

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Milaca MN

Confirmation Packet for Parents

What IS Confirmation?

Confirmation at St. Paul's is a 2- or 3-year intensive educational immersion where 7th, and 8th (and 9th) graders are equipped with everything they need to live the Christian life and walk in the righteousness and holiness of Christ Jesus.

In Matthew 28, our Lord commands us to "make disciples" by baptizing and teaching. In orthodox Christianity, the first part of this process of disciple making is baptism. We baptize our infants and young children because our Lord promises salvation and eternal life in baptism.

But the Christian faith does not stop with baptism. We are also commanded to "teach everything" Jesus has commanded us. Fundamentally, Christianity is a teaching faith. We can simply read through the Epistles of Paul to see the high emphasis placed on continued, faithful teaching of God's Word to young and old alike. A person's faith grows when he is exposed to and engages with Jesus' teaching and life.

Upon satisfactory completion of the confirmation course, the Rite of Confirmation is celebrated, typically in the Spring or at Reformation, and the students are invited to stand before God and the congregation and confess their baptismal faith. While the students were children of God throughout the process, the Rite of Confirmation is their opportunity to say, "yes, we believe," and for the congregation to officially recognize the students as "Communicant members."

Some pastors may also offer early Communion to the students, typically after the first year, and after the students properly articulate parts 5 and 6 of the Small Catechism. The Rite of First Communion before Confirmation will be used in the Divine Service should the pastor choose to do this.

The candidates will be asked the following questions during the Rite of Confirmation:

Do you confess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, drawn from the Scriptures, as you have learned to know it from the Small Catechism, to be faithful and true?

Do you intend to hear the Word of God and receive the Lord's Supper faithfully?

Do you intend to live according to the Word of God, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even to death?

Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?

These are not unserious questions; they carry great weight before God and His church. Sadly, over the years, many candidates who stood before God and man and made these vows have not kept them. They've fallen away from the church, they've stopped receiving the Lord's Supper, they've stopped hearing the Word and attending church and fellowshiping with God's people. This is a trend among most churches that use some form of Confirmation. Yet the Scripture never assumes Christians don't go to church. Regular worship is essential to the life and spiritual health of the individual.

Parental Responsibilities

Since the pastor cannot spend more than a few hours a week with the students, it remains the parents' responsibility to actively work with them in their daily study and memory work. Simply put, your children will not do this work themselves. They need you to teach them and help them. In fact, catechesis is the job of the parents. Weekly class is secondary to parents' teaching, praying, and leading.

Parents, using the included schedule, spend time each day with your children and help them memorize the assigned work from the Small Catechism and the Scripture. They should be reciting the memory work out loud. Here is a simple way to go:

Morning time:

Parent, say: *In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*
(it is appropriate to do the sign of the cross, but not required)

Pray Luther's Morning Prayer together
Recite the Commandments
Recite the Creed
Recite the Lord's Prayer
Pray as follows:

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

Before bed:

Parent, say: *In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*
(it is appropriate to do the sign of the cross, but not required)

Recite the Commandments
Recite the Creed
Recite the Lord's Prayer
Pray Luther's Evening Prayer together.

These things should be memorized, and your children should be able to recite them without the catechism open before the first of the new year.

It is also important that you assure your children are setting time aside each day for private study, reading through the lesson, and working to memorize the names of the books of the Bible. It is also important that your children read Scripture. It is suggested that they read through the Book of Genesis and the Gospel of John throughout their first year. This can be done as a family.

You are also encouraged to organize "study sessions" with all the confirmation students. This can be done in your homes, at the church, or wherever your children could meet together outside of weekly Confirmation class.

Other responsibilities

When your children were baptized, you made vows to:

- Faithfully bring them to the services of God's house
- Teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments
- Place in their hands the Holy Scripture
- Provide for their instruction in the Christian faith that they might live in their baptismal grace and remain in communion with the church and live godly lives until the Day of the Lord.

Confirmation instruction helps you fulfill these vows, but these vows are yours to keep. Thus, as you promised, please ensure that your children are in church regularly. Regularly is defined as at least 2-3 times a month on Sundays, but **absolutely not less** than once per month (this includes summer). Midweek services should also be attended when available. To be sure, if your children are not in church at least once a month, including during the summer, they will not be confirmed.

Parents may need to chaperone from time to time.

Parents are expected to attend at least **ONE** confirmation class with their kids each semester (once in the fall/winter and once in the winter/spring).

Parents are expected to set a good example to their kids of what the Christian faith and life looks like. They are to set their priorities accordingly and minimize the pressure and temptation to make church and regular worship a trivial endeavor.

Important Dates

Throughout the year, a number of things come up which your kids may take part.

On Wednesday, October 14, St. Paul's hosts the annual Stew Supper. Hundreds of people from the Milaca community come and dine on delicious home-made stew. It is also a great time for your kids to come and help out with serving, taking orders, carry-out, clean up, or helping in other ways. Confirmands are required to participate.

Class will be led by an assistant on November 11th and 18th as Pastor is out of town. There will be no class on November 25th – Thanksgiving break (though there may be a worship service).

Christmas Program rehearsals begin November 22. Confirmation students are expected to take part.

The kids will celebrate the Christmas season with a Pizza Party on December 16th! They can bring friends. Parents are also invited to stick around for pizza and fellowship.

Christmas break runs from December 23rd to January 13. There will be no class. Class resumes on January 20.

February 10 is Ash Wednesday, the opening of the season of Lent. No class, but kids are expected to attend the Ash Wednesday service.

No class during Holy Week, the week of March 21. Kids should attend the Holy Week services, however.

Pastor will be offering early communion to students who satisfactorily confess what they learned in the first year. The Rite of First Communion will be during a Divine Service in May. Second year students who satisfactorily complete the course will be confirmed a week later in May.

Student Responsibilities and Expectations

Students are expected to participate in all classes, to be on time, prepared, and to have their class materials with them.

While in class, students are expected to pay attention, participate, and refrain from behaviors that distract the group. This includes any time that students are gathered. Second year students who talk out of turn or waste time will be asked to leave the class and will be given a note to take home to a parent for a signature.

Snacks are prohibited during confirmation class but may be passed out after class ends.

Cell phones or other devices are strictly prohibited during confirmation class. Pastor may allow tablets or laptops from time to time when needed for class participation, but otherwise, all electronic devices must be left outside on a table in the Fellowship Hall.

Worship Attendance

Since a big part of the confirmation immersion is instilling a good and lifelong Christian habit, students are required to maintain at least a 60% record of attendance at weekly worship. To help them with this requirement, each 1st year student is asked to complete a *Worship Reflection* worksheet every Sunday. A sample Worship Reflection worksheet is attached, and copies will be available in the Narthex, along with clipboards and writing instruments. Completed Worship Reflections should be left in the Pastor's mailbox.

Acolyte Service

Confirmation students are expected to take part in regular acolyte duties at church. This includes candle lighting, crucifer, communion assistant, sound booth assistant, and lector (reader, where appropriate). A schedule is available in the narthex which will be modified once confirmation classes begin to include all students.

Service Opportunities

Students are encouraged to take part in churchly service opportunities throughout the year. This may include property clean up, youth group room clean up, assisting with VBS or Sunday School, etc.

Sunday Morning Youth/Wednesday Evening Youth

Students are expected to participate in Youth Group. Youth group meets upstairs. The Youth Group room must be **kept clean and orderly at all times**. Different adult leaders will be present each week to teach and lead discussions or activities. Sunday AM Youth is at 10:30 and Wednesday evening is at 6:00.

Inviting of Friends

Students may invite friends to confirmation classes, though only one friend may attend at a time. Students may invite as many friends as they wish to Sunday Youth Group, or when Pastor permits such as at the Pizza Party in December.

Special Worship Service Attendance

Throughout the year there are special worship services for Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Holy Week. Students should make every effort to attend these services as they offer unique glimpses into deeper matters of the faith, and they help to develop a habit of worship and prayer.

Student Materials

The church shall provide the following materials for each student: Luther's Small Catechism (1991 edition), Faith Alive student bible, and weekly handouts for class.

Parents shall provide a 3-ring binder with blank paper and writing instruments. The books, bible, and binder should be brought to class every week.

Class Photograph

A class photograph will be taken on Confirmation Sunday and available to parents/family. A digital version will be saved on the church cloud and printed copies made as requested. There is no charge.

Attendance Policy

Since missing even one class can set a student behind, attendance is not optional. Sports, school activities, vacations, etc., should never take precedence over confirmation instruction. Exceptions:

- Inclement weather (pastor will send out a push notification, text message, or email not less than 3 hours before class).
- Illness (the parent should contact the pastor not less than 3 hours before class).
- Family emergencies

Note: If a school function such as a game or concert gets in the way, such that the student risks a poor grade or removal from team/group, please let the pastor know. Some leeway is allowed in these circumstances.

Confirmation Offering

Teaching our children to be good stewards with the gifts the Lord provides is par and parcel to raising them in church before Word and Sacrament, in Scripture, in prayer, and to lovingly serve the neighbor. To that end, this year we are starting a new 2-year Confirmation Offering/Gift where the students will have the opportunity to give to a fund each week which will, at their confirmation, be used to purchase a gift for the church. The gift might be something on the wish list, or something that the class chooses (with help from Pastor or parents).

Parents are encouraged to NOT simply hand their children money to put into this offering, but that it comes from their allowance or other funds which is their own. This way they learn to give from themselves joyfully and freely, as our Lord instructs.

Digital Resources/Cloud Access

Students will have access to certain resources online. However, we will not use any online learning this year.

Pastor's contact information:

Rev. Daniel Carlson

Cell: (218) 499-9024

Office: (320) 362-8776

Email: pastor@stpaulsmilaca.org

Sample Worship Reflection Worksheet

Your Name: _____ Service Date: _____

Sunday of the Church Year: _____

Color: _____ Lord's Supper? YES NO

First or Old Testament Reading: _____

Second Reading or Epistle: _____

Holy Gospel Reading: _____

What was your favorite hymn? _____

What did you like about it?

What was the general theme of the sermon?

In just a few words, summarize the LAW preached:

In just a few words, summarize the GOSPEL preached:

What is something that you learned, from the sermon or the service, that you didn't know before?

Student Registration for Confirmation

STUDENT

First Name: _____ Middle Name/Initial: _____

Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Date of Baptism: _____

School Year (this fall): _____

Personal Email Address: _____

Cellular Phone Number: _____

Note: The app called Kaizala should be installed on the phone, as well as Microsoft Teams.

Are there any special concerns (allergies, special needs, etc.) which the church/pastor should be made aware of before confirmation class begins?

PARENT(S)

Primary Parent First Name: _____ Middle Name/Initial: _____

Last Name: _____

Spouse Name: _____

Primary Email Address: _____

Primary Phone Number: _____

Can this phone be used in the case of an emergency? YES NO

If not, what phone number should be called? _____

Are the parents members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Milaca, MN? YES NO

If not, what is the name and city of your church? _____

I hereby permit my son/daughter to participate in Confirmation Instruction at St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Milaca MN. I will further work to set an example of Christian character, will see to it that we attend church regularly, and that my son/daughter takes part in Youth Group activities, acolyte responsibilities, and other church serving events when possible.

Signature

Date