

DIOCESE OF SOUTHWELL

ADMISSION OF CHILDREN TO HOLY COMMUNION CHECKLIST FOR PARISHES

This checklist is designed to assist parishes which are considering admitting children to Communion before Confirmation. It is not a substitute for the Guidelines Agreed by the House of Bishops (see *Children and Holy Communion* pp. 6-7) and parishes should familiarise themselves with these guidelines at an early stage. It will be helpful when submitting a policy for the approval of the Bishop of Southwell if the numbering of the paragraphs below is followed.

Some books which will certainly prove useful in both the phases of deliberation and the preparation of the children following approval are *Children and Holy Communion* by Steve Pearce and Diana Murrie (National Society and Church House Publishing, 1977), *Welcome to the Lord's Table* by Margaret Withers (Bible Reading Fellowship, 1999), and *Share Communion Preparation Course* by Nick Harding (Kevin Mayhew Ltd, 2002). The small booklet *My Communion Book* by Diana Murrie (NS/CHP, 2002) is also helpful.

1. Has the issue been fully discussed by the PCC and a formal resolution passed and minuted? Where appropriate, have ecumenical partners been consulted?
2. Has there been a period of preparation and discussion with the congregation with adequate time and opportunity for questions, concerns and pastoral issues to be addressed?
3. How does admission to Communion fit in with the overall parish policy on the nurture of children within the framework of Baptism, Communion and Confirmation? What are the earliest ages deemed appropriate by the parish for admission to Communion and for Confirmation?
4. How have the implications for worship been addressed? How much of the liturgy will communicant children attend, how will they be involved, and how often will they receive Communion?
5. How will parents or guardians be involved in the process of deciding whether and when individual children are ready to receive Communion and in the period of preparation? How will the circumstances of families where the parents do not normally attend church be addressed?
6. How will the needs of children with learning difficulties be catered for?
7. What provision will be made for the preparation of children to receive Communion? Who will be responsible for the preparation and what materials will be used?
8. Who will be responsible for maintaining the register of people admitted to Communion before Confirmation?
9. Three years after the implementation of children receiving Communion in your parish there will be a review of the policy in consultation with the Children's Mission Support Officer. Who will be responsible for undertaking this review?

Advice and help is available from a number of clergy who have taken parishes through this process. The Children's Mission Support Officer is also available for consultation and should be referred to during the period of discussion and decision-making.

Southwell, May 2002