

Children and Communion
River Terrace Church
East Lansing, MI
Adopted by Elders May 2017

1. River Terrace church supports the 2010 Christian Reformed Synod's decision that all baptized persons, regardless of age, are members of the church, and that all members who come with age and ability appropriate faith in Jesus Christ are welcome to the Lord's Table.
2. Baptized children, as part of the body of Christ, are welcome to the table not on the basis of their comprehension or profession, but on the basis of God's gracious invitation to the covenant community.
3. All baptized members are called to obey biblical commands about active participation in the Lord's Supper in an age and ability appropriate way, including examining themselves, discerning the body, and proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes again.
4. Parents are urged to hear their children's interest in the Lord's Supper as the stirring of the Holy Spirit, and to encourage age appropriate self-examination and discernment. Examples of statements from children showing discernment may include:
 - I love Jesus
 - This is God's feast
 - The bread and juice are signs of the body and blood of Christ
 - I am sorry for my sin
5. When a parent discerns that his or her child is ready, the parent is authorized to grant permission to participate in the sacrament. Parents are asked to let one of the pastors know of the family decision and indicate whether or not they would like further discussion prior to their child's first communion.
6. Parents have primary responsibility for nurturing the faith of their children, and should continue to instruct their children in the meaning and implication of participation in the sacrament as they mature and should encourage full participation in the life of the church.
7. Children are expected to continue their church school and faith formation education and to participate in other activities of the church in order to encourage growth in their faith and Christian maturity in their lives.
8. At the appropriate time, children and youth are encouraged to acknowledge their baptism and join the church in full membership through a public profession of their faith in Jesus Christ. Mature responsibilities in the congregation (voting and holding church office) will be granted on the basis of this public profession of faith in accordance with the requirements of Article 59 of the Church Order.
9. Elders have responsibility to nurture grateful and obedient participation in the sacraments by providing encouragement, instruction, and accountability in the congregation. The elders carry out this responsibility by personal contact and encouragement of parents and children, and also by ensuring a program of faith formation education and spiritual vitality exists in the church for all ages and abilities.
10. As a practical matter, pastors and church education staff shall ensure that a curriculum that instructs children in the meaning and importance of the sacraments is in place and that parents are actively informed of the church's position on children and the Lord's Supper and their role in nurturing their children's understanding of it. This curriculum, information, and program of instruction should seek to include parents, pastors, and elders appropriately.