



ZION LUTHERAN

CONFIRMATION HANDBOOK: 2023-24

Introduction

Welcome to Confirmation! We're so excited to serve you and your family as you begin a new journey in your faith development. The purpose of this handbook is to clearly define Zion Lutheran's Confirmation process and better prepare you for the 2-3 years ahead. Confirmation at Zion Lutheran exists to build connections between God's Word, His promises and what it means for our daily lives, while at the same time learning about what a relationship with our Savior, Jesus Christ, truly looks like.

For our students, this means that our desire is to equip them to live a Christ-centered life in whatever role/profession *God has blessed them to live*. We want our youth to feel a part of the mission of Zion right now; they have a purpose in the Body of Christ and God has equipped them to partner with Him in building His Kingdom.

For our parents, we hope to equip you as ambassadors for Christ in your families. God has placed you in your child's life to bring them to know and trust Jesus. *That is your number one role and purpose*. Our desire is to walk along side of you, give you tools, and support you in this calling as parent/guardians.

Confirmation is not necessary for salvation; it is not a Christian stamp on life's to-do list that we all need to get. Instead, it is an affirmation of your Baptism, a promise to continue living in and receiving God's promises (*Hear the Word of God, share in the Lord's Supper, and proclaim the Good News of the Gospel*).

Objectives

It is our desire that every confirmand will...

- engage and participate in the community of Zion Lutheran.
- gain a greater understanding of the Word of God and trust and believe that it is the authority in which we live our lives.
- gain knowledge of the teachings of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, specifically what is found in Luther's Small Catechism.
- be equipped to defend their faith in Jesus and be able to give reasons as to why they trust Him as their personal Savior.
- understand their place in the body of Christ and the Christian church.

- continue their faith journey as an active member of the body of Christ and the Christian church.
- understand that confirmation model is an extension of worship and our youth program, not a replacement for it.

What does the Confirmation Process Look Like?

- Students may begin confirmation beginning in their 8th grade year.
- There is no set amount of time for this process as our format offers a flexible approach that allows students to advance at their own pace, either a traditional pace (3 years), faster, or slower if needed.
- Confirmation consists of nine units/courses as well as a few other additional requirements.
- Parents are required to attend all parent meetings, including the Fall Parent Orientation and any other meetings the ministry staff deem necessary.

Parent Expectations

As stated earlier, our goal is to equip you as ambassadors for Christ in your families. Matthew 28:19 says, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." **Your number one priority in this life is to disciple your kids.** God has entrusted you with these children and given you the opportunity to model a Christ-centered life and to point them to God's promises and the love and the grace that He offers us. What an honor to participate in the great commission by pouring the hope of Jesus into your children!

Parents fill the most important role in the faith development of their children. Research shows that the greatest adult influence in a child's faith life is their parents, and it's not even close. Confirmation is not to replace you but to assist and equip you in your God-given role as the spiritual instructor for your child. If at any time you do not feel able to answer questions for your students or help them through the process, don't be frustrated. In fact, you should expect good and challenging discussions with your children! There may even be questions that you may not be able to answer, and that is okay! Always feel free to contact any of Zion's staff and we would love to assist you.

Parents/guardians are always invited to attend any of your child's confirmation classes with them. In fact, we encourage it! Although for many of the classes this is optional, **there are five courses (indicated by a star on the calendar) in which at least one parent/guardian attendance is required.** If you are unable to commit to the time that is given, you need to find a faithful adult/mentor that can fill this role for your child.

Unit Registration

All nine units will be offered twice throughout the year at various times and days to allow confirmands to advance at their own pace and build around their schedule. A master calendar of when units are offered is provided so that families may plan which courses need to be taken throughout the year. Confirmands must register in advance for the units they wish to take but **space will be limited to no more than 10 confirmands at a time. We will also have a minimum of 2 students registered for any course.** We will be opening up these classes to adults in our congregation to fill any open spots that we have in the classes. **All nine units must be completed to participate in the Rite of Confirmation (Confirmation Sunday).**

How do I register my child for a course?

- Put the registration form in the Confirmation mailbox in the office wing
- Mail the registration form to the church office (1400 S. Duluth Ave. 57105)

The order in which a student takes the units will vary by individual, but the following guidelines must be followed:

- **What Is the Bible** and **Being Lutheran** should be one of the first units to complete.
- The 200 courses (*blue*) can be taken in any order.
- The 300 courses (*red*) cannot be taken until students are 10th graders *or* in the winter/spring semester of their 9th grade year.
- **Being a Disciple of Jesus** should be taken as one of the final courses.
- Students can be working on a maximum of two units at one time.
- *If a course works for you NOW...take it NOW.* Don't assume it will work later

Is there an order you recommend my child taking the courses?

Zion staff recommends the following order to aid in your child's learning process:

1. What Is the Bible?
2. Being Lutheran
3. Lord's Prayer or the Ten Commandments, or Apostle's Creed
4. Means of Grace
5. Creation and Evolution
6. What is Apologetics?
7. Being a Disciple of Jesus

Email reminders are sent to keep you aware of units being offered and any schedule changes.

Students and Parents are largely responsible for making sure units are completed and assignments are finished and turned in. However, unit instructors will give notice of any missing work and confirmation of when a unit is completed.

What materials should they bring to each class?

The Following Items are Required for Each Course:

- Bible
- Confirmation Binder
- Course handouts
- Paper for taking notes: *Regular lined paper or a notebook within their binder is a great tool for writing down notes, drawing pictures, writing questions, etc.*
- Luther's Small Catechism: *100 and 200 courses*

Unit Process

The units consist of the 6 chief parts of Martin Luther's Catechism plus units that we feel help integrate our students into active members of their Christian faith and the life of the Body of Christ including their ability to understand why they are Christians and believe what they believe.

Each unit will consist of the following:

- 3-4 classes taught by their instructor
- Special assignment to express understanding of material.
 - Students will receive detailed instructions on how to complete each assignment.
 - Once they've completed their assignment they can turn into their teacher or the Confirmation mailbox in the office wing.
- **Required Worship Notes**
 - *3 Worship notes/course*
- **Regular participation in Worship, Sunday School, and Youth**
- Any required memory work included in each course
- Recommended Ministry involvement
- Regular participation in community building opportunities
- Unit Instructors will review course work that pertains to their unit.
- Worship Notes will be reviewed by the course instructor and/or Director of Youth.
- **All unit requirements should be completed and turned in before or at time of the final class. If a take home test is given, students will have 1 week to complete and hand-in. If there is still missing work after a week has passed, the student will need to retake the class in order to receive credit.**

Unit Attendance

Confirmands must attend all instructional time for units they register to take. **If you know you cannot attend all the unit classes, sign up to take the unit at a later time.** If a confirmand is sick and misses class it must be made up. Contact the Director of Youth on how this will be done. We do not video record or offer private instruction of units except for extreme circumstances.

Where Do I Hand in the Required Work? Worship Notes?

- All completed work should be placed in the Confirmation mailbox located near the office mailboxes.
- If a confirmand does not complete the requirements, they will receive no credit for the unit and have to retake it.
- If there are circumstances that cause your child to miss part or all of a registered unit, please communicate with the instructor and Director of Youth. Our goal is to work with families to continue the faith development of all our students.

****If your child has special learning needs, please set up a meeting with Jacob, the Director of Youth so we can plan to meet their individual needs.**

Worship and Sunday School Participation

Since confirmation ministry is one of many steps on the journey to spiritual maturity, it is important that habits of mature followers of Jesus be nurtured during the time students are involved in Confirmation. By building these habits in the process, we help young people grow in knowing and practicing God-pleasing spiritual disciples. We believe that we need God's nourishment through the Word and Sacraments in order to face life's daily challenges and so we highly encourage family weekly participation in Worship, Sunday School and youth activities.

Worship notes are designed to see how the student is able to apply what they are hearing and experiencing during worship into daily life and also what to be listening for during the service, including God's Word and the sermon. Worship notes are located in your binders with extras available in the back of the sanctuary.

Please notify the Director of Youth if there are special circumstances that would affect Worship and Bible class participation (*example: non-traditional families, etc.*), so we can work with your special circumstances on an individual basis. If there is a Sunday where you will be gone, don't forget that we offer a live-stream service on *YouTube Live* with our sermons also available to download as a podcast.

Final Project: Spiritual Gifts

Students who are on their way to completing all required units will begin work on their final project. To preface the final project, all students will need to attend the *Being a Disciple of Jesus* course. The purpose of the project is for the student to participate in ministry (*servicing the Kingdom*) by using their spiritual gift. It should be something they enjoy and are excited to do.

Students must choose a project where they are actively participating in ministry.

Examples include:

1. An art piece that represents their faith or contributes to some kind of ministry (church or community)
2. A public presentation like leading Bible Study or sharing about an experience
3. A service of some kind where they are working with a local organization
4. Supporting an existing ministry with leadership or service, helping to train other volunteers or groups for service, etc.

The project opportunities are meant to be broad so that the student can choose a project that fits their personal giftedness. We want to celebrate the unique gifts God has given them.

Students will be required to decorate a tri-fold that shares the following:

- What is my project? Why did I choose it?
- What did I learn about myself and serving in ministry?
- What did this project do for ministry and building God's Kingdom?

Rite of Confirmation

After completing all the requirements of confirmation and with the recommendation of the Ministry Team, confirmands will be invited to participate in the Rite of Confirmation on Confirmation Sunday, either in December or May. The Rite of Confirmation involves a confirmand's public profession of their faith and desire to promise to continue receiving God's gifts. Prior to the Rite, students will complete their final Confirmation Project, write a faith statement, and select their Confirmation verse. To celebrate this with your family, the church offers a *Confirmation Dinner* for our confirmands and families the night before Confirmation Sunday.

Instructors Contact Information

Director of Youth, Jacob Shoup

Email: jshoup@zionlutheransf.com

Phone: 605-295-0141

Pastor Greg Lehr

Email: glehr@zionlutheransf.com

Phone: 605-359-6475

Director of Children's Ministry, Chezarae Shoup

Email: chezshoup@zionlutheransf.com

Phone: 605-941-7469

Pastor John Farden

Email: jwfarden@gmail.com

Phone: 605-228-7799

Terry Lafrentz

Email: etlafrentz@yahoo.com

Phone: 605-595-5821



"I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

Ephesians 3:16-19