sins. He told us to remember what he did for us in this way.
- It helps us say 'Thank You' to God for letting us know Jesus and his love.

What is the bread and juice for?

[Note: When celebrating with children, remember to use juice and not wine!]

- The bread represents Jesus' body that was broken/hurt for us on the cross.
- The juice represents his blood that was shed (spilled from his body) on the cross.
- Together they help us remember that he died for us because he loves us, pays the price for our sin, and gives us peace and togetherness with God!