

Jr. Confirmation at St. Peter Lutheran Church, Huntington, IN

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

Introduction and Rationale:

In Jesus’ commission to the church, making disciples is accomplished by these two closely related activities: we baptize and teach; we teach and baptize.

As the world is brought ever closer to its consummation, Jesus promises that there will be strong persecution of the church and a great falling away from faith (Matthew 24) as Satan is allowed greater freedom upon the earth (Revelation 20).

How can we best prepare our families to withstand the temptation to fall away from the Christian faith in the face of increasing pressure to drift away from Christ? As the spiritual warfare increases and Christians in American are facing a spiritual climate we have never before experienced, we continue to diligently make disciples as we have in previous generations: we baptize; we teach.

This picture/reality of spiritual warfare is helpful as we consider “how to do” Confirmation. In earthly armies, all soldiers must undergo training before they are deployed. There is basic training, and then there is more intense, specialized training. In wartime, that basic training may even be shortened to the bare essentials in the expectation that in-the-field experience will finish the training. Short or basic training may be sufficient for new soldiers; on the other hand, in the face of an experienced and savage enemy, new soldiers with such training may also be quickly overwhelmed.

As Christians, we face a vicious and well-experienced enemy (Satan) who hates us with every fiber of his being. The longer we are Christians, the more accustomed we are to his tactics and schemes, and the harder it is for Satan to overcome us. Newly-born and newly-trained Christians, however, are soft targets for our enemy: if he can overwhelm and destroy their faith before deep roots have been set, his goal is much more easily accomplished.

This is what drives our understanding of Jr. Confirmation: it is preparing the young Christian for intense spiritual battles – some of which weren’t even an issue in the 1950s, 70s, or 90s. As the warfare intensifies, so must our training so that our families are not lost; so that we can see our children and grandchildren in heaven. Because of that, confirmation today may not look like the jr. confirmation which you experienced. Different congregations approach this time of teaching and faith-formation in different ways: some take the “shortened-with-bare-essentials” approach; others take a longer approach which takes years (this is often done in schools).

Course Description:

Here at St. Peter under Pastor Lorenz, we take a ‘middle approach’ that is longer than the traditional “2-year program” but less intense than what is found in a parochial school. The components of this 3-year Jr. Confirmation class are as follows:

<p>Year 1: Introduction to Christianity Basics</p> <p>Course Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lutheranism 101 for Kids• The Small Catechism <p>Course Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the Bible• Introduction to the Small Catechism• Introduction to the Hymnal <p>Year 2: The Small Catechism, Part 1</p> <p>Course Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applying Luther’s Catechism• The Small Catechism <p>Course Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-depth teaching on the 10 Commandments• In-depth teaching on the Apostle’s Creed <p>Year 3: The Small Catechism, Part 2</p> <p>Course Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applying Luther’s Catechism• The Small Catechism <p>Course Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-depth teaching on the Lord’s Prayer• In-depth teaching on Holy Baptism• In-depth teaching on Confession & Absolution• In-depth teaching on Holy Communion	
--	--

Course Requirements:

<p>(1) Church Attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of simple sermon notes required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rationale: Training young Christians how to listen and think about sermons 	<p>Component Goal: To foster the habit of life-long faith formation and church attendance, even after the completion of the confirmation class</p>
<p>(2) Sunday School Attendance</p>	<p>Component Goal: To foster the habit of life-long devotion, faith formation, and education, even after the completion of the confirmation class</p>
<p>(3) Memory Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available with whole year (12 month) or school year (9 month) due dates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rationale: The same memory work is completed throughout the year. Selecting the 12 month scheduling reduces the weekly workload 	<p>Component Goal: To learn and commit to memory important parts of the Bible and the Small Catechism</p>
<p>(4) Homework Lessons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be completed prior to -or- concurrently with enrollment in confirmation class. Completed online. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rationale: Completion prior to confirmation class will reduce the weekly workload • Because homework is completed online, if completed prior to enrollment in confirmation class, a brief examination will need to be completed with pastor to check for understanding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rationale: The brief examination ensures that it is the student who has completed the homework lessons 	<p>Component Goal: To learn the important themes and stories of the Bible</p>
<p>(5) Final Oral Examination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All confirmation class requirements (attendance, memory work, homework) must be met prior to this final examination. • Study guides with the exact questions for this examination will be provided to the students for their preparation. Completion of the study guide is not required, but is beneficial 	<p>Component Goal: To have the student publicly profess before the congregation their Christian faith.</p>

Miscellanea:

- 1) **Abilities.** We understand that memory & homework may be exceptionally difficult for some students and that others may have mental disabilities. This is all taken under consideration. The key for successful completion of jr. confirmation is effort & parental support: the student must show that they have completed each component of the class to the best of their ability. Parents must encourage their children and support the faith-formation that is taking place. For this reason, St. Peter has required parents to attend classes with their children. As parents/guardians, your support is necessary. If you don't see these components as necessary for your child, then they won't either, and they won't be in church after confirmation. God keep us from that!
- 2) **Recommended Age Level.** Because this is a 3-year class, students may be enrolled in the 5th or 6th grade. If a parent wants their child enrolled at a younger age, this may be permitted on a case-by-case basis based on the ability and maturity of the child.
- 3) **Discouraged Age Levels.**
 - Because of the busy schedules high-school students often experience; and
 - Because such school involvement demands great time commitment that often interferes with church involvement and confirmation class requirements; and
 - Because faith formation is needed early in a child's life to aid them as they confront many temptations presented in high school; thereforeEnrolling your child in confirmation class in 7th or 8th grade is not recommended. Parents will need to be in contact with Pastor Lorenz and the elders to make them aware of their plan to get their children confirmed and brought to the Lord's Supper.
- 4) **Recognition.** Our requirements are intimidating. Our pastor does his best to teach to the level of each student. But confirmation requires commitment. As you examine each component of the class, we hope you see how each part of the class is necessary for a Christian's life and how it is designed to keep your child in Christ, in church, and in religious instruction & faith formation even after the confirmation course is completed. What we desire for our confirmation students is what we desire for all Christians.