

The Diocese of Gloucester

### **Admission of Children to Communion**

1. Children who have been baptised may be admitted to Communion in parishes of the Diocese of Gloucester before Confirmation where the parish has adopted such a policy, implemented the Regulations and received permission from the Bishop.
2. There is evidence that parishes that have adopted the admission of children to Communion before Confirmation have a better record in keeping children within the life of the Church. Parishes that have not given consideration to admitting children to Communion are encouraged to do so.
3. A parish wishing to adopt this policy must be in touch with the Diocesan Children's Officer and work through a number of stages (reflecting the Regulations) with him before applying to the Bishop for permission. Material relating to this process is posted on the Diocesan Website.
4. The General Synod Regulations (which are part of the posting on the website) must be followed. These do not lay down a minimum age for children to be admitted to communion, beyond the direction that it be at an age when they can be properly prepared. There is no minimum laid down in this diocese and the Bishop trusts the pastoral judgement of the parish priest. But, however much it may be justifiable theologically, it is not Church of England practice at present to admit to Communion babes in arms and others who have received no preparation. Nor is casual reception of older children without preparation and formal admission permitted.
5. The Regulations require the incumbent to maintain a register of all children admitted to Holy Communion under these provisions and also to record on the child's baptism certificate the date and place of the child's first Communion. The register will fall within the definition of a "record in parochial custody" for the purposes of the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 and should therefore be inspected by the Archdeacon in the course of the quinquennial inspection.
6. An order of service for use when children are first admitted to communion is to be found in *Common Worship: Christian Initiation* on pp188ff. This should be used in preference to earlier diocesan provision.
7. It is sometimes argued that admission to Communion before Confirmation should then mean the delay of Confirmation until late teenage years. There is no such rule in this diocese. As with admission to Communion, the Bishop trusts the pastoral judgement of the parish priest in relation to the age of Confirmation of a candidate.

8. A parish that has not adopted this policy must nevertheless recognise the need to receive as communicants children who have been admitted to communion in another parish. No baptised person, adult or child, who has once been admitted to Holy Communion and remains in good standing with the Church, should be anywhere deprived of it.

**+Michael Gloucestr:**

Revised July 2006