

**The Elders, as overseers of this covenant community, are responsible for providing encouragement, instruction and accountability in the practice of participation in the Lord's Table for all its members and adherents.**

The elders of Harderwyk have unanimously affirmed our practice and these criteria for admission to the Lord's Table. Therefore, you are encouraged to talk to your children about their participation in this Sacrament, to use the resources that are available, and to come to the Table acknowledging that this Sacrament is God's gift of grace.

## **WHAT DOES HARDERWYK SAY ABOUT ... The Sacrament of the Lord's Table?**



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Children are always growing – physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. They are constantly incorporating new experiences, reaching new milestones, asking new questions, and becoming more and more the people they were created to be. When children of this community of faith are baptized, the parents are taking a step of faith on their behalf. But baptism is also an affirmation of God's grace in that child's life. A child's baptism is the first milestone in *their* faith story.

Each milestone of faith in a child's life gives us as the Family of God a reason to celebrate. Although the milestones follow quickly on the heels of one other in the earlier years of life, we keep celebrating milestones of spiritual growth all the way into and through adulthood. There are many possible milestones along the way for us to celebrate together:

- Sacrament of Baptism
- Sacrament of the Lord's Table
- Presentation of Bibles to 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders
- Public Profession of Faith
- Reception into Membership
- Marriage
- Commissioning for Service
- Ordination
- Funeral

Each milestone reflects that first milestone of baptism: we are part of the Family of God, identified by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We live out that baptismal identity every day and with every expression of faith, until the day we die.

Some of these milestones happen at more obvious times in a person's life (at birth, in third grade), but if you are a parent, you may be wondering...

## IS MY CHILD READY TO COME TO THE LORD'S TABLE (CELEBRATE COMMUNION)?

If your child is asking questions about communion, if your child is talking more and more about their love for Jesus, if your child talks about how Jesus loves them, now is a very good time for you to start talking to them about receiving the Sacrament of communion. Your child doesn't need to understand everything there is to know about communion in order to participate in the Sacrament. The Sacrament of the Lord's Table has much less to do with how much your child knows and understands, and much more to do with God's grace and love for your child. If your child desires to receive that grace, walk with your child and encourage your child toward that next milestone: his or her first communion.

### WHAT IS HARDERWYK'S PRACTICE REGARDING ADMISSION TO THE LORD'S TABLE?

Harderwyk is a congregation of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), and our practice is consistent with the guiding principles of our denomination. Here are some important things for you to know about Harderwyk's position on admission to the Lord's Table.

### All baptized members of Christ's church are welcomed at the Lord's Table.

If your child has been baptized, he or she is welcome to receive the elements of communion.

### Each is invited to participate in the Sacrament in age and ability-appropriate ways.

The Lord's Table is for all those who, regardless of age and ability, love Jesus and trust in him alone for their salvation. Jesus has prepared his table for all who are as truly sorry for their sins as they can be, given their age and ability. All who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior and who desire to live in obedience to him

are welcome to participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Table. Love, sorrow for sins, belief, and growth in obedience look different depending on one's age and ability. Likewise, participation may mean different things for different people. For example, parents may choose to ask for a blessing for their young child when they come forward to receive the elements.

### Instruction regarding the meaning and significance of the sacrament is vital and should be provided to members and families of our congregation.

We are developing a variety of resources to help you to talk to your children about the Lord's Table. "HOW DOES MY FAMILY TALK ABOUT ... the Sacrament of the Lord's Table?" is available now. You are also invited to talk to a pastor.

### Public acknowledgement and expression of our faith in Christ is encouraged as a life-long practice.

As we grow in our faith, we must grow in our capacity to share that faith with the family of believers (public expressions and testimonies) and with those who do not yet consider themselves to be part of that family (witnessing in word and in deed). All of our faith expressions are life-long practices. A formal Public Profession of Faith is one of many expressions of faith. Other expressions include our corporate songs and prayers, our recitation of the creeds, and our giving of our gifts time, talent and treasure. A Public Profession of Faith is not a prerequisite for admission to the Lord's Table. However, a family may still choose to link these two milestones (Public Profession of Faith and admittance to the Sacrament of the Lord's Table) together. If this is the decision you make as a family, your children are still encouraged to participate in the sacrament by coming forward with you, their parent, to receive a blessing.