

CONFIRMATION FAQ

What are the differences between CORE and Confirmation?

CORE is a weekly Sunday morning middle school program (6th-8th grade students) that runs during the school year. It is a place where all students can grow in their faith, invite their friends, and grapple with the real life issues they are facing daily. It consists of a fun and impactful large group time with a student-led band, relevant teaching and creative illustrations followed by small group discussions led by adult mentors. CORE meets in Cornerstone on Sundays from 10:30am-12noon.

Confirmation, on the other hand, is for those students who are serious about growing deeper in their faith. Confirmation helps students understand the chief parts of the Catechism and gives opportunity to publicly profess their faith through the Rite of Confirmation. It is an optional faith development program that any student (8th-12th grade) can participate in when they desire to go deeper into six key doctrines of Luther's Small Catechism (The Apostles' Creed, The Ten Commandments, Baptism, Confession & Absolution, The Lord's Supper and Prayer). As a part of Confirmation, students will be expected to engage in deeper study of the Bible and Luther's Small Catechism as well as participate in discussion groups. Once the Confirmation requirements are completed, students can publicly profess their faith and participate in the annual Confirmation Service in May.

How old does my student have to be?

Any student in 8th-12th grade is welcomed to participate in Confirmation. Currently, most students participate in the Rite of Confirmation in May of their 8th grade year.

What are the expectations of Confirmation and why are they important?

Confirmation is a great way for students to develop their faith and grow in their relationship with God. There are multiple components that contribute to this development, such as gaining knowledge/understanding, building community with Christian peers, serving God and others, and owning their personal faith. The expectations for Confirmation have been created to teach and reinforce these essential components. Students will be expected to:

- **Work through six key doctrines of the Christian faith** (also known as "The Six Chief Parts" from Martin Luther's Small Catechism). Students will view an introductory teaching and then work through related material individually/ with parents, completing online study questions for each unit that will be submitted. *(Knowledge)*
- **Attend Required Discussion Groups** for each of the six units after submitting the online questions. *(Understanding)*
- **Regularly attend Sunday morning CORE** large group teaching and small group discussions. *(Life Application and Christian Community)*
- **Write a personal Statement of Faith** and share it with their small group or a Student Ministry leader after attending the discussion groups. *(Ownership of Personal Faith)*
- **Attend the Middle School Retreat** each year. *(Christian Community)*
- **Complete a total of 15 service hours** prior to the Rite of Confirmation at St. John Church and/or in the community. (Hours must be completed within the last calendar year). *(Acts of Service)*
- **A parent is expected to serve** at either the middle school New Year's Eve Party (or planning team), or serve as a chaperone for a day of Extreme VBS.

What are the dates of the discussion groups?

All discussion groups meet at 9:00am in Cornerstone first floor on these dates:

- October 7, 2018
- November 11, 2018
- December 16, 2018
- January 13, 2019
- February 10, 2019
- March 3, 2019
- April 7, 2019 (Statement of Faith teaching)

What if my student has to miss a discussion group?

We allow students to miss one discussion group without making it up. If they miss a second, it is the student's responsibility to schedule a time to meet with the Student Ministry directors and discuss the material within 30 days of the missed discussion group. If a third discussion group is missed, it cannot be made up and your student will not be eligible to be confirmed this year.

How does my student get registered for CORE?

You can register your student online at www.stjstl.net/next-steps/students/core/ OR you can fill out a paper registration. The paper forms can be found in Cornerstone at the start of CORE each Sunday. CORE meets on Sundays from 10:30am to 12:00pm during the school year. There are no fees to attend CORE.

How is Confirmation for 2018-2019 structured?

The Confirmation process will be utilizing both online elements and live, face-to-face discussions. The following steps will need to be taken to register and participate in the program.

- Register and pay online at www.stjstl.net/students/confirmation
- Once registered, students will receive a link via email to create an account for the online elements.
- The first teaching video will be unlocked on September 3, 2018 for students to view.
- Complete the corresponding study questions and submit them through the online portal.
- Completed questions will be reviewed and students may be given feedback if needed.
- Attend the required discussion group for the teaching (dates above).
- The next teaching unit will unlock after the previous unit's discussion group.

Who will be teaching and leading the discussion groups?

Our pastors, student ministry directors, and called teachers will teach and facilitate the discussion groups.

Why self study?

While solid teaching is an important part of our spiritual growth, the personal disciplines of prayer and Bible study are essential for continued, sustained growth. In a self-study model we are putting greater responsibility on students to take ownership of their spiritual growth. We are also helping them develop habits and disciplines that will serve them over

their entire LIFEjourney. In addition, we believe that when students can work through the Confirmation materials at their own pace, they will be better positioned to live out their Confirmation vows.

What are the benefits of parents being involved in this meaningful process?

The original intention for the Small Catechism was for Confirmation to be done in the home. We know that whole families will be strengthened in their faith when they have an opportunity to view the teachings, have discussions, and answer the questions together. An added bonus is that this approach will give busy students and families the much needed flexibility to complete the requirements according to their own schedules.

What if I don't feel equipped to help my student?

Growth happens through struggle. We expect that students, and even parents, may struggle with parts of their Confirmation studies. That is normal and to be expected. To come alongside families, we will offer parent answer guides to help you feel confident as you discuss the material with your student.

How long will it take?

The Confirmation program is designed to be completed in one school year. The discussion groups are scheduled three to four weeks apart beginning in October and ending in April. This basic structure helps keep students on pace to participate in the Confirmation ceremony in May.

How does my student complete their service hours?

Students complete 15 service hours, made up of at least 3 different activities (each counting for no more than 6 hours), in their community or here at St. John. As a reminder, this is unpaid service that benefits another person or group (children, senior citizens, ESL learners, church, community events, etc.) Service hours must have been completed in the last calendar year prior to Confirmation.

What if my student already participated in some of the Confirmation teachings last year?

All students who wish to be confirmed will need to complete ALL six units of confirmation instruction in addition to the other confirmation requirements. Students who have already received some confirmation instruction will be benefited by what they've been taught and should have an easier time mastering the content. We will not require students who successfully completed units last year to repeat the study questions for this year. **However, they will be required to attend the discussion groups.**

What about First Communion?

Holy Communion (The Lord's Supper) is an incredible gift where God gives His people the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, which brings forgiveness, life and salvation. Parents and students in 6th-8th grade should make a mutual, prayerful decision about when to begin receiving Communion based on the student's personal faith in Jesus and their ability to properly examine themselves.

Already participated in First Communion?

- Follow the same steps for the Lord's Supper as the other units (view the online video, answer study questions, and attend the discussion group).

Never participated in First Communion?

- Attend, with parents, a **live** Lord's Supper Teaching offered in January or February each year. After both demonstrating strong personal faith in Jesus and receiving instruction on how to receive the Lord's Supper rightly, students may take their "First Communion" as a part of the Ash Wednesday services each year.