

## **The Role of Parents**

Parents are the single most important role models in a child's life. We are to be faith-transmitters to our children. The church's task is to equip parents to be the best transmitters possible. Children learn best when they learn with their parents.

## **Confirmation, Parents and Youth**

We seek to make the confirmation program an extension of the baptismal service and the pledge we made as parents. Our confirmation program involves parents and youth during Grades Five through Ten. This includes retreats, Bible camp, instruction by members of the congregation and pastors, and a final year bringing an adult mentor together with a student to share personal faith stories.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **When does Confirmation begin?**

Confirmation is a ministry which begins with baptism and includes a youth's entire relationship with the church – worship, Sunday School, Bible School, youth activities, Bible camp, and specialized instruction with parents and pastors. Formal instruction begins at Grade Five.

### **How long does Confirmation ministry last?**

Confirmation is a life-long event. However, there are some 'bench marks' along the way that mark certain events. Affirmation of Baptism (another term for "Confirmation") Sunday takes place in the fall of the Tenth Grade year.

### **What is the basic course of study?**

In confirmation, special emphasis is given to the Bible, Martin Luther's Small Catechism, the Lutheran Church, worship, faith, and how all these relate to God's world.

### **How do we view Confirmation requirements?**

The key word in confirmation is 'opportunity,' not requirement. What St. John's Lutheran provides is an educational opportunity for faith-in-life development. The **Participation** and **Synopsis** sections list the components of the program in more detail.

### **What if a student enters the program late?**

Each student is asked to enroll with their own grade. Should they enter mid-term, an individualized plan will be developed in cooperation with the parent(s), a lay instructor, the pastor, and student.

### **When is First Communion?**

There is no age restriction for receiving Holy Communion at St. John's. Family workshops will be offered regularly throughout the year for parents and children to receive specific instruction in this sacrament.

## **Faith Development**

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God.”* (Ephesians 2:8)

St. Paul wrote that faith comes from hearing the Word, the message of God’s love in Jesus Christ. We tell the story of God’s love in Jesus Christ so that faith can grow and take root in our lives.

The good news of Christ is communicated in many ways in the life of St. John’s, in the daily lives of its members and through the confirmation program.

Here are some of the ways the confirmation program nurtures the development of faith: ♦ worship attendance ♦ Sunday School ♦ Vacation Bible School ♦ Bible stories ♦ songs ♦ study of Luther’s Small Catechism ♦ Small Group Work.

From the beginning of Fifth Grade until the fall of Tenth Grade, confirmands explore the meaning of Christian faith in classes, small groups, and retreats.

In the fall of the Tenth Grade each confirmand will prepare a statement of faith. Mentors and pastors will assist them in the development and expression of this statement.

## **Faith in Action**

There are many ways our young people are encouraged to act out their faith.

The confirmation program at St. John’s includes regular involvement in service projects. Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Grade students may participate in activities such as: ushering, helping in the nursery, serving at church suppers, visiting shut-ins, etc. The Youth Program also provides students with opportunities to serve their congregation, community and world.

## **Mentor Program**

In the fall of the Ninth Grade, each confirmand in cooperation with parents and pastors will select a mentor (a trained adult member of St. John’s who is not a relative). The mentor is not a substitute for the parent, but is an additional adult to whom the confirmand will relate during the last year of the confirmation program. They work through a series of packets prepared by our Youth Director and worship together during Lent. Specific guidelines for mentoring will be available when the confirmand enters that phase of the program.

## **Affirmation of Baptism**

*“Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in Holy Baptism: to live among God’s faithful people, to hear his Word and share in his supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?”* (Service of Affirmation of Baptism, *Lutheran Book of Worship* pg. 201)

In October of Tenth Grade, confirmands who are ready to do so are confirmed in an Affirmation of Baptism service before the congregation. Affirmation of Baptism is the confirmand’s decision but will emerge out of interaction with parents, mentors and the pastoral staff.

## Beginnings

Confirmation is an educational and pastoral ministry of our church designed to help all baptized members grow in their faith. Confirmation begins at baptism and lasts a lifetime. Public affirmation of baptism in the rite of confirmation marks the entry of the confirmand into full voting membership in the congregation.

The story is told of a young architect who wished to become famous for her building designs. She had attended the finest academies. She had studied hard. She was the best in her field. Yet, as often as she received compliments for her work, she was not completely satisfied.

One afternoon she visited with one of the great builders of the world. The great builder knew of her work. She quizzed the great builder about satisfaction.

After a lengthy pause the great builder replied, "Consider the porch; it's a simple structure. But before we consider how to build it we need to think about the supporting beams. But wait... before we even think about the beams we need to consider the foundation."

The young architect replied, "Why the foundation, which takes us way back to the basics?" To which the great builder replied, "**Dear friend, the strength and beauty of the structure is only as good as the foundation.**"

A foundation of monumental strength is built on the occasion of baptism. On the day of baptism, certain promises are made. Confirmation Ministry is designed so that those promises can be fulfilled.

**Confirmation Ministry at St. John's Lutheran Church has three goals:**

- 1. To establish an ongoing relationship with confirmation participants.**
- 2. To establish and encourage relationships with the parents of our confirmation students.**
- 3. To emphasize that all aspects of our teaching and learning are dominated by the grace of God which reflects his love for us.**

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## **Confirmation Program**

### **Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Grades**

Each grade will meet for a separate five-week block in both the spring and fall, for a total of ten weeks. The Old and New Testaments and the Ten Commandments will be covered during this time.

Each year 15 worship response forms will be completed as part of worship participation.

During Wednesday evenings in Lent, with their families students are asked to attend worship, assist in serving the suppers, help with ushering, and participate in any planned activities before each service.

Sunday School is offered for each of these grades. They are strongly encouraged to take part in classes from September through May.

The summer after Grade Seven, confirmands are asked to attend a week-long summer session at a Lutheran Bible Camp.

### **Eighth Grade**

A six-week (mid-week) class focused on prayer.

Regular worship attendance and participation are expected.

Sunday School is an integral part of the confirmation program.

### **Ninth Grade**

Students identify a mentor, with whom they will meet monthly and during the Wednesdays of Lent.

Regular worship attendance and participation are expected.

Sunday School is an integral part of the confirmation program.

### **Tenth Grade**

Fall retreat, where the “Faith Expression” statement is prepared.

Affirmation of Baptism will be held on Reformation Sunday in October.

## **Participation**

Both students and parents are encouraged to be very involved in the confirmation program at St. John’s. Faith-in-life is an active process.

### **Opportunities for confirmand involvement include:**

Sunday School

Middle School Choir

Nursery Aide

Youth Group

Acolyting (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, & 7<sup>th</sup>)

Vacation Bible School teacher or assistant

Lector or Usher at Sunday morning Worship

Parents have many opportunities at St. John’s to become involved and active with our children. Below we list a few possibilities. We encourage and welcome everyone to participate. **Parental involvement options:**

Wednesday skit leader

Wednesday music leader or musician

Sunday School teacher or assistant

Retreat or Special Events Helper

Vacation Bible School teacher or assistant

Small Group Leader

Confirmation Ministry Member

Individual Grade Coordinator

Worship Notes: collection and distribution

Worship Notes: record keeper

Wednesday Lenten Soup Suppers

## Synopsis

5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Old & New Testaments		10 Wednesdays	
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Ten Commandments	10 Wednesdays		Bible Camp
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Lord's Prayer	6 Wednesdays		1 retreat
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Mentor Program			
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade Faith Expressions	1 retreat		Affirmation of Baptism in October

# Growing in GOD'S Family

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