

St John's Highbury Vale

Easter Service including Eucharist

FAQs

Why are we having a Eucharist?

It is an expectation that Church Schools in London Diocese will give children the chance to be involved in a Eucharist unless there are clear reasons why this would be inappropriate. The children have been learning about the Eucharist (also known as Communion or The Lord's Supper), and this will give them an opportunity to see it in action.

How will children take part?

As always, this service will involve the pupils singing, reading and leading prayers. We will be telling the Easter story of Jesus appearing to the disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21. 1-14), and was the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

If your child normally receives bread and wine at their church, they will be invited to come to the communion rail and do so here.

If your child does not receive bread and wine at their church, they will be offered the opportunity to come to receive a prayer of blessing.

How will you know whether or not my child should receive the bread and wine?

We will be asking parents to let the school know before the service if their child receives communion at church. If parents have not told us that this is their normal practice, the class teacher will only offer the opportunity to receive a prayer of blessing.

What is a prayer of blessing?

Usually this involves the priest placing his or her hand on or above a child or an adult's head and praying that God would bless them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Will the children understand why some of them are receiving bread and wine and others are not?

Yes, they should do. In talking about the Eucharist, the teachers will have explained to the children that different churches have different practices.

In the Orthodox church, it is normal for even very young children to receive communion once they have been baptised. Many churches run special preparation courses for children to receive communion before they have been confirmed. Other churches wait until children are older and have been confirmed before they receive communion. Within our school community we reflect this diversity and that is OK.

How will the children understand what is going on?

The service has drawn on services used by schools around the country, and uses a question and answer format within it to explain why the different components of the Eucharist are happening.

The Eucharist is very important to me. How can I be sure it will be taken seriously enough?

We agree that the Eucharist is of central importance as a service at which Christians remember with thanks the death and resurrection of Jesus. That is why we feel it makes sense to link it to our Easter celebration. We expect this service to be full of the joy we associate with our school worship, but also to be conducted with dignity and respect.

I don't want the new idea of allowing children to experience a Eucharist to detract from the Easter message. How will you avoid that?

Neither do we. We believe the service will help children to understand more deeply the Easter message of Jesus's death and resurrection, as it will explain that this is what is celebrated by Christians in every Eucharist that is celebrated.

Who will be conducting the service?

This year's Easter service takes place at St Thomas' and will be conducted by the vicar, the Revd Alice Smith. Each year, a different one of our three churches (St Augustine's, Christ Church and St Thomas's) will host the service.