

**Title: Belonging ~ First communion and confirmation**

**Year: Years 3 and 4**

**Timing: 2/3 lessons**

**Links: CRP1 CRP2 CSC3**

**Learning Objectives:**

- To reflect upon the importance of belonging in a family setting
- To find out about different ways of welcoming children into communities
- To consider the concept of personal responsibility in religious communities
- To think about the use of symbols in rites of passage ceremonies, and to understand how these are linked together within one faith.



**Questions for reflection:** Why do we feel that it is important to belong to different groups, including families? How might we welcome someone into a group to which we already belong? When do you think that children are old enough to tell right from wrong?

This unit will depend on your direction and the experience in your group. If you choose to study the Anglican and other protestant experience, confirmation precedes the first communion, usually at 12-16. Roman Catholic children usually have their first communion at 7, with confirmation at about 12. In the Orthodox Church, children are fully initiated into the church while they are still babies. They have their baptism and confirmation ceremonies at the same time, and a parent or guardian takes their first communion for them.

**Activities and experiences:**

1. Start by finding out groups in the class to which various children belong, and asking them to talk about how they came to join the group, and how they were welcomed into it. Brownies and Cubs are useful in that they have small initiation ceremonies that enable a helpful comparison with initiation into a faith.
2. Use a picture of a font to revise baptism, and ask the children what they can remember. Write down their suggestions around the picture and keep it as it will provide a useful point of comparison later on.
3. The best way to explore this topic is undoubtedly to interview a child who has already received their first communion, but it is important to make sure that their parents are absolutely happy about the arrangements, and even better if one of them could also take part in the lesson. Some parents are also willing to lend artefacts, but these need to be placed where they cannot be touched.
4. Prepare questions in advance and send them home. Some children will not be able to answer in great detail and will need your support (and therefore knowledge!). If you have replica artefacts in school, let the children handle these where appropriate, bearing in mind that artefacts used in worship will generally be considered holy to the believer ~ check.
5. Use [www.request.org.uk](http://www.request.org.uk) and follow the links either through **infants/** milestones in family life/ confirmation/ photo resources and Catholic first communion or go through **the main site** and then do what? choosing either communion/ Catholic mass/ first communion or rites of passage/ first communion.
6. Ask different groups of children to find out facts about first communion and confirmation in order to build up parts of a display. They are helped to prepare a picture with captions that shows what is happening and *why*.

**Assessment:** Ask each group to present their part of the display to the class, encouraging the others to ask questions about that part of the topic. Useful headings could include ~ preparation, clothes, service, symbols. How does the ceremony reflect that of baptism, and demonstrate that the child is now an adult in terms of their faith?

**Resources:** Initiation Customs by K. Prior, pub. Wayland 0-7502-0423-0

