**The Eucharist in Schools – Guidance from Bath and Wells Diocese Education Team**

As Church of England schools, you may be considering what the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, looks like in your school context.

There are two elements to consider;

* Teaching about the Eucharist, as part of your RE curriculum
* Engaging with the Eucharist as part of collective worship

Teaching about the Eucharist / Holy Communion

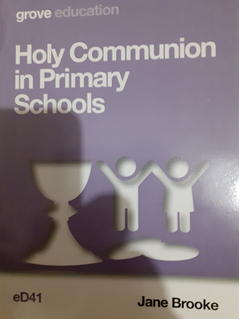
* There are resources on our [Bath and Wells RE webpage](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/schools/re-collective-worship-and-spirituality/religious-education/) that may support you in this for both both primary and secondary schools and on the [REQuest page](http://request.org.uk/teachers/teaching-resources/life-resources/communion-life/communion-in-an-anglican-church/).
* You will probably already be teaching the Eucharist as part of your RE curriculum; Understanding Christianity is a resource we recommend and has some excellent activities that would support learning about this Christian sacrament.
* It is important to use the language ‘some Christians believe’ when teaching about the Eucharist, in the same way we would introduce a practice from any faith.

Engaging with the Eucharist as part of Collective Worship

* Within the SIAMS Schedule in strand 6b, The Impact of Collective Worship’, it says that ‘the school community need to evaluate the extent to which worship enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story ….. and where appropriate the Eucharist.’
* Within the grade descriptor for a good church school, it says ‘They are aware of the central importance of the Eucharist/Communion to Christian worship’. An example given of excellence is that ‘Pupils are enabled to engage with the Eucharist in creative and innovative ways, and this ensures a range of age and context appropriate opportunities for pupils to explore the Eucharist in ways that respect the integrity of the pupils.’
* Your school will need to decide what your decision is about ‘engaging with the Eucharist’.
* If you would like to have a form of the Eucharist within your school day, the first thing you would need to do is talk with your local vicar/rector/priest. If the parish is in vacancy, you should contact the Area Dean. You will need an ordained person to lead a Eucharist in school or church. Beliefs and practices vary hugely because of the spectrum of churchmanship. Parental agreement would need to be sought and you would need to consider how you can maintain an ethos of inclusivity during this collective worship.
* In secondary schools, a Eucharist could be held out of curriculum teaching time, to allow pupils to ‘opt in’.
* Within your school context, and through your parish church, you may enable children to access a pathway to the Eucharist, by signposting an after-school confirmation course, or access to communion course for children. Again, your partnership with the church in deciding these next steps is crucial and traditions in Anglican churches vary.
* We know schools have devised some great ‘Agape’ services which are not sacramental in the strict sense of the word, but do give opportunity for the principles of Gathering, Engaging, being Community, Sharing etc. The advantage is everyone is welcome and no one needs to be excluded.

Questions for discussion:

* Who should we involve with discussion on this decision?
* What will the governor timescale be on this governor decision?
* Do we have the opportunity to involve chaplaincy as part of this consideration?
* Could schools offer a Y3-Y6 course for children after school, in partnership with the church, possibly in preparation for Confirmation, if children are previously baptised?
* Would schools appreciate further training in Agape services? How would this offer an alternative?

Further information:

This booklet has some useful questions to provoke thought and discussion within your leadership team: Jane Brooke (Grove Education booklet) October 2019 <https://grovebooks.co.uk/products/ed-41-holy-communion-in-primary-schools> There is a really useful section in the back on page 26 about questions for governors and staff to consider. There are also some really excellent scenarios shared on page 14, 20, 21, 22.

Other useful links:

<http://www.going4growth.com/downloads/Exploring_HC_in_Primary_Schools_-_Gloucester_Diocese.pdf>

(particularly from page 15)

<https://www.worshipworkshop.org.uk/eucharist/>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/holy-communion/additional-0>

<https://trurodiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/EucharistQuestionsSchools3.pdf>

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/ministry-for-mission/mission/chaplaincy/chaplaincy-schools/>

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/youth-children/advice-and-guidance/children-communion/>