

Confirmation Handbook

2009-2010

Confirmation...what does it mean??

According to Webster's Dictionary, Confirmation is the rite or act of confirming. Well then, what is Confirming? Confirming is:

- To give approval to
- To make firm or firmer
- To give new assurance of the validity of: remove doubt by authoritative act or indisputable fact

I guess that you could say that our confirmation program at Grace Lutheran covers all of those definitions – and then some. At the end of Confirmation, we definitely give our approval by accepting these youths as adult members of our congregation and give them validity through the confirmation service each October. But by far and away the most definitive description of our program is the second definition listed above. During Confirmation, we try to help students to grow in their faith and to make it firmer – all while having a good time!

How do we do this?

Gone are the days of just the Pastor or education committee teaching our youth and the days of sitting our children at a desk and lecturing for an hour. We have realized how important it is to involve the entire family in our children's Christian education – moms, dads, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles (and even the family pet!). In addition to teaching them the Commandments, Lord's Prayer and Creed, it's also teaching them to live a Christian life by example. They need to use all their senses in their faith journey. We want our young people to see, hear, feel and touch Jesus Christ by living out their Baptism on a daily basis – at church, at school, and especially at home.

How do we get the entire family involved?

We believe that our program allows both the youth and the parents to work as a family during and after the confirmation process. We offer many opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's Christian education.

"Here We Stand"...what does it mean?

The "Here We Stand" Confirmation program is designed to help nurture junior high students, both in Large and Small group settings, as they continue on their walk with Jesus Christ and prepare to publicly affirm their Baptism and beliefs. It is also the goal of the confirmation program to educate students in high energy and fun ways, as well as help them to see how their faith is relevant in their daily life.

This system takes the identity of adolescents, the communication needs of parents, and the educational goals of teachers seriously. It creates a holistic approach to the adolescent faith journey by blurring the lines between traditional youth group and youth education. It blends the best of fellowship created in youth group with Christian service and a "back to the basics" approach to

Christian education. Learning, service, and fellowship become the three legs of the stool for the adolescent faith journey. Classroom gives way to community. Kids have fun.

The Small Group is made up of one adult huddle guide and three to five junior high youth. This huddle guide is a caring person who loves God, likes kids, and is willing to be involved in the Christian growth of these youth. They commit themselves to learning, playing, and promoting Christian service with and among the youth in their charge. Guides are responsible for helping create an atmosphere of personal care, support, and Christian nurture. They are not responsible for teaching the "content" of the lessons, but they do help provide the "context" of care as youth meet in small groups to pray, share "highs and lows", and process the lessons that are presented.

The Pastor/Presenter of the "Here We Stand" junior high ministry program is responsible for creating a learning event to convey the content of each lesson using multiple teaching methods and student participation. For each lesson, the Pastor/Presenter prepares a personal, relevant youth-oriented teaching talk on the topic and supplements the talk by involving small groups in skits, music, and art to help reinforce the theme.

Confirmation Retreat

This year's retreat will be held at Good Earth Village. During this retreat, student will have the opportunity to interact and get to know each other, the huddle guide leaders, and Pastor Dan. There will be bible study, games, worship, food and fellowship. It should be a great time and it is requirement for all students. The date currently scheduled for the retreat April 23-25, 2010.

Wednesday Program Overview

The official learning events happen twice a month, last for 1.5 hours, and looks like a mini youth rally.

These learning events begin with students and huddle guides sharing a meal together. There is strong biblical basis for mealtime fellowship, and this is a time when students can interact with their peers and leaders in a very causal manner. After this, the teaching time will begin with an opening prayer and flow into the presentation based upon the selected topic. This presentation lasts for approximately 30 – 45 minutes. This year we will be focusing on Luther's Small Catechism. Small group time follows as youth break away with their guides to bond the group, process the lesson, and plan/process service and fellowship events. The blessing always wraps up the small group time and is a quiet moment to add a peaceful closure to the event.

Once a month each small group will plan and participate in either a Servant or Fellowship event. The Servant event teaches our youth to build trust, care, and healthy relationships through Christian service. Such events have included cleaning ditches, serving at church dinners, baking cookies for homebound, and cleaning around the church. Fellowship events blend the best aspects of youth group into the educational process and build group identity, trust, care, and healthy relationships between young people and their guides. Such events have included, attending a movie, going bowling, and playing video games.

The remaining Wednesday is set aside to build our learning organization and bond guides together in mission. The term "huddle" best describes this event. We gather to reflect, deal with immediate issues and strategize for the next month's meetings. This meeting is only for the confirmation team

that comprises, the Pastors, the confirmation coordinator and the small group guides/leaders. This meeting is not intended for the youth and we give them the night off.

Sunday Program Overview

The Sunday program is currently under development with the changes being made to the current Sunday school program. At this time, simply know that Sunday school is a required part of the Confirmation program and that attendance is required.

Sermon Notes and Quarterly Papers

Sermon notes are a required part of the confirmation program. Twenty sermon notes per year are expected from each youth for the two years of the program. Sheets can be found in the gathering area along with a drop box for the completed note. Youth may turn in a completed sermon note from another church as long as it is accompanied by the corresponding church bulletin for the service attended. Please know that the notes will be reviewed by Pastor Dan – and he just might ask you a question about what you wrote.

In addition to sermon notes, students will be required to write three two-page papers during the course of the year. This year, they will be reflection papers about some of the biblical stories we will cover in class. More information about the papers will be given at the appropriate times.

Acolyting

All 8th grade youth are expected to participate in the worship service through the Acolyting program. In the fall of their 8th grade year, the youth are given acolyte instructions and a schedule is established. Acolyting is an important part the worship experience. The youth must find a replacement if they cannot acolyte at their scheduled time.

The Lutheran Handbook

The Lutheran Handbook is the essential field guide for all things Lutheran. Confirmands — or anyone hiking the trails of life's adventures and challenges — will want to pack this handy illustrated field guide to Lutheran theology and culture. This enjoyable, easy-to-read, reliable, all-in-one collection helps you understand the essential information about our theology, culture and Lutheran way of life. Each confirmand will be required to purchase a copy of the Handbook at a cost of \$15.00.

Bibles

Bibles are distributed at the beginning of the 7th grade year. A letter will be mailed to each 7th grader with the cost of the bible. The youth are expected to bring these bibles, their Lutheran Handbook, a notebook and pen or pencil to each learning event.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required at all events as spelled out the in the 'Guidelines for Confirmation" document. Attendance at the retreat is also required. If you will be out of town, we do expect you to attend a worship service wherever you may be and turn in a sermon note. A bulletin signed by the Pastor or Sunday School Superintendent of the church you visited is required. Grace Lutheran will make every effort to work with children of blended families in respect to this policy. We do expect you to attend every Wednesday night program and those Sunday morning programs when you are with your parent who is a Grace member. We hope that you will at least worship with your other parent at their place of worship when you are with them. We will be as flexible as needed without losing the integrity of the program.

For an absence to be excused, the confirmation student must call the church office prior to their absence.

Parent Involvement

Confirmation ministry at Grace Lutheran is a cooperative ministry joining youth, their parents, and our church. It is important for youth to have a supportive adult to walk with them through the journey. Therefore, youth will be asked to participate with their parents in many experiences. Parents will be asked to support this ministry by becoming involved in some way as well. There are many opportunities to become involved as a huddle guide, Sunday morning teacher, confirmation coordinator assistant, mentor, etc. We expect each family to volunteer in some aspect of this program.

Mentor Program

The purpose of mentoring in our congregation is to broaden the learning opportunities for our youth and adults. Each youth is expected to find an adult who is not a family member as their mentor. They are also expected meet and attend worship services with their mentor. The mentoring program is held each year during Lent.

Good Earth Village Bible Camp

This program is offered to all children in grades 3-8. It is strongly encouraged that your child attend this camp or another Bible camp at least once prior to their 9th grade confirmation. Registration for Good Earth Village summer camp is always the second week in January each year. Grace Lutheran always reserves one week in early August for our youth to attend Good Earth Village. Fundraising is available in February for all campers. Scholarships are also available.

Service Trips

Mission trips are scheduled each summer for youth in grades 8-12. Registration for these trips begins in September for the trip the following summer. Fundraising events are scheduled from September through April to pay for these trips. Scholarships are also available.

9th Grade Confirmation

As 9th graders, the youth will meet three times on Wednesdays to prepare them for their upcoming Confirmation Interview and Confirmation service. During these three meetings, the youth and their

huddle guides will recap what was learned the previous two years. A mandatory Retreat will be held in the fall of the 9th Grade year, either here at Grace or at an area college.

The youth will also receive instructions and an outline to aid them in writing their Faith Statement paper. This paper will be used during their confirmation interview and an excerpt of this paper will appear in the Confirmation service bulletin.

The Confirmation interview is a ½ hour meeting with one of the Pastors and a member of the education ministry team or the confirmation coordinator. This interview is held the Thursday and Friday over MEA week. During this interview the youth will read their Faith Statement paper and answer a series of questions.

The Confirmation service is held on Reformation Sunday, which is the last Sunday in October. Gowns will be ordered prior to this service and the parents will make a confirmation stole for their child.