THE ORDER FOR ADMISSION TO THE LORD’S TABLE OF THOSE BAPTIZED IN INFANCY

The Constitution of the Reformed Church in America (Article 6) states that it is the office of the elders, together with the ministers of the Word, to “...pass upon the fitness of those who desire to make public confession of faith...” (Sec. 1c). “Only those persons may be received as members of the Church in full communion who have made a confession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ before the Board of Elders...” (Sec. 6a). From this it seems clear that the minister, if any, and elders shall pass upon the fitness of baptized persons to be received into full communion, and authorize their admission to the Lord’s Table before the congregation.

The following procedure and office fulfill these constitutional provisions. The order consists of two parts, the one before the elders, offered as a suggestion, and the one before the congregation.

This form of interrogation before the elders is also to be used for adults baptized at the time of their confession of faith.

BEFORE THE ELDERS

At the meeting of the elders, the minister or presiding elder shall present the candidates, naming each one. The following or some other suitable prayer may be made.

Prayer

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hast called us out of darkness into thy marvelous light, grant us thy favor, that what we do at this time may be pleasing in thy sight, that thy Church may be strengthened and increased, and that thy name may be glorified in the midst of thy people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Interrogation

The minister, who is to examine the candidates in the presence of the elders, shall then say:
Dearly Beloved, you come before us to confess your faith and to confirm the covenant of God of which your Baptism is the sign and seal, and to seek admission to the Lord’s Table. That we may know the sincerity of your purpose and your understanding of this solemn engagement, you will answer the following questions:

The minister may use these and other questions:

Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Do you rely upon him and him alone for salvation?

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the only rule of faith and practice in the Church?

Will you confess Christ publicly before men, and by God’s grace seek to walk worthily of your Christian calling?

What is your answer?

The candidates may then respond:

Yes, truly, with all my heart.

The elders may examine the candidates further as to their knowledge of the Christian Faith as contained in the Apostles’ Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord’s Prayer. They may also examine the sincerity of their decision to seek admission to the full communion of Christ’s Church.

The elders with the minister, having determined the fitness of the candidates, may publicly receive them before the congregation by using the Order provided. If the reception is not a public one, then the Order shall be used before the elders. The meeting before the elders may be closed with the following or another suitable prayer.

Prayer

Gracious and eternal God, we bless thee for the fellowship which we have with one another in thy Church and, above all, for Jesus Christ, our living Lord and King. Enable us, by the power of thy Spirit, to walk together in harmony and in true holiness; to help one another by word and example in the faithful performance of our duties; and to live worthily of the Gospel.
of Christ and to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to say when we pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

BEFORE THE CONGREGATION

The public reception into full membership and admission to the Lord’s Table should be after the service of the Word.

Admission

The minister shall say to the candidates as they stand:

Dearly Beloved in Christ, as children of your heavenly Father, you stand here for the deliberate and public confirmation in your own person of that covenant of God of which your Baptism is the sign and seal. You have already been duly instructed, and have made confession before us of your faith in Jesus Christ. And now, in this most solemn manner before God and his Church, you are to repeat and renew that confession. I ask each one of you to join with the congregation in confessing our Christian Faith, in the words of the Apostles’ Creed.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The minister, after the congregation is seated, shall then ask each of the candidates the following questions:

ADMISSION TO THE LORD’S TABLE, 1968
Do you acknowledge and confess the Apostolic Faith thus affirmed as your faith, and do you purpose steadfastly to continue to the end of your life in the truth affirmed in these Articles of the Christian Faith, as they are taught in the Church of Jesus Christ, according to the Word of God?

Do you acknowledge that you are delivered from all your sins and miseries only by the saving work of Jesus Christ, and will seek to show true gratitude to God for this deliverance?

Do you promise to make faithful use of the means of grace, especially the hearing of the Word and the use of the Sacraments; to give faithful adherence to the doctrines and teaching of the Church; to walk in the spirit of Christian fellowship and brotherly love with the congregation; to submit yourself to all Christian admonition; to offer faithfully to the service of God your prayers and your gifts; and to seek the things that make for purity and peace in the Church of Jesus Christ as long as you live? What is your response?

*The candidates shall then reply:*

**Yes, truly, with all my heart.**

**Declaration**

*The minister, laying his hand on the head of each of the kneeling candidates, may then make formal declaration saying:*

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of his Church, I declare that N____________, received into the visible membership of the holy catholic Church through Baptism, is now admitted to the Lord’s Table.

*After the declaration, the minister shall use the following or another suitable prayer:*

**Prayer**

Defend, O Lord, these thy servants, with thy heavenly grace, that they may continue thine forever, and daily increase in thy Spirit more and more, until they come to thine eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Or,

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, guard, we pray thee, the life and work of these thy servants, and fulfill to them thy gracious promises. Let thy Holy Spirit dwell in them, enabling them to overcome the temptations of the world, to adorn the doctrine of our Savior in all things, and finally to obtain their inheritance among the saints in light. Bless also this congregation of thy people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

General Prayers

Hymn

Benediction

*If public reception into full membership and admission to the Lord’s Table is at another place in the Order, it should be concluded with prayer. The service should then continue to follow the Order to the end.*