

Additional Eucharistic Prayers

Guidance Notes

1. The Liturgical Commission proposes to publish alongside ‘Additional Eucharistic Prayers’ (GS1822) these guidance notes for use when planning a Eucharist at which a significant number of children is present.
2. The attached draft has been revised in the light of comments from the House of Bishops. It is circulated to members of the Synod for information.
3. The text will be finalized by the Commission once the Additional Eucharistic Prayers have received final approval.

On behalf of the Commission

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Chairman

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GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE PLANNING OF A EUCHARIST AT WHICH A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF CHILDREN ARE PRESENT

1. These notes have been drawn up to help those who are preparing a celebration of the Eucharist at which a significant number of children will be present and at which it is intended to use one of the Additional Eucharistic Prayers written for such occasions. They set out a number of general principles, which will apply whenever children are present at a celebration of the Eucharist in significant numbers, and offer some specific and practical guidance tied more closely to the Additional Eucharistic Prayers themselves. It is assumed that those preparing such a celebration are familiar with the theology and practice of eucharistic celebration in the Church of England, and that what is said here will be adjusted and adapted in appropriate ways in the light of local needs, resources, and experiences.
2. The Additional Eucharistic Prayers (and these guidance notes) have been prepared on the assumption that the majority of the congregation – or at least a significant proportion of it – is made up of children of Primary School age, although the possibility has also been in mind that children of other ages, including younger children may be present. The Prayers are not otherwise directed to particular age-groups, least of all to successive age-groups.
3. The most usual occasion for the celebration of a Eucharist at which the majority, or at least a significant proportion, of those taking part are children, is a school Eucharist. This will commonly be celebrated in the school itself or in a parish church, although other settings can be imagined.
4. The increasing participation of children of all ages in celebrations of the Eucharist, and the admission of children to communion at a younger age and/or separately from confirmation, have been marked features of the life of the Church of England in recent years. The Dearing Report (1998) emphasised the importance for the church's mission of its work with schools; and schools themselves, especially Church primary or secondary Schools, have recognised the importance for their children of familiarity with the Eucharist. Many Church Schools now include a termly or half-termly celebration of the Eucharist in their school calendars. All this forms the immediate background to the preparation of Additional Eucharistic

Prayers for use at celebrations of a service of Holy Communion at which a majority, or at least a significant proportion, of those present are children.¹

5. Children may not have the language to talk explicitly and connectedly about God, but their sense of God is direct and vivid: they “move with ease in the world of the transcendent.”² Adults who have not altogether forgotten what it was like to be a child will recall this sense of the closeness and obviousness of God. It is connected to a child’s sense of wonder, and to his or her ability to ask profound and simple questions. “Who made God?” “Why is there something rather than nothing?” The fact that the child cannot yet develop such a question in the way that an adult philosopher of religion would does not mean that it is not a real question, really asked. In the Common Worship baptism service, the whole congregation takes on a responsibility to help children to become gradually more articulate in developing their intuitive sense of God. But the sense of God is there already, and children’s worship is to be taken seriously as a present reality, not as a future hope.

6. In planning a children’s Eucharist it is important to look at the celebration both from the point of view of the child, and from the point of view of the wider church. The Eucharist is always the one Eucharist; it is not divided according to the age (or colour, or language, or sex) of those who celebrate it. In that sense, there can be neither a children’s Eucharist, nor an adults’ Eucharist. But the celebration may take its tone and style from those who celebrate it. Again, the Eucharist is celebrated to the glory of God, and because the Lord commands us to do this in memory of him. It proclaims the death and resurrection of Jesus until he comes again in glory. It is the remembrance of God’s saving work in Jesus, and a visible expression of the church. Wherever and however it is celebrated, the aim of the celebration is not to entertain those who are present, whether children or adults. But this does not mean that a children’s Eucharist may not be filled with a properly child-like sense of playfulness, celebration, delight and fun, and it does not prevent those planning the service from trying to approach it from the point of view of a child – asking, so far as their adult

¹ For the sake of brevity, the phrase “children’s Eucharist” will be used from this point onwards. Each time it appears, the fuller form of words is to be understood.

² Sofia Cavalletti, *The Religious potential of the Child* (New York: Paulist Press, c. 1993), 45. For excellent surveys of children’s sense of, and response to, God, see David Hay with Rebecca Nye, *The Spirit of the Child* (revised ed. London: Jessica Kingsley, 2006), and Rebecca Nye, *Children’s Spirituality: What it is and why it matters* (London: Church House Publishing, 2009)

imaginings allow, how each aspect of the celebration is likely to be experienced by a child. This approach needs to extend to the most basic practicalities – children are smaller than adults, so their sight-lines are different.

7. For all that a children's Eucharist has an integrity in itself as the Church's eucharistic act, it also serves as a preparation for and a bridge into the worshipping life of a Sunday eucharistic community, typically that of a parish church. One important part of that preparation is the building up of a repertoire of remembered liturgical texts. This makes it important to include in children's Eucharists a number of texts which will, over time, be learned by heart. A selection of such texts can be found at <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1259499/gs1596.pdf>. Another aspect of the preparation is the child's growing familiarity with the underlying structure of a celebration of the Eucharist. Two forms of this are set out on pp. 25 and 166 of the *Common Worship* Main Volume, and reproduced in Appendix A. Within the underlying structure, there is considerable scope for the liturgy to be adapted to particular times and circumstances, but it is important that the underlying structure is maintained and becomes familiar.
8. The admission of unconfirmed children to Holy Communion is governed by Regulations published in 2006, pursuant to paragraph 1(a) of Canon B15A. These are available on the Church of England's website at <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/35579/sacraments.pdf>
9. Only those children who have been admitted to communion under the Regulations should be invited to receive communion at a children's Eucharist. If a children's Eucharist takes place in a school, and the president is not one of the parish clergy, then there should be careful consultation between school and parish to clarify which children have or have not been admitted to communion. For similar reasons, it is important to keep parents well-informed about any arrangements for a children's Eucharist.
10. The president at a children's Eucharist must always be someone who has authority to preside over the celebration, not only in terms of priestly ordination, but also in terms of licence and local permission. The president should also be someone who has a pastoral relationship with the school or other community to which the children belong.

11. These notes assume that a significant number of those present at a children's Eucharist will receive communion during the service. The principle that a significant proportion of those present at any celebration of the Eucharist should normally receive communion remains true for a children's Eucharist, but there will also be occasions, in the variety of settings in which a children's Eucharist is celebrated, when there are good pastoral and missionary reasons for departing from this principle and arranging a celebration at which only a smaller number of those present receive communion.

12. Provision needs in any case to be made for those who are not communicant – because they have not yet been admitted to communion, or because they are members of a church whose discipline prevents them from receiving communion at an Anglican celebration, or for some other reason. A common practice would be for them to present themselves for an individual prayer of blessing at the time of communion, in which case there needs to be a clear and previously agreed way of signalling to the ministers that they are to be blessed rather than communicated. Further reflection on prayers of this kind may be found at <http://www.transformingworship.org.uk/TransformingWorship/wpcontent/uploads/2007/12/prayer-for-non-communicants.pdf>
It may also be that members of other faith communities are present at the service, in which case the Head Teacher and Governors should be consulted about the way in which their presence is acknowledged. Children who are not receiving communion or a blessing can also stay in their seats; permission to do this may need to be given explicitly.

13. Canon B17 specifies that the Eucharist is celebrated with “wine the fermented juice of the grape, good and wholesome.” Although the Church of England has always accepted that the whole sacrament is received, even if it is administered in one kind only, it has always been its deliberate practice to administer Holy Communion in both kinds. It should therefore be normal practice to offer consecrated wine to children, as well as consecrated bread. It may be that a parent or governor objects to the administration of any alcoholic wine to children. The law states that “an alcoholic drink” may not be given to a child under the age of five except in an emergency and under medical supervision. From the age of five, parents may allow a child to consume an alcoholic drink at home, but they may not buy their child an alcoholic drink in a public house or restaurant until the

age of 16. The administration of communion wine at a service in church or school does not fall into either of these categories, but it is reasonable to suppose that a parent may give permission for any child over the age of five to take a sip from the chalice. The amount of alcohol consumed is tiny (≤ 0.04 units; even less if a generous quantity of water is added in the preparation of the chalice). If a parent declines to allow their own child to receive consecrated wine, then communion should be administered in one kind only.

14. Two Additional Eucharistic Prayers are now provided for use at a children's Eucharist. Every Eucharist needs to be seen as a whole, and these prayers have therefore to be placed within a rite that has been carefully planned in its entirety as a children's Eucharist. Several different learning styles will be present in any group of children, from the verbal and theoretical to the practical and experiential, and this variety has to be taken account of in designing both the celebration itself, and any activities that lead up to it. Similarly, the celebration itself is not a recitation of texts; it is a whole, which includes speech, music, and silence, as well as sight, taste, touch, and smell. The capacity of children to be silent and to appreciate silence, if they are led into it carefully and deliberately, should not be underestimated.
15. The initial planning and preparation needs to cover:
 - The lay-out and physical preparation of the worship space
 - The provision of any materials that are to be used in the celebration, some of which (e.g. bread, banners, vestments, frontals, flower arrangements, artwork, and similar "installations") may be made by children who are taking part.
 - The selection, arrangement, and (where appropriate) composition of texts to be used
 - The choice of readings and readers
 - The choice of music and musicians
 - The order and movement of processions
 - Arrangements for the bringing of bread and wine, and the preparation of the table
 - Arrangements for communion
 - The assessment and mitigation of any risks associated with the use of candles, or charcoals for incense.

The planning provides an opportunity to engage the whole community – school or church – in a process of creative preparation for the celebration, and to involve a wide range of people directly in it. It is especially important that children are as fully involved as possible in the preparation and celebration of the rite. The capacity of children to lead particular sections of an act of worship, if they are properly prepared, supported, and rehearsed, is much greater than many adults imagine.

16. The layout of the space needs particular attention if the celebration is not taking place in a church. At a Eucharist, the ordinary furniture of a school hall or classroom is put to an extraordinary use, and this needs to be reflected with care and imagination in the way in which a desk or folding dinner table, for example, is adapted for use as the holy table. Appropriate positions need to be found for both the Bible and the table, both of which need to be clearly visible to children. Children can take part in this physical preparation of the space, in a way that provides a structured anticipation of the celebration over a period of time.
17. Some liturgical texts are fixed, or are to be selected from a field of authorised choices (e.g. collects, words of absolution, Affirmations of Faith). The tables in Appendix A show which components of the rite must be used on every occasion, which must be used if the celebration takes place on a Sunday or Principal Holy Day, and when authorised texts must be used. Other parts of the rite allow for the composition of fresh material. Such texts include:
 - The individual lines of a Kyrie confession
 - Prayers of intercession for the Church and the world
 - Introductions to the Peace
 - Short prayers for use at the preparation of the table
 - Short proper prefaces

There is no reason why children may not in principle be involved in this process of composition, so long as it is never turned into a competition. The president takes responsibility for the appropriateness of any texts prepared in this way, and has to ensure that they are “reverent and seemly and...neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter.” (Canon B5).

18. Music and song are often already an important part of a child's experience of school; it may be especially appropriate for all or part of the Eucharistic Prayer to be sung.
19. Participants in the celebration need to be confident, both about any words that they are to say and sing, and any actions they are to perform. A decision will need to be made about how much text the participants are given, and in what form. Some songs, responses, and prayers can be learned in class beforehand, so that they are committed to memory before the service takes place. Text can also be provided on paper, or on screen. It is worth remembering that children are very used in school to reading words from an interactive screen, and it will often be better to project words than to print multiple paper copies.
20. On many occasions (e.g. Harvest Festival, St Michael and All Angels, Ash Wednesday, days in Holy Week, Ascension Day) there is no need to look beyond the provision in authorised lectionaries, which should be used. On some other occasions (e.g. after a death in the school or at the end of the school year), readings suitable to that occasion may be chosen in preference to the readings appointed for the day in an authorised (weekday) lectionary. There must always be at least one reading, from the Gospels. Readings may be read in dramatised form, and may be accompanied by mime, dance, music, or puppetry. Similarly, reflection upon the scripture that has been read may take the form of a conventional address, or it may come through drama or dance, or in other ways.
21. Although most modern rites place the Peace between the prayers of intercession and the preparation of the table, *Common Worship* also allows for the Peace to be exchanged at the beginning of the service, or at the end, or before the Breaking of the Bread.
22. Short proper prefaces may be locally composed for use in Eucharistic Prayers A, B and E of *Common Worship: Order One*. The second Additional Eucharistic Prayer provides similarly for the local composition of a very short preface. Although these may reflect the particular occasion of a celebration, it is important to remember that the task of the preface is always to celebrate the work of God in creation and redemption, and the faithfulness of his loving purpose in salvation-history.

23. In addition to the possibility of newly composed prefaces, Additional Eucharistic Prayer 2 contains three question-and-answer couplets. The Prayer may be used without the questions, which are printed in square brackets. If they are used, each question may be asked by a single child or group of children (and may need to be repeated by the president if it was asked very quietly). The answer may be given by one of the ministers (e.g. by the president or the deacon), or by another child or group of children. It is important that the dialogue is spoken in a way that does not appear to patronise or “squash” any child or children that have asked the questions.
24. Additional Eucharistic Prayer 1 makes use of short responses, which build up towards the Sanctus and the final Amen. Careful thought needs to be given beforehand to the way in which these responses are used, so that they support, rather than interrupt, the movement of the Prayer as a whole. They may be said or sung, especially to music that anticipates the singing of the Sanctus. They may be repeated and varied dynamically: louder at first, and gradually becoming very soft, or *vice versa*. They will need to be cued, perhaps with a visual signal. The intention is to create a sense of deepening wonder.
25. Thought needs to be given to the way in which, and the places at which, communion is to be administered. Communion should be distributed only by those who have the bishop’s permission to do so.
26. It is important to rehearse the celebration, as a whole and in parts, so that children feel properly supported and confident in every contribution that they are making. At the same time, children should not be drilled in a way that will make them anxious. The celebration should be seemly and practised; it need not be liturgically perfect. The way in which the president presides is particularly important in drawing children into the celebration, and in communicating both confidence and a sense of invitation.

APPENDIX A:

[reproduced from *Common Worship Main Volume*, p 25]

¶ A Service of the Word
with a Celebration of Holy Communion

This rite requires careful preparation by the president and other participants, and is not normally to be used as the regular Sunday or weekday service.

Sections marked with an asterisk must follow an authorized text.*

Preparation

The people and the priest:

- ¶ greet each other in the Lord's name
- ¶ confess their sins and are assured of God's forgiveness*
- ¶ keep silence and pray a Collect*

The Liturgy of the Word

The people and the priest:

- ¶ proclaim and respond to the word of God

[a Gospel reading must be included]

*[a Creed or authorized Affirmation of Faith
must be included on Sundays or Principal Holy Days]*

Prayers

The people and the priest:

- ¶ pray for the Church and the world

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The people and the priest:

- ¶ exchange the Peace
- ¶ prepare the table
- ¶ pray the Eucharistic Prayer*
- ¶ break the bread
- ¶ receive Holy Communion

The Dismissal

The people and the priest:

- ¶ depart with God's blessing.

[reproduced from *Common Worship* Main Volume, p 166]

Order One Structure

The people and the priest

- ¶ greet each other in the Lord's name
- ¶ confess their sins and are assured of God's forgiveness
- ¶ keep silence and pray a Collect
- ¶ proclaim and respond to the word of God
- ¶ pray for the Church and the world
- ¶ exchange the Peace
- ¶ prepare the table
- ¶ pray the Eucharistic Prayer
- ¶ break the bread
- ¶ receive communion
- ¶ depart with God's blessing

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