



Julie's Story Shirley Rayburn, North Shore Alliance Church, North Vancouver, B.C.

Talk about patient! Julie first talked to me about getting baptized when she was 7 years old. It finally happened this spring. She is now 10.

Julie was key in bringing her family to church and she has always been very sensitive spiritually. Our elders had decided not to set a particular age regarding baptism, but rather address each child who expresses interest individually. We talked about the process – that we would meet together to learn more about baptism and then she would meet with an elder and myself. I let her know that sometimes, the elders may say ‘not yet,’ just like sometimes God’s answer to a prayer is ‘not yet.’ I told the elders of her interest and the process began. There were some unrelated things going on that delayed the process, but I would touch

base with Julie about it once in a while and her conviction was unwavering. She knew Jesus wanted her to be baptized, and she showed great respect for the elders and their need to be sure of the timing.

In looking for material to teach baptism, I visited Langley Vineyard and found a booklet they published in 1992 called “My Baptism Book.” It starts by comparing baptism to a wedding. The wedding isn’t the beginning of a couple’s love,

but it is the time when they announce to the world that they love each other. Baptism is the same – not the beginning of our love for Jesus, but the time when you announce that love to the world. This was a great analogy that kids can understand. It goes on to explain that sometimes Moms and Dads break their marriage promises – but it goes on to reinforce that Jesus will never, ever break the baptism promise, and that He’d be very sad if we broke our love promise to Him. Then it covers five topics to describe baptism – BORFT: Believing, Obeying, Repenting, Following, Telling.

Julie and I met and she was so clear on her understanding of baptism. I was looking forward to her interview and baptism. The date was set and as we were in the tank she said, “You may think I’m not old enough to be baptized ...” and went on to describe how she knows Jesus is with her every day. Then, “You may wonder why I should get baptized – because Jesus said so. Don’t believe me? It’s in the bible, Matthew chapter 3.” Many adults were convicted by her simple, clear, right-on-target kind of faith.

It was a long process, but watching her unwavering conviction was worth the wait – for me.



Our church has an annual baptism at an outdoor pool which provides an unbelievable and relaxed opportunity for our kids to watch

baptism in a family-friendly venue. Our senior pastor uses this event to explain baptism in kid-friendly terms. If a child is interested in baptism, they go through materials that we have available for parents and kids, attend a baptismal class and talk to the elders about what Jesus means to them. It really doesn’t get any better than this!

Laura Hahn, First Alliance Church, Calgary, Alberta

First Communion **St**

To prepare our children, Michael and Katherine, for their first time participating in the Lord’s supper, my wife and I remembered the passover story. It was close to Easter and we knew that our children would soon be ready for their ‘first communion.’

The table was set to ‘the nines.’ It was formal and meant to be memorable. Before dinner, we started with the passover reading from Exodus 12. My wife had bought lamb and lots of green mint jelly. Lamb is not a common meal at our place, so that in itself was a conversation piece. As we ate, we talked. While we remembered the passover story and celebrated this special meal together, we remembered the Lord’s sacrifice - His life, death and resurrection. As a pastor, I had access to a portable communion set that I used on occasion for hospital visits. So, after dinner, we shared together the elements of the Lord’s supper. I did it just like it would have been done in church. We ate and prayed. We drank and prayed. We had an opportunity as a family to prepare our children for their first public communion service.

The passover/communion connection was perhaps more memorable to us, as parents, but I’m sure our children will remember, with similar fondness, their first communion.

Dr. C. Stuart Lightbody, VP/Canadian Ministries
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Taking Communion – When Is a Child Ready?

How often have you been asked this sticky question, “My little Nathan keeps pushing to take communion, how do I know if he is really ready?” The answer is simple enough, but we all know that a child who has an agenda does not take ‘not yet’ or, ‘wait until you’re a little older’ as a satisfactory answer. The child just keeps pushing on the boundary, and Mom and Dad begin to feel guilty and maybe even misguided as they wonder, “What will it hurt anyway? Maybe saying ‘no’ will turn my child away from the Lord? Will we be sorry later?”

Taking communion is serious business. Probably many of us as adults do not appreciate the full impact of communion. 1 Corinthians 11:23-34 is the passage most often referred to and it clearly states that:

- 1 It is only for those who believe in Jesus as their Savior. (v.24 -25) Has the child accepted Jesus as his or her own Savior?
- 2 It is to help Jesus’ disciples remember what He did for them on the cross until He returns. (v. 24 -26) Does the child understand why we take communion? Has he or she learned to thank God for the wonderful gift of salvation?
- 3 There is a price to pay if we take communion unworthily. (v.28 -30) Does the child understand that taking communion is a very serious and worshipful time and that God sees and knows our hearts? Does the child know that it is important to confess known sin?

After considering these issues and discussing them with the child, the parents are then the ones who are responsible for making the decision. Just because a child ‘pushes’ is not enough reason for him/her to be given the privilege. Giving in when a child is not ready can easily lower the child’s understanding of God’s character and lessen his or her obedient response to the Word of God.

Age is really not the issue here. The issue is one of a child’s spiritual readiness and responsiveness to love and follow Jesus. That is what determines when a child is ready to take communion.

Jan Heppner, Kelowna Alliance Church, Kelowna, B.C.