

Preparation for Receiving the Ordinances of the Church

Firm Foundation Christian Church, Woonsocket RI

For children and youths, a condition of accountability is required to be eligible to participate in (believer's) baptism or to partake of the communion table. For some youths, this will be met around the age of ten. Other youths will take longer. The condition of accountability finds its basis in Scripture, and simply means that point at which an individual is able to make a decision for or against the Lord with full understanding of what that means and its results and consequences. The second generation of the children of Israel, for example, was exempted from the judgment of not entering the promised land on this basis. "Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it" (Deuteronomy 1:39, NKJV). Regarding baptism, scripturally, only those with the understanding and desire to repent and believe are allowed to partake. "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"" (Acts 2:37-38). Regarding communion, it is implied that the same is required. "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). Condition of accountability is determined by the believing parent(s) or grandparent(s), the pastor, Sunday School teachers, and others as input is needed. In summary conclusion, There are two ordinances in the Christian Church, Water Baptism and Communion. The requirements for either or both are the same. We do not coerce anyone to participate in either one, since that would be contrary to the spirit of Christ. Freely He has loved us, and freely we choose to receive of Him.

To this end, we have created the following rigorous program to prepare young people to partake of the ordinances with full understanding. The requirements, subject to modification based upon the individual, are as follows. The program is largely independent study

(reading assignments, handouts, and writing assignments) working with the caregiver(s) and administered by the church (generally the Pastor and the Pastor's wife).

- *Study of the Gospel of John Salvation Scriptures
- *Study of the Romans Road to Salvation
- *Study of Scriptures relating to the permanence of salvation
- *Study of Christian Baptism
- *Study of the Communion Table
- *Study of the Ten Commandments
- *Study of the Fruit of the Spirit
- *General study of the Bible as the literal Word of God sufficient for all matters of Christian faith and practice
- *Active Regular Participation in Sunday School (at least twice per month)
- *Successful completion of two Emmaus Courses, "Tell me the Story of Jesus" and "One God One Way", or the equivalent to them.
- *Demonstrated understanding and application of Christian principles in day to day life, as determined by the parent(s)/caregiver in consult with other parties taking an interest in the youth's spiritual well-being

The primary goal is to preach and teach those truths most pertinent to the gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, and that the youth be saved at the very moment the condition of accountability is met. We are serious about the salvation of souls of those we like to call "God's favorite people", the children. The secondary goal is to establish such a firm Christian life foundation, that the youth is strong in faith and not easily moved, and even if he or she does drift away at times, there will always be a firm foundation to come back to.