

Confirmation Program Information 2021-2022

The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

Welcome to confirmation instruction at LCGS! This is a two-year program, typically for students in 7th and 8th grades. Our hope is that all who participate will grow in faith, in faith practices, and in understanding the Bible and Lutheran theology.

Curriculum Overview

Our primary texts are the Bible and *The Lutheran Handbook*, which contains Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*. We also use some pieces of the Living the Word curriculum that many other Sunday School classes are using. This curriculum follows the Narrative Lectionary. Our study of the *Small Catechism* is aligned with the Narrative Lectionary, the order of Bible readings we use in our Sunday worship services. Gospel readings this school year will come primarily from John. (Matthew's gospel will be primary for 2022-2023). In the *Small Catechism*, we will cover the Apostles' Creed and the Sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion) this year. In 2022-2023, we will study the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer (which 2nd-year students studied in 2020-2021).

Class Sessions

Confirmation instruction takes place during the Sunday School hour each week: 9:30-10:30 a.m. During the first part of the class, we gather as a large group, with 1st- and 2nd-year classes together. We have a review activity, engage with the week's text, and introduce the week's faith concepts. Then, we break into small groups for discussion, sharing of highs and lows, and prayer.

Until younger siblings of confirmation students have a vaccination available to them or the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a threat, we will offer alternative confirmation sessions via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. Students can attend either the in-person session or the virtual session on any Sunday when confirmation classes are held.

(See schedule for dates of class sessions.)

Missed Class Sessions

A handout will be distributed during most class sessions. When a student misses a class session, please download a copy from the church web site: <http://www.lcgselca.org/confirmation.html>. Please read through the handout, the Bible passages, and the pages of *The Lutheran Handbook* referenced in the handout with your student, so they can follow along with what we are doing in class. If a student misses more than 25% of class sessions during the year, parents will need to submit a signed summary form for each missed class, affirming that the material was covered at home as a family.

Confirmation Retreat

Our annual Confirmation Retreat for 1st- and 2nd-year confirmation students will again be held at Mar-Lu-Ridge Camp & Retreat Center, in Jefferson, MD. We will select a date in Spring 2022 based on parent input. Please respond to the confirmation date survey you will receive via email.

We will need 6-8 parents to serve as chaperones and 2 as retreat coordinators. Please let Pastor Teal know if you are willing to serve as a retreat coordinator. This involves helping plan the event.

Bibles

Students may bring their own Bibles or use the class set. If your family decides to purchase a Bible, please consider choosing an edition of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Some good study Bible options:

- *Lutheran Study Bible* from Augsburg Fortress
- *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*
- *The Harper Collins Study Bible*

We use the NRSV translation in worship. There is another study Bible out there with a similar name, *The Lutheran Study Bible*, but this is a different translation, the English Standard Version (ESV). Please look for the NRSV *Lutheran Study Bible*.

There are several web sites and apps where the NRSV and good reference materials for understanding the Bible are available. Some resources you might explore with your student:

- <http://bible.oremus.org/> – Easy to search for NRSV text by Bible passage reference or word/phrase. Note: The default translation on this site is Anglicized NRSV, but NRSV is the second option on the dropdown menu. Checkboxes allow users to display or omit verse numbers, footnotes, and section headings.
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/> – Many different Bible translations are available, in English and other languages. Useful for comparing a verse across many translations.
- <https://netbible.org/> – Displays the New English Translation (NET). Has extensive notes on translating the Hebrew and Greek texts, cross references, and notes about the context. Can display Hebrew and Greek texts or link to various commentaries.
- <https://www.workingpreacher.org/narrative-faq> - This Narrative Lectionary overview helps explain the cycle of Bible readings we use in worship and in confirmation instruction.

The Lutheran Handbook

Each student receives a copy of *The Lutheran Handbook* to bring with them to class and to keep as a reference. Contributions may be made to defray the cost (about \$10 per book). Families are responsible for replacing their copy of *The Lutheran Handbook* if it is lost.

Teachers

Pastor Teal is taking the lead on teaching the class. Sherman Canapp will serve as a discussion leader when we break into groups.

Family and Faith Community Participation

Parents, guardians, grandparents, baptismal sponsors, and other adults significant in confirmation students' lives are invited to attend either the Let's Talk Faith group or the Lectionary Text Study held during the Sunday school hour.

Family participation enhances student learning, as discussions can continue through the week at home. You may know that Martin Luther wrote the *Small Catechism* as a guide for parents to teach the Christian faith to their children. Contemporary research shows that faith "sticks" best when youth have at least five adults involved in their faith lives. Parents, guardians, grandparents, baptismal sponsors, pastors, Sunday School leaders, and Youth Group leaders can all support youth in their faith development.

Reading the Daily Lectionary readings together is another way for families to support student learning. They are printed in the weekly bulletins and on confirmation handouts.

Worship Notes

Each student is expected to complete 20 worship notes during each year of confirmation instruction. Families are invited to participate in worship notes discussion questions. Further reflection on the Bible stories we hear in worship and in class will help students make connections between the Bible and their lives.

Worship notes should be submitted to Pr. Teal in class or placed in Pr. Teal's mail slot in the church office. Pr. Teal records them in a spreadsheet, comments on them, and returns them to students. It is helpful to Pr. Teal for students to submit worship notes through the year, rather than saving them up for the end of the school year. Thank you!

If students attend worship at another congregation, they may submit a bulletin and a written account of their experience in lieu of worship notes that Sunday.

If students are unable to attend worship on 20 Sundays or Wednesday evenings (or special services such as Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil) per school year, worship notes may be completed during the summer months. However, 2nd-year students must complete worship notes prior to being confirmed.

Portfolios

Students will choose six projects to complete from this year's portfolio project descriptions. (See detailed instructions for portfolio projects.) This year's projects will focus on the Apostles' Creed, Baptism, and Holy Communion. The projects from last year (or next year) center on the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. Students will review their portfolio with Pr. Teal at the end of their second year of confirmation instruction. Pr. Teal will track these submissions via spreadsheet, as well.

Accommodations for Learning Needs

Confirmation instruction is meant to be faith formation, not school. We will not have tests. We will not emphasize memorization. We do not want to add to the academic pressure that middle school students already face. *We want confirmation to be about growing in faith, faith practices, and understanding of the Bible and Lutheran Christian theology in a community of peers and mentors.*

We will do our best to accommodate the range of learning needs of confirmation students by adjusting expectations where necessary. For example, if writing is difficult, students may complete worship notes or portfolio pieces using dictation software or a parent scribe, or by submitting an audio recording of responses. We do not want parents to complete them for students without student involvement, but to engage with students in discussing the content of what we are learning. Alternative portfolio projects may be proposed to Pastor Teal and approved on a case-by-case basis.

Acolytes and Crucifers

Students are expected to serve as acolytes and crucifers during worship. Students are expected to serve in one of these roles at a minimum of 10 worship services between now and August 2022. A training session will be scheduled.

Acolytes are needed for every worship service: Sundays at 8:00 and 11:00 a.m. (10:00 during the summer), Wednesdays at 6:45 p.m., and special services during Advent and Lent. Crucifers are needed when the choir processes.

Please check your family calendar and help your student(s) sign up to serve at worship times that are convenient for your family (a link to this page appears at the bottom right corner of the LCGS home page, <http://www.lcgsselca.org/>): <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0b4ca4ad23aafc1-worship>

Confirmation Day: Affirmation of Baptism

On Sunday, June 5, 2022, those who have completed two years of confirmation instruction will be invited to affirm their baptism at the 11:00 worship service, becoming confirmed members of LCGS. This will make them voting members of the congregation and eligible to serve as council members. The order for Affirmation of Baptism is printed on pp. 234-237 of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, our hymnal. 2nd-year students will go over this material

on the confirmation retreat. A rehearsal and confirmation photos will take place on Saturday, June 4. LCGS owns a set of confirmation robes. Students will be measured for robes prior to the photo session. Confirmands may affirm their baptism at the 6:45 pm service on Wednesday, June 8, if they are unable to attend worship on June 5.

To participate in affirmation of baptism on June 5 or 8, 2nd-year confirmation students must have their portfolios and worship notes completed by May 1, including any that were not completed during the 2020-2021 school year. Students who have not completed these by May 1 can affirm their baptism at a date in the future, when they have completed their portfolios and worship notes. Pastor Teal will hold individual meetings with confirmands and their parents between May 1 and June 5, to review portfolio projects and assess readiness for affirmation of baptism.

Students may choose not to affirm their baptism on June 5 or 8. They are still welcome to come to worship and take communion. They are welcome to come to the high school Sunday school class in the following school year, or to continue attending confirmation instruction on Sunday mornings, if they feel they need more time to deepen their understanding of the Bible and Lutheran Christian faith. The only things they would not be able to do without becoming a confirmed member is vote at congregational meetings or serve on council.

Youth Group

While it is not a requirement of confirmation, we encourage all confirmation students to be involved in our Youth Group for students in 6th-12th grades. Youth Group typically meets twice a month, with a goal of building relationships through social, service, and spiritual activities.

FreeRide

On October 22-24, confirmation students are invited to attend FreeRide, the Delaware-Maryland Synod's retreat for middle school youth, at NorthBay Adventure Camp in North East, MD. Class will be held as usual on October 24 for those not attending this retreat.

For more information about FreeRide, please visit:

<https://demdsynod.org/connectedness/youth-family-ministry/events-and-retreats/freeride/>

Please note that our congregation's FreeRide registrations will be submitted by Gina Miller and are due October 3. LCGS will pay \$30 of the FreeRide registration fee, lowering the registration cost from \$250 to \$220. The Synod also has scholarship applications, to cover \$100 or \$200. Anyone needing additional financial assistance to attend may ask Pr. Teal to submit a request to the LCGS Family Fund.