

# CONFIRMATION/YOUTH MINISTRY 2015-16

St Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Medford WI

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

## 1. What is confirmation ministry all about?

- 1.1. Confirmation ministry is “a process of formation in faith in youth” (*ELW* p 234).
- 1.2. A ministry of “equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). A safe time and place for immersion in a culture of faith, when young adults get hands-on experience with “tools” of the faith.
- 1.3. Faith is so much more than book learning and head knowledge. It involves all of you: your heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)! In addition to the content of our lessons, we'll experience and practice our faith through variety of activities, exercises, and practices—individually and in relationship with peers.
- 1.4. I see the time of confirmation as a *steeping* in a *culture* of faith, time spent living in a world different from one's daily life. Not unlike being a foreign-exchange student!
- 1.5. Functionally, this is a blended confirmation and youth ministry. In addition to faith formation, our goal is development of leadership among the youth. So that in a couple years, youth will run much of St Paul's confirmation and youth ministries!

## 2. Syllabus.

### 2.1. CoW (Confirmation on Wednesdays).

- 2.1.1. **Topics.** Our focus this year is on Lutheran Catechism and Lutheran Living. (Next year we'll walk through the Bible.)
- 2.1.2. **Guides.** High-school youth and adults serve as small-group guides. Guides are fellow companions on the journey. They are not experts! Think of them as faith friends.
- 2.1.3. We meet **every Wednesday night, from 6:30 to 8:00.** We do *not* meet on those Wednesdays when there is no school, when there is early release that Wednesday, when there is no school the following Thursday, or when school is cancelled that Wednesday due to weather. (If we have several snow-day cancellations, we may need to add additional Wednesdays in May.)
- 2.1.4. *Proposed* Schedule of Lessons and Key Verses:

#### Unit 1. Lutheran Catechism

September 9	Orientation for confirmands and parents
September 16	<i>NO confirmation due to early release</i>
September 23	Reformation (Galatians 3:28) & Reformers (1 Corinthians 3:11)
September 30	Confessions (John 11:27) & Adiaphora (1 Corinthians 10:23)

October 7	Luther's Small Catechism (1 Corinthians 15:3)
<i>October 14</i>	<i>NO confirmation due to no school the following days</i>
October 21	The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2)
October 28	Apostles' Creed, Article 1 (Psalm 8:9)
November 4	Apostles' Creed, Article 2 (Luke 23:46)
November 11	Apostles' Creed, Article 3 (Acts 2:2)
<i>November 18</i>	<i>NO confirmation, PB will be away for continuing education</i>
<i>November 25</i>	<i>NO confirmation due to Thanksgiving break</i>
December 2	The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)
December 9	Holy Baptism (Romans 6:3-4)
December 16	Holy Communion (Luke 22:19)
<i>December 23</i>	<i>NO confirmation due to Christmas break</i>
<i>December 30</i>	<i>NO confirmation due to New Year's break</i>
January 6	Confession & Forgiveness (1 John 1:8-9)
January 13	Daily Prayers (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
<b><u>Unit 2.</u></b>	<b><u>Lutheran Living</u></b>
January 20	Justification by Faith (Romans 3:28)
January 27	The Cross (1 Corinthians 1:18)
February 3	Law & Gospel (Matthew 22:37-39)
<i>February 10</i>	<i>NO confirmation due to Ash Wednesday!</i>
February 17	Saint & Sinner (Romans 7:15)
February 24	The Church (Acts 2:42)
March 2	Freedom of a Christian (Galatians 5:1)
March 9	The Neighbor (Luke 10:36-37)
March 16	Grace (John 1:16)
March 23	The Word (John 1:1)
March 30	Bondage of the Will (Luke 22:42)
April 6	Two Kingdoms (Matthew 3:2)
April 13	Vocation (1 Corinthians 12:11)
April 20	Worship (Psalm 95:2)
April 27	Devil (Hebrews 2:14)
May 4	Doubt (John 20:29)

2.1.5. **Proposed flow of our 90 minutes together:**

6:30	Arrive. Preview the evening with a problem statement.
6:35	Story Time
6:45	Haiku
6:50	<b>Co</b> (Frame the Problem): Icebreaker. Into the Story. Learn the key verse! Get the Conversation Going. First lesson page in <i>Student Handbook</i> . Video.
7:05	<b>Lab</b> (Info-graphic): Middle lesson pages in <i>Student Handbook</i> . Want more?
7:20	<b>Orate</b> (Making Meaning): Last lesson page in <i>Student Handbook</i> . Individual project. Group project. Review with take away.
7:35	High & Lows in small groups.
7:45	Games
7:55	Prayer & Blessing!

2.1.6. Please bring your Bible and *Small Catechism* every Wednesday.

**2.2. Ninth Grade.**

2.2.1. **Confirmation Sunday.** Confirmation Sunday is on the Reformation Sunday of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. Reformation Sunday is always the last Sunday in October. For this year's 8<sup>th</sup> graders, Confirmation Sunday is October 30, 2016. For this year's 7<sup>th</sup> graders, Confirmation Sunday is October 29, 2017.

2.2.2. **Interviews.** One-on-one interviews with the pastor will be scheduled in the summer between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades.

2.2.3. **Peer Ministry Leadership.** Ninth graders will be trained in peer ministry leadership and will serve as small-group guides-in-training for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the September and October of their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year! After Confirmation Sunday, high-school youth are encouraged to continue to serve as small-group guides.

**2.3. Enrichments.**

2.3.1. **WoW (Worship on Wednesdays).** Every Wednesday evening from 6:00 to 6:30. Confirmands are encouraged to participate. This is a handy time to write those sermon notes!

2.3.2. **CHoW (Come Hungry on Wednesdays).** During Lent, we join in with the congregational midweek Lenten meals, 5:00-6:00. Confirmands are encouraged to participate.

- 2.3.3. **Crazy CoWs.** We'll have periodic game and activity afternoons or Saturdays. And a lock-in, probably January 15-16 or 29-30, 2016! Confirmands are encouraged to participate.
- 2.3.4. **WoW (Worship on Wednesdays).** Every Wednesday evening from 6:00 to 6:30. Confirmands are encouraged to participate. This is a handy time to write those sermon notes!
- 2.3.5. **Quake Zone,** Friday-Sunday, April 1-3, 2016, in either Bloomington MN (<http://www.youthencounter.org/event/minneapolis/>) or Wisconsin Dells (<http://www.youthencounter.org/event/wisconsin-dells-3/>). A transformational weekend for grades 7-12 where lives will be renewed and faith will become real! This Quake Zone is for young adults across the Upper Midwest region. Cost is approximately \$190 each in Bloomington or approximately \$200 each in Wisconsin Dells. We need one adult for every four youth attending. We need to register by the middle of January. Confirmands are encouraged to participate.
- 2.3.6. **Canoe-Camping Trip.** We'll go on a weeklong, canoe-camping trip in the BWCA in July 2016. Outfitted and guided by Wilderness Canoe Base ([http://campwapo.org/files/uploads/resource/WCB\\_Canoe\\_Trips\\_Flyer.pdf](http://campwapo.org/files/uploads/resource/WCB_Canoe_Trips_Flyer.pdf)). Cost is approximately \$450. St Paul's pays part of that cost (traditionally St Paul's has paid half); camper scholarships are available. All confirmands are *expected* to go on at least one such summer trip before they are confirmed. All confirmands are encouraged to participate every year.
- 2.4. **Expectations.** All confirmands are *expected* to earn 50 points over the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grades prior to their Confirmation Sunday. You have 25 months in which to earn all 50 points!
- 2.4.1. **Sermon Notes.** All confirmands are *expected* to write 25 sermon notes over the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grades prior to your Confirmation Sunday. Each sermon note is worth one confirmation point.
- 2.4.2. **Mix and Match.** For the remaining 25 points to be earned over the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grades prior to your Confirmation Sunday, you may mix and match as you'd like:
- 2.4.2.1. Six points for each summer trip.
- 2.4.2.2. Three points for each Quake Zone.
- 2.4.2.3. One point for each time serving as Sunday school helper, acolyte, reader, usher, VBS helper, in the Good Friday tableau play, helping with Mobil Food Pantry, helping with Giving Tree, singing in choir, etc.
- 2.4.3. **Missed classes.** If you miss a Wednesday class *for whatever reason*, you'll make it up with two additional points.

3. **ELCA Youth Gathering.** All of this year’s confirmands are encouraged to plan to participate in the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston TX, June 27-July 1, 2018!
  
4. **Some thoughts on “classroom management.”**
  - 4.1. The means we use—as well as the content—communicate the faith we’re sharing. Our methodology needs to communicate God’s love and grace and model how a mature faith is lived. How do we make this a safe place to live into grace?
  - 4.2. Luther wrote the *Small Catechism* for parents to teach the faith to their children. He wrote the *Large Catechism* for pastors to teach parents so they can teach their children.
  - 4.3. This is a three-way street of responsibility, authority, and accountability. The learner has a right to learn. The teacher has a right to teach. And the parents have a right to parent.
  - 4.4. As our reflections on the Third Commandment remind us, we are bound to not want to be in confirmation. And as we reflect on the Fourth Commandment, there is a tension in honoring our parents and others in authority, and at the same time living out the adolescent vocation of growing into an individual separate from, yet connected to, our families.
  - 4.5. Unless we are intentional in our response, we will naturally react and organize around the least mature members of the group.
  - 4.6. “Structure corrals anxiety.” Structure includes ritual and seeing the big picture of the time together right now, and how it fits in with all of confirmation ministry. Structure respects that both the teacher and the learner is responsible for our time together.
  - 4.7. Our approach to confirmation may not be what every confirmand needs at this time. Perhaps an individualized approach (e.g., assigned readings, written journals and reports, and discussion) might be more appropriate. And there is no theological reason for young people to be confirmed in groups. They could be confirmed as they complete their course of instruction.
  - 4.8. When it comes to “classroom management,” my first action would be to have a sit down with the group.
    - 4.8.1. Outline the rights of the three streets. Discuss. Encourage them to take ownership of their behavior/participation, both individually and as a group.
    - 4.8.2. And to create a threshold/metric which, if breached/violated, then we leaders would request a sit-down with the parents of those confirmands who cannot/will not abide by the group norms. This approach respects and plays to the mature members of the class, while calling the immature ones to accountability.