

Confirmation 2021

Teacher's Guide



“The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”

Ephesians 4:11-13

Welcome to Confirmation 2021!

We are so glad you have chosen to teach this year and hope this experience is a blessing to you. As you go through these next few months, know that you are covered in prayer. We will be in prayer for you, our pastors and staff will be in prayer for you, and we have asked various people within the congregation to be praying for you as well.

This is an important time in the life of our students. They will not only be learning about the foundations of their faith, but will likely make firm commitments to live for Jesus for the rest of their lives! We appreciate you serving as a teacher more than you know! We are available to you at any time.

Blessings in Christ,
Chris, Deidre & Peyton

Get to Know Your Youth Ministries Staff

Chris, Deidre, and Peyton are here to assist you in any way. Deidre will be responsible for the bulk of the weekly programming of Confirmation, and will be providing support to our volunteers who make this class happen (teachers, project leaders, etc.). You will receive communication from all three of us during this year.

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Teacher responsibilities

It is your responsibility as the teacher to...

- **Create an environment of love.** Students will not feel the love of God in Confirmation unless they feel loved by those around them. Creating a loving classroom means being present when students arrive each week, smiling, offering (long distant) hugs and high-fives, expressing an interest in students' lives, listening, meeting students where they are, and telling them that God loves them!
- **Emphasize commitment.** It is important for each student to understand that Confirmation is a commitment, but more importantly, Christ is a commitment. There are a lot of responsibilities that come along with being a Christian and a member of Christ's Church. Confirmation and the journey of faith is not something to be taken lightly.
- **Get to know every person in your class.** Ideally, you would know each of the student's names by the second Sunday class period. As the weeks go by, though, you will also want to know their interests, background, personality, etc. so that you can reach them, be involved in their lives, and minister to them more effectively.
- **Encourage Faith Partner interaction.** Faith Partners are an important part of the student's Confirmation experience. The more individualized attention and interaction the student receive during the three months, the better, so please encourage your class to get to know their Faith Partners and spend time with them. Students, no matter how they may act, are craving deep, personal, and meaningful relationships. Faith partners can serve as one of the most effective instruments God uses to capture our youth's hearts.
- **Stay on track.** If at any time the discussion is going in a direction that it doesn't need to go, you will need to gently pull your students' attention back to the task or subject at hand. At the same time, if the discussion has hit a lull and doesn't seem to be going anywhere (this is often referred to as "awkward silence"), you may need to be creative in how to get your class's attention. Don't be discouraged if a discussion is not going in the direction you would like for it to (or if it is going in no direction at all!); instead, be patient, avoid frustration, and remind yourselves that they're young. God's timing for their learning is perfect! J
- **Be serious when it's time to be serious and silly when it's time to be silly!** If you are covering something serious and important, or if you, as the teacher, are simply the only one who needs to be talking, and you have students who are being loud and rambunctious, tell them that it is no time to joke around. If you are playing a game, have a blast and use that time to show them how cool and fun you are! *At all times*, demand that the students show respect to you and their peers. *At all times*, show students love that reflects the love of Jesus.
- **Follow up with "Go The Extra Mile" sections of the manual.** At the end of each lesson's reading, there is a section called "Go The Extra Mile." This is for any student who would like to put forth a little extra effort, do outside research, and/or find out more about the topic discussed. After each teaching lesson, there will be an opportunity for further discussion, if

time allows. You can use this time or just ask students outside of class if they went the “extra mile” and if so, what they learned.

- **Make opportunities for fellowship.** Class time is good for learning but a bit more challenging to grow deep friendship. You may want to consider planning a fellowship opportunity outside of regular class time. Later in this guide is list of suggestions for these “field trips;” you can also talk to the students for other suggestions. Students may need to pay for the event themselves, so please try to make the activities as low in cost as possible. We will gladly reimburse any of your personal or group expenses for these opportunities if needed. (You might need to volunteer to drive some of your students if they do not have a ride to activities.)
- **Invite students to church with you.** This is tricky during a pandemic, but you can encourage your students to attend church virtually. Ask them about their experience, and look for connections between sermons and lessons. Once in-person worship resumes, if you feel comfortable attending, you can invite students to attend with you.
- **Alert students to the Confirmation schedule.** Make sure everyone knows that the weekly classes, weekly readings and service project are mandatory and very important. All of these parts of Confirmation build up to their “Big Day.” Encourage students to participate in class discussions, get involved in the service project, and be a part of any planned activities.
- **Communicate with your student’s parents if they need you.** This simply means you are available to your student’s parents if they need to talk with you about their child’s Confirmation experience. **Note: If you are having a problem with one of your students, please discuss the problem with the church youth leadership first so they are aware of the situation.*
- **Pray for your students.** We hope you will lift your Confirmation class up daily in prayer, asking God to teach, shape, and reveal His love and truth to each student.

Teaching “Helpful Hints”

The following will help make your Confirmation class a success! All are merely suggestions, though – we encourage you to make your class your own. Be creative and have fun!! J

As you teach, consider....

- Trying to make the material relevant to students’ lives. (i.e. “How can we make *worship* a part of what we do every day?” or “What does *Scripture* mean for us today?”)
- Using a variety of mediums as you communicate your lesson - art, music, writing, discussion, games, loud, quiet, etc. - while staying true to the material. This ensures that your message reaches a diverse group of students.
- Making the lessons interactive. Get everyone to participate - even the quiet ones. This may mean acting out Scripture verses, having students bring snacks that start with the same letter as the lesson (Snickerdoodles on Sacraments day), or simply getting up and “shaking it out” just so they don’t fall asleep!
- Making sure everyone in your class gets to know everyone else. Bond your class – help them enjoy each other, create “inside jokes,” be a family, etc.
- Having fun! Ideally, your students would look forward to coming to Confirmation each week. J
- Bringing candy, donuts, or other food or drinks that will get your students excited. (Consider bringing their favorites. If you know they love *doughnut holes*, bring a few dozen to class on Sunday morning!) **Note: We will reimburse you for any of these expenses, minus tax unless you get a tax exempt form from us; just give us your receipts.*
- Making your class casual, relaxed, and fun!
- Being creative! If you don’t think the game and/or curriculum is effective for a particular lesson, modify it! You can make up games, show videos, etc. that you think will work best. The sky’s the limit on how you can be creative in your class! .
- Giving assignments to the students if you can think of any that would help them apply the lessons to their lives. (ex. “We learned about worship this week. Before we meet again next time, write out a “Worship Works” list that has 10 ways you can worship God every day of the year. Then, try and do at least 5 of them this week at school.”)

How do I teach?

Below is a list of more specific suggestions concerning how to teach your class. They include how to lead your class, encourage your students and be creative, follow the manual, facilitate discussion, and the like. If you know of other things that help you teach effectively, feel free to share them with your fellow teachers!

- Begin and end each class with a prayer. This alerts students that God is actually *with them* in class.
- Each lesson begins with a goal/purpose. This is there for you to understand the main points of discussion for that week and to highlight the most important parts of the lesson. When the students leave your classroom at the end of each week, they should leave understanding the goal/purpose for that day. **Note: The goal/purpose does not need to be read out loud each week! As the teacher, you simply need to understand it and let it lead and guide your class discussion.*
- Things typed in parentheses are merely notes for you to follow. They either give you page numbers or answers to the questions, based on the reading. Rather than saying “Turn to page 20 for the answer,” be prepared ahead of time and know the answer. If your students are struggling, lead them to the correct answer. **Important: These notes are guidelines to follow – they are not necessarily (though they are sometimes) specific answers. (Ex.: ways to worship God in every day life may be typed out for you in the parenthesis, but there are many more ways! Let the students think of the majority of them. **i.e. think outside the box!*) **The more you look at your manual, the less you will keep their attention.***
- Encourage discussion and participation – don’t just let them answer the question and move on. Help them to truly *understand* what they are learning. On that note... ***DON’T LET YOUR STUDENTS GET AWAY WITH SUNDAY SCHOOL ANSWERS!!** This is one of the more difficult things to do in student ministry. It’s important, though, that we challenge students to think through and understand what they are learning about their faith so it becomes real for them. This is especially important in Confirmation.
- If your students are not talking, challenge them. Don’t let them get away with complete silence! At the same time, respect those who are more quiet – ease them into discussion.
- Encourage journaling. At the end of each lesson is a Journal page. Let the students know this page is there for them to take any notes or write any questions they have as they read each week. More journaling at home might make more discussion in class!
- Pray on your own and/or with your teaching partner before you lead each class.
- At the end of each class, tell your students about what’s coming up (planned activities, break from class, etc.). Also, prepare them for the week’s reading and next week’s discussion!

- ***IMPORTANT!** Encourage students to do their reading each week! This will make your job a lot easier as they will understand what you're talking about when you lead them. As well, it will help the students really learn all of the important stuff. Tell your students, "You get what you give." If they do not actively participate in what they're doing by reading and taking part in class, they're not likely to get much out of their Confirmation experience or be ready for their big day.
- Try to stay up to date on all the activities that are happening with Confirmation. Make announcing and inviting students to upcoming activities a part of your weekly routine.

Do not assume that students know what you're talking about all the time! Often we use "Christian language" because we're used to talking about our faith and what it means to us, but doing this can lose student's attention or make them feel frustrated. Below is a list of some things that might be confusing to students and possible thoughts to help them grow in understanding.

Concepts Students May Not Understand:
(and a few thoughts to hopefully help you clarify)

- Open Heart/Open Mind – Having an "open heart" or an "open mind" in our faith or Confirmation journey simply means we listen and consider the things we hear in class and church. We don't necessarily believe everything and say, "Anything goes," but we also don't assume God and/or Christianity has nothing to do with us just because of other ideas we may have.
- God "at work" - This means God's doing things in our midst. It can be a doctor healing a patient, a friend helping a neighbor, or John Wesley feeling the "strange warming in his heart" and believing in Christ! God is "at work" all around us. In fact, God will be "at work" in your Confirmation class. J
- God's forgiveness *through* Jesus Christ, God working *through* the Holy Spirit –God is beyond our understanding. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are ways in which God reveals God's self so we might have a more clear understanding.
- A relationship with Christ – The Confirmation Introduction in the manual gives an idea. Basically for students, though, being in a relationship with Christ means believing God really loves them and wants to spend time with them. A relationship with Christ involves Scripture reading and prayer to *know* the things of God, serving and loving to *do* the things of God, and being involved in church community. It is to trust your life to Jesus as Lord and Savior.
- The gospel – literally "good news." The basics of the Christian gospel are that God created humans out of love, but humanity has sinned and fallen short of what God expects from us. God sent Jesus Christ – the perfect sacrifice - to forgive our sins and bring us into complete relationship through his death and resurrection. Our salvation through Christ is Good News

- Doctrine – basically, a system of belief. Church doctrine is what we believe to be true about God ~ Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Webster defines doctrine as:
1 archaic : TEACHING, INSTRUCTION
2 a : something that is taught **b** : a principle or position or the body of principles in a branch of knowledge or system of belief : **DOGMA c** : a principle of law established through past decisions
d : a statement of fundamental government policy especially in international relations
**Church doctrine is obviously Christian principles based on the gospel.*
- The Holy Spirit – One of the three Persons of the Trinity; God's Spirit since the very Beginning. The Holy Spirit is how God exists here on earth now that Jesus has left earth and returned to the Father. The Holy Spirit is how we experience God in our daily lives today.
- Anglican – from Webster:
1 : of or relating to the established Episcopal Church of England and churches of similar faith and order in communion with it
2 : of or relating to England or the English nation
- God's will – in very simple terms, God's plan for both individual lives and for the world. Charles Swindoll, a well-known Christian pastor and writer, called it "not so much about our own well-thought-through 'mission' for our lives as it is... what matters to [God] in our lives," (The Mystery of God's Will, i.x.)
- Salvation – God's free gift of eternal life through belief in Jesus Christ. Salvation in the Christian faith refers both to the after life/heaven and life on earth (salvation from despair, loneliness, sin, etc.)
- Fasting – from Webster:
1 : to abstain from food
2 : to eat sparingly or abstain from some foods
**In Confirmation, fasting refers to abstaining from food for spiritual reasons. When we give up something and begin to crave it we are reminded of Jesus who gave up his life because he craved to be in a relationship with us.*
- Speaking in tongues - language not understood by the general public, brought on by the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian believer. There are many different views and understandings on speaking in tongues.