



WoodridgeChildren

Baptism & Communion
Information for Parents

Key dates: Sun April 20th - Parent/Child Class 10:45 Room 101
Sun May 11th - Communion Celebration 9 and 10:30

The following information is intended to assist parents and their children in determining when a child is ready to be baptized and/or take communion. As in all other areas of life, spiritual growth occurs uniquely for each child. There is no predetermined age when a child is ready for any particular step of spiritual growth. At Woodridge, we walk alongside parents and kids to help them decide when their child is ready to be baptized or take communion. The first question you need to ask is, “has my child made their own personal faith commitment to Jesus Christ?”

Has your child made a personal Faith Commitment?

In order to make this commitment:

- Children must be able to understand they are sinners. (*They do bad and selfish things and are unable to always be good. Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*)
- They need to ask Jesus to forgive their sins. (*1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*)
- They must believe Jesus is the Son of God. That he lived died and rose from the dead. (*John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*)
- They need to ask Jesus to become the Leader of their life; the Lord they follow and obey. (*1 John 5:3 “This is love for God: to obey his commands.”*)

When your child is ready to make this commitment to Jesus, they should pray in their own words, asking Jesus to forgive them and to become their leader. When a child does this the Bible tells us they have eternal life. (*John 5:24 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*) In Treasureland the kids learn “the CBA’s” of making a faith commitment.

Once your child has made a personal faith commitment you along with the church body guide them toward growth in their faith. Some signs of growth may include: learning to pray to God with an open heart; studying the teachings written in the Bible; learning to love others unselfishly; learning to forgive; fellowship with other believers; finding ways to serve Jesus within the church; learning to share their faith with others; taking communion; and being baptized.

What is Communion or the Lord’s Supper?

Communion and the Lord’s Supper are both terms that refer to the traditional broken bread and cup of wine that Jesus shared with his disciples during his last meal. When we take communion, we are celebrating the fact that Jesus’ death and resurrection makes it possible for us to be forgiven and to have a relationship with God.

In 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 we read, “*The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.*”

When we celebrate communion at Woodridge Church, we are remembering that Jesus' blood was shed and his body was broken when he was crucified. We think about how he was willing to go through the pain of the crucifixion in order to pay the penalty for our sin.

Going on to verses 27-29 we read, *"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 the blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."*

Discuss these verses with your child in order that they can seriously consider all that Jesus went through in order to give them forgiveness. Each time they participate in the Lord's Supper they should be thinking of Jesus' love and sacrifice for them. It is better not to invite your child to take communion than to allow them to 'drink judgment on themselves' by not considering the meaning and importance of this symbol.

When and how do we share Communion at Woodridge Church?

At Woodridge Church communion is generally observed on the first Sunday of every month during the adult service (changes to this schedule are published in LifeMatters). Children who have made a personal faith commitment to Jesus Christ are welcome to participate in the Lord's Supper with their parents. Occasionally all the Treasureland Jewels children will join their parents in the adult service on communion Sunday's but parents are welcome to invite their children to participate in communion with them on any Sunday. Typically the ushers will pass the communion elements as the congregation stays seated. We hold the bread or juice until the pastor instructs us to eat or drink together. Feel free to contact any of the Woodridge Pastors or the Children's Church Director if you need further information.

What is Baptism?

Baptism is the outward symbol of the transforming work that God does in our hearts when we make a personal faith commitment to Him. The word 'baptism' comes from the Greek word 'baptizdo' which means to dunk under water. Being lowered into the water symbolizes death to self. The water symbolizes being cleansed of our sins and raised to new life in Christ.

When and how do we share in the celebration of baptism at Woodridge Church?

Baptism services are held at Woodridge about four times a year. They are usually done in Lake Independence or in a hot tub at the church. These services are announced well in advance and there are opportunities to meet with pastors or participate in classes prior to being baptized. Baptism is a very significant marker in a person's spiritual journey as well as a very impactful time for the gospel to be shared. Families should consider who they would like to invite to share in this important event as well as who may be witnessed to by attending. We also encourage family members, friends or other spiritual mentors to take an active part in the baptism. At Woodridge we wait to baptize children until they are old enough to make their own decision to follow Christ and can articulate a short testimony about their personal faith commitment. As a general guideline we wait until a child is 7 years old. Another practical consideration is whether they are ready for a full immersion baptism. It is worth considering how the action of being "dunked" might take away from the true meaning if the child is not ready. When your child is ready to be baptized we look forward to meeting with you and making this a memorable and significant experience in your child's faith journey.