

First Communion Class

Preparing for Holy Communion

The Bible requires us to prepare ourselves to receive Holy Communion

- Holy Communion is a great gift God has given the Church.
- We receive it as a gift and respect it, as it is given directly to us from Jesus.

We prepare ourselves through a process called “self-examination.”

- “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.” [1 Corinthians 11:26-28]

Self-examination includes asking questions:

1. Do I believe I am a sinner and need God’s forgiveness?

- “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” [Romans 3:23]

2. Do I believe that Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price for all my sin?

- “The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” [1 John 1:7]
- “The person is truly worthy and well prepared who believes these words, ‘Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.’” [Martin Luther, Small Catechism]

3. Do I believe Jesus is truly present in the bread and the wine?

- “Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread we break a participation in the body of Christ?” [1 Corinthians 10:16]
- “While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” [Matthew 26:26-28]

4. Do I intend, by God’s grace, to continue to grow in faith and serve Him? - The blessings we receive every time we eat and drink Holy Communion:

- Forgiveness – “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Matthew 26:28
- Life □ “For where there is forgiveness, there is also life
- Salvation □ salvation.” [Martin Luther, Small Catechism]

How often should we receive Holy Communion?

- The Bible never gives timetable, so each congregation comes up with their own schedule.
- At Bethany, we offer it every Sunday and other special worship services.
- We do this because we want to make God’s gifts as available as possible.
- When we receive it with a true heart, there’s no such thing as “too often” or “too much.”

The Wine:

- The trays of drink will present a choice: wine (red and in most of the cups) or grape juice (yellow and in just a few cups in the middle). Please take the wine. Even though you are young, it’s okay. You’re at church and it’s part of a Sacrament. We ask the grape juice be saved for those who cannot drink wine (because of allergies or some other reasons).