

Sharing is a lesson we hope kids will learn. Children protect what they own. One child with a toy may not want a brother or sister to play with it. One child with a new outfit may not want another one to wear it. One child with a choice of desserts may pick the largest one before anyone else can get it. Adults never do that. We hope, in time, that kids learn to share.

Before we celebrate first communion with children [as we will here tomorrow morning], we expect kids to be ready. Their readiness includes education. Kids should know about Jesus, the church, and especially about the communion we share: There is a difference between the bread and wine they see at home and the bread and wine we share at mass. At mass our bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. We expect children to have some grasp of the difference before their first communion.

But, preparing for communion means more. It isn't just learning about Jesus. It is following Jesus, doing what Jesus would have us do. And that means, among other things, sharing. Children first learn sharing with friends. With a good friend, children share food, they share toys, and they play fair. Learning to be a friend also prepares for communion. It teaches us how to act as Jesus would like. But there is a catch. Jesus would have us act that way with other people too - not just with our friends.

Today's passage from Acts of the Apostles describes the church shortly after the resurrection. Jesus had appeared to the disciples. The Holy Spirit had come upon them. They believed in resurrection. They worked miracles. They witnessed baptisms by the thousands. And they shared things. They were baptized as individuals, but they formed a community. Luke says, "The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed any possessions of their own, but they had everything in common. Those who owned property or houses sold them, brought the proceeds to the apostles, and saw them distributed to each according to need. There was no needy person among them."

Incidentally, if this happened today, it would not be fiscally wise for those with property to sell it and donate the proceeds to the apostles. If they had given the property to the apostles and had *them* sell it, the donors would have received a better tax break on the gift.

Christians share as a sign of our communion. We share with our friends, with other believers, and with all the needy. Many say our country should spend money on a strong defense, but we have a responsibility to help the needy around the world. Sharing communion at church is not just a sign that we have learned about Jesus, but that we are trying to follow Jesus. When we break bread and share the cup we remind ourselves to share and share alike.