

**First Lutheran Church  
Papillion, Nebraska**



**Confirmation Handbook**

**2020-2021**

**6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

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## What is Confirmation?

*Confirmation is a public rite of the church preceded by a period of instruction in which baptized Christians learn about the confession, life and mission of the Christian Church. (Question 14 in Small Catechism, pg. 51)*

**Faith Inkubators Head to the Heart (H2H)** is a three-year curriculum designed to blend education, service, and fellowship. It creates a holistic approach to the adolescent faith journey by blending the lines between traditional youth group, youth education, and family involvement. It combines the best of fellowship created in youth group with a “back to the basics” approach to Christian education. All of this is tied together with faith dialog in the home.

From a “church program” standpoint, H2H is designed to retain both the information and the youth. It strives to build group identity while communicating the content of each theme in a way young people will remember for life.

Each week is built around a Theme Event. All grade levels (6-8) come together for the Opening and Presentation of the topic by the pastors/DCE. Following this interactive whole-group immersion in the topic, small groups break away for care, sharing, prayer, discussion of the topic, and memory work. Small groups are comprised of adult guides/mentors and five to eight students. Guides/mentors sit with their small groups during the large group presentation to preempt

discipline problems and to experience the topics alongside the youth.

Equipping parents to be faith mentors is an important aspect of H2H. Deuteronomy 6 clearly charges parents to be the primary mentors in the faith and to “teach God’s Word diligently to your children...”. Reformation leaders also made it clear that the head of the household is the bishop of the small church (the home). In H2H, we also head to the home. In our model, a good portion of youth ministry is done in the youth’s home. Church is simply the place that gets the family started.

### **Confirmation Program Overview**

- Wednesday Evening Classes
  - Large Group Time
  - Small Group Time
- Study of God’s Word and placing Scripture in the heart and mind
  - Wednesday Night Lessons
  - Sunday School
  - Memory Work
- Fellowship Events
  - Monthly Events
  - Retreats
- Opportunities to serve the church and community
  - Acolyte for Worship Services
  - Orphan Grain Train Kits
  - Etc.

- Faith-oriented conversations and prayers with peers, adults, and family members
  - Small Group Time
  - Home Huddles (Family Devotions)
  - Faith Sponsors (8<sup>th</sup> Grade)

### **Confirmation Student Expectations:**

At a child's Baptism, parents and sponsors promise to nurture and guide the child in the teachings of the Lord. Through exposure to the Gospel message, the child grows in stature and spirit. The confirmation process is an opportunity for adolescents to affirm the vows that were spoken for them at Baptism. It is also an opportunity to renounce the devil and embrace the teachings of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The confirmands will be asked to publicly proclaim their faith prior to Confirmation Sunday in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. The following expectations are an effort to help students build faith-nurturing habits that will hopefully continue after Confirmation. Mature Christians regularly attend worship, know the Scriptures, serve their neighbors, etc. We ask that students in Confirmation do the same as they continue to mature in their faith lives.

1. **Class Attendance:** Attend class faithfully and participate actively in both Large Group Class and Small Group Time.
2. **Memory Work:** Complete memory work assignments which includes verbal recitation. At least 80% is expected overall for memory work.

3. **Worship Attendance:** Regular worship is expected for students and their families. At least 50% is expected from September - April and encouraged throughout the year.
4. **Sunday School Attendance:** Attend Sunday School faithfully as an opportunity to study God's Word. At least 50% is expected from September - April and encouraged throughout the year.
5. **Serve in the Church:** As a prime means of serving in the church, students will acolyte throughout the year as assigned. Students are encouraged to serve in additional ways such as helping with Vacation Bible School, Reading, Greeting, or Ushering during Worship Services, etc.
6. **Serve in the Community:** In addition to serving in the church, students are asked to serve the community in at least two ways during the year. Opportunities will be available both in the Spring and Fall.
7. **Fellowship with Believers:** Connect with peers and fellow believers via various fellowship events offered throughout the year. In addition, attendance at the Fall Confirmation Retreat is mandatory for all students and the Spring 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Retreat is required for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.
8. **Faith Partners – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade ONLY:** Students will partner with a congregational sponsor and join in faith conversations in the Fall and Spring as a part of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade project.

## **Parent Expectations:**

We believe that God has given the primary responsibility for your child's spiritual growth to you, the parents (Deut. 6:4-9). You have your children many hours; we are privileged to have them in our care only a few each week. We are committed to helping you grow in your abilities to nurture your child's spiritual life at home. We expect that parents:

1. **Foster Faith Development:** Take an active role in positively influencing the spiritual growth of your child.
2. **Worship together** as a family regularly and talk about what you learned or experienced.
3. **Encourage and learn Scripture passages alongside your child.** Assist your child as he/she speak verses from memory. Ask, "What does this verse mean to you?" and sign off on the weekly Memory Work Notecard.
4. **Nourish my child's faith** through the weekly Home Huddle Time and faith-oriented conversations. At least 50% of these sheets need to be completed and returned throughout the year.
5. **Open, view and monitor your child's online progress update regularly.** The link to your child's spreadsheet is sent out via email in October. Continue to use this link throughout the year to view student reports.
6. **Attend at least one Parent Night during the year.** While parents are welcome to attend any class session, there will be intentional Parent Nights that seek to actively include parents into the learning experience alongside their child.

## **Google Sheets for Report Tracking**

As a means of helping students and families establish mature Christian habits, the church keeps track of student involvement in accordance to the listed expectations. Class attendance, Memory Work points, Worship attendance, Sunday School attendance, Home Huddle completion, and Community Service are all tracked and recorded. This year we will be using Google Sheets as our tool for student progress reporting.

Each week at the beginning of class, students will record their class attendance, worship attendance, Sunday School attendance, and Home Huddle completion on their Small Group folder. Later in the evening, volunteers will record student memory work points.

The data collected will then be transferred to a Google Sheet for each student. This spreadsheet will be used to track confirmation student expectations for your student. In October, parents will be emailed a link to their child's spreadsheet. Please check this often to make sure our records and your records match. If there are any inconsistencies or questions, please contact Brady.

## **Memory Work**

### **WHY MEMORIZE BIBLE VERSES?**

*"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly"*

*– Colossians 3:16*

The Bible is one of the greatest gifts God has given us. Contained in its pages are history, prophecies, promises, and teachings that reveal our need for God, His love for us, and His plan for us to both receive His blessings and become a blessing to others. Our memory work helps students commit to their minds and hearts messages, promises, and instructions that become sources of joy, hope, and inspiration throughout our lives, and truths to share with others.

So, why memorize? Scripture helps us...

- Overcome temptation (see Psalm 119:11)
- Know God's will for our lives (see Psalm 119:105)
- Thrive during times of trial (see Jeremiah 15:16)
- Encourage fellow believers (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
- Witness to nonbelievers (1 Peter 3:15)

Also,

- Truths of Scripture are internalized, so that they are with us wherever we go.
- Studying of God's Word **always** has a result. His Spirit works through the words of the Bible.
- Memorizing Bible verses strengthens "memory muscle", improving a learning skill that has life-long benefits.

During Small Group Time, students will be asked to verbally recite the memory work due for that week. Memory Work assignments either come from Scripture of the Small Catechism and will directly connect to the

lesson. Students are expected to complete at least 80% of Memory Work throughout the year.

### **Community Service**

God calls us to love and serve our neighbors, both near and far (Matthew 22:39). In an effort to encourage students to live a life of service, students are required to participate in a minimum of two community projects throughout the school year. Community Service opportunities are available throughout the year, and more information can be found on the church website. For each project, the student must fill out a section on the Completion Form and a parent must then sign for each project. Many projects can (and should!) be done as a family. All projects must be completed and forms turned in no later than **Wednesday, April 7, 2021.**

### **Home Huddle: Family Devotions**

Home Huddles are meant to be an opportunity for families to talk about the faith together. Scripture and multiple research studies affirm that parents and grandparents are the #1 faith role models in a child's life. We know life is busy, but we still encourage families to take time to grow in faith together. The Home Huddles will assist students/families in preparing for the upcoming lesson and memory work.

Complete/talk through the 'Faith 5' (Share, Read, Talk, Pray, Bless) on each Home Huddle Sheet.

Blank Home Huddle forms will be distributed at the end of each class. Completed and signed sheets are then due at the beginning of the next class. Digital copies will be emailed and can be found on the church website.

Faith conversations at home support long-term faith development in students. Therefore, at least 50% of weekly Home Huddles must be completed throughout the year.

### **Fellowship Opportunities**

Gathering and connecting with fellow believers is an important aspect of integrating into the life of the church. Typically, once a month there will be a chance for students to gather together for fun and fellowship. A few larger events include the Fall Confirmation Retreat and the Nebraska District Middle School Gathering.

### **What to Bring** on Wednesday Nights:

- Your Bible (ESV Version)
- Your Small Catechism (2017 Edition)
- A Highlighter
- A Pen
- Signed and Completed Home Huddle Sheet

## **Advent/Lent Class Schedule**

During the seasons of Advent and Lent, Confirmation class will take place in the Sanctuary instead of the Fellowship Hall. These lessons will be intergenerational and include Confirmation, High School Youth, and adults.

During these seasons, only the large group lesson will transpire on Wednesday evenings. Since there will be no Small Group Time, there will also be no Memory Work on those nights.

## **Keeping in Touch: Communication**

We will regularly send emails and text messages with reminders and other information. Please be sure that your contact information is up to date on the registration form.

This year, we will be using Remind, a free service that sends messages and reminders as text messages or push notifications. To sign up for this service, simply text the class code **@flcon20** to **81010**. Include the “@” symbol too! Then, reply to the message from Remind with your first and last name and you will be added to the class list. Be sure to sign up as this service will be used to send out regular reminders and additional details regarding Confirmation happenings.

The church website (<https://firstlutheran.360unite.com/confirmation>) contains an entire page devoted to Confirmation Ministry. Orientation documents, details

on upcoming events, Home Huddle sheets, and other pertinent information can be found there.

## **COVID-19 Policies**

As our world continues to face the coronavirus pandemic, some additional policies will be in place. However, the goal is to maintain regular ministry programs as much as possible while adding in necessary precautions.

### **General Policies:**

- **Encourage physical/social distancing when possible**
- **Require masks/face coverings for all students over the age of 2, volunteers, parents in the building, and teachers**
- **Necessitate a signed release form for each minor participant prior to attending ministry events**
- **Urge any student or volunteer who is not feeling well or displaying any symptoms to stay home**
- **Increase cleaning and sanitation procedures. Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes will be available throughout the building**
- **Limit activities involving physical contact and sharing of supplies/objects**

- **Minimize touching between students (no hand-holding during prayers, etc.)**
- **Clean high-touch areas frequently**
- **Establish specific entrance/exit doorways for the building**
- **Consider staggered entrance/exit times**
- **Use visual and verbal reminders to practice good hygiene**
- **Affirm students, parents, and leaders that we are making every effort to care for each other**

Confirmation Specific Policies:

- Physical/social distancing rules will be in place; however, since distancing will not always be possible, masks/face coverings will be required to be worn by students, small group leaders, and volunteers.
- Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes will be available in each small group room and the Fellowship Hall and their use, along with handwashing, will be encouraged.
- Students, small group guides, and parents will enter the Fellowship Hall through the southwest door and exit out the northwest door to establish traffic flow. (Doors will be marked).
- Seating in the Fellowship Hall will be altered to enable all students to face the same direction and encourage spacing between groups of students.

- Acolytes will resume their candle lighting duties during worship services beginning in October. Students will be placed on the regular acolyte schedule following Confirmation Orientation (9/26).
- Students will be encouraged to bring their own Bible, Small Catechism, and water bottle to events. Drinking fountains in the building will be turned off.
- Regular opportunities to gather for fellowship and service will continue to be made available following these guidelines (when applicable).

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We recognize that not all families will feel comfortable returning to in-person ministry events at this time. Though we look forward to when they will join us face-to-face again, we are providing a few options to stay connected and involved from home. Please note that these alternatives are not meant to replace or substitute in-person activities.

**Confirmation** – Wednesday night lessons will be recorded and posted on the church website on Thursdays with the lesson PowerPoint for students to follow along. Students can still engage with Home Huddles and worship via the Livestream service.

*Please sign-up for the Remote Confirmation Program by emailing Brady by **September 1<sup>st</sup>**.*

For any Confirmation questions or concerns, please  
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