



Catechesis and Confirmation Manual

A Note from Pastor Gillespie:

As your pastor, I believe that confirmation instruction is one of the most important experiences a young person can have. What a privilege it is to learn the marvelous truths that God shares with us!

But Confirmation is more than a process of learning facts – rather it is a formation in Christian identity and living. Our catechesis classes seek to instill the habits of faith into the children of our parish.

On Confirmation Sunday it is my joy and honor to declare to this congregation that the young people who stand before them have been taught the Holy Scriptures, are fully aware of their sins, and are assured of the complete forgiveness purchased for them by the precious blood of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To this end may the Holy Spirit lead our young people and their parents into an ever deeper understanding of living a life of repentance and faith centered in God's Word and Sacraments. May He equip them with wisdom and a love for His Word. And may He instill in catechumens and parents alike a deep regard for the seriousness of this path of catechesis and formation in the Christian life.

God bless your learning and growing in the Faith!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Christopher L. Gillespie". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "In Christ,".

Pastor Gillespie

LUTHERAN CATECHESIS

Catechesis is not a new word but common to our Lutheran parents. It is not merely education. Catechesis is God's way of teaching the Word of God by which faith is established. Catechesis passes on the language of our holy faith as God's gift that is received as a gift, rather than as something that is "force fed" into the catechumen. The Christian life of faith is lived from the Word of God that is received and believed.

The Christian life of faith has concrete expressions:

- in the ongoing reception of God's gifts in the Divine Service through the hearing of Scripture, the hearing of preaching, and the eating and drinking of the Lord's body and blood;
- in the daily prayer of the Christian;
- in the confession of one's faith in the world;
- in the confession of one's sins to God or a brother;
- in forgiving the sins of those who have sinned against him;
- and in living "concretely" by faith in Christ in the vocation to which God has called him.

Catechesis is, therefore, much more comprehensive and involves the actual doing of things that Christians will continue to do for the rest of their lives: attend Divine Service, listen to preaching, receive the Lord's Supper, confess their sins, receive absolution, pray, confess their faith, forgive one another, live as husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children, workers of every kind, etc.

Scope and Sequence

- **Divine Service** (weekly)
- **Congregation at Prayer**
 - * Prayer at home with the family using the weekly prayer guide
- **Sunday School and Sunday Morning Catechesis**
 - * Pastor introduces Bible Passage, Catechism, and Hymn for the week from the *Congregation at Prayer*
- **Learn by Heart the Catechism** (six chief parts)
 - * At home through the use of the *Congregation at Prayer*
 - * In Sunday School
 - * Through O.T. and N.T. Catechesis
- **O.T. and N.T. Catechesis** (weekly *and* with children)
- **Lutheran Catechesis** (24 weeks for 90 minutes/session)

Role of the Parents

The rationale for our method of catechesis and confirmation is simple. It is Bible-based not only in content but also in format. It recognizes the Biblical truth that passing down to our children the teachings of Scripture is most properly the parents' task. The Church's task is to support the parents.

"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. *Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.* Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth." **Deuteronomy 11:18-21**

"We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children." **Psalms 78:4-6**

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." **Ephesians 6:4**

From these passages it is clear that the religious education and training of each child rests with that child's parents, particularly the father. The Church stands ready to assist parents in this great task, but would never presume to rob parents of either the responsibility or the joy of teaching their own children. With this Biblical background in mind, outlined now is the confirmation program for Grace Lutheran Church.

General Structure of Catechesis for Confirmation

The path of Catechesis at Grace Lutheran Church is at least a two year program which usually begins no later than fifth grade but which may begin at any earlier age based on the child's preparation and the parents' judgment.

We use the *Lutheran Catechesis Series* published by the Concordia Catechetical Academy. This three-year curriculum begins with 32 Old Testament narratives, drawing on their connection to Christ, the Sacraments, and the liturgical life of the Church. The second year considers the age of the church through the book of Acts and the life and ministry of Jesus with an emphasis on the cross and resurrection. The final year is an intensive study of the Catechism, again through the lens of the Biblical narratives.

Class Structure and Schedule

Class will meet at an agreed upon time. One parent will also be required to be in attendance for each class as explained below.

Class will begin with quiz and memory work taken and graded. Previous results will be given to the parents. Following the quiz and memory work, a teaching session will be led by Pastor. This will cover the material assigned in the previous week. Finally, next week's lesson will be introduced and assignments given.

What Is Expected Of Parents

1. At least one parent is required to attend with Pastor every Monday. Parents must be in attendance even if their child is not there that night (due to illness, etc.). In this way parents will be prepared either to reinforce what was taught by Pastor (if their child was there) or to actually do the primary teaching of the lesson (if their child was absent). Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child does not fall behind.

2. Parents are expected to work with their child during the week. They are to see to it that all work is done to the best of their child's ability and that their child meets all of the requirements stated below.

What Is Expected Of Catechumens

Number of classes held: about 28 (per year)

Yearly requirements for Confirmation:

- a. Attending all *classes*.
- b. Successfully completing all *written assignments*.
- c. Successfully completing *28 sermon studies*.
- d. Successfully completing all *memory assignments*.
- e. Successfully completing all *quizzes*.
- f. Regular attendance at *worship services*.
- g. Regular *Sunday School or Bible Class attendance*.
- i. *Acolyte or altar guild responsibilities*.

Notes About Requirements

1. **Classes**: All classes must be attended. On weeks where a confirmand is absent from class due to sickness, etc., the parent who was in attendance must teach the lesson to their child. If this is done, the absence will not be counted.

Frequent absences will require a meeting with Pastor to review whether or not the parents are committed to the confirmation program and want their child to continue in it.

2. **All Written Assignments**: All written assignments must be completed and handed in. All assignments must be completed. Incomplete work or missed assignments must be made up or redone. Unsatisfactory work will be redone.

3. **28 Sermon Studies**: A sermon study is a one-page report on Pastor's sermon from the previous Sunday. Blank sermon reports are in the mailbox in the fellowship hall.

Do not attempt to simply write down everything that was preached. Rather, write down the things that you thought were important -- the main points, how God's Word in the

sermon applies to our lives, etc. There is no wrong sermon study, except the one that isn't done at all.

Sermon studies do two things: (1) They teach the confirmand how to listen carefully and think through what they hear, and (2) they help Pastor by letting him know when a sermon message came through strong and clear and when it didn't. *Approximately 45 different sermons will be preached from September through April, including Lent, Holidays, etc. 28 sermon studies must be handed in to pass the class.*

4. **Memory Assignments:** Confirmands will be required to memorize Bible passages and a portion of the Small Catechism for each Lesson. They will write out their memory work as part of the quiz they take during each class. If they do not successfully complete the memory assignment, they may retake it at a later date.

5. **Quizzes:** At each session confirmands will take a brief quiz. These questions, which will be true/false, multiple choice, or short answer, will test their understanding of the Lesson they learned the previous Monday. All quizzes must be taken. Unsatisfactory quizzes will be retaken

6. **Worship Attendance:** It goes without saying that confirmands are expected to be in Divine Service every Sunday (or Saturday evening if a Sunday is missed), and on holidays and that their family is expected to be there with them. Faithful worship attendance is expected of us by our heavenly Father. The Divine Service is the center of our lives as His people. Confirmation prepares a young person for a life of worship, both now and in the life to come. On Confirmation Day each Confirmand promises to remain faithful in Word and Sacrament. That faithfulness must begin now.

7. **Sunday School Attendance:** Sometimes young people in our confirmation program feel they're too old for Sunday School or Bible Study. Nothing could be farther from the truth. No one is too old. Studying God's Word is not something that we graduate from. Sunday School and Bible Class, and private home study should be a part of our lives for as long as we live. Parents and Students are encouraged to attend Pastor's Adult Bible Class during the Sunday School hour. *24 Sunday School or Bible Classes must be attended to pass the class.*

8. **Acolyting or Altar Guild:** Each boy in the program will be asked throughout the year to light candles or carry the processional crucifix for worship services. Each girl shall assist in either setting the altar on Saturday or clearing the table on Sunday as part of the junior altar guild (young women).

9. **Examination and Absolution:** The Confessions of the Lutheran Church state that no person is to be admitted to the Lord's Table until their faith has been examined by the Pastor and they have received individual absolution (*Ap XXIV.1*)

Other Items

1. **Notification of Progress:** Pastor will contact parents concerning their child's progress. Parents are encouraged to also share any questions or concerns they have with Pastor.

2. **Weather Related Cancellations:** We will have class unless driving conditions are dangerous. Use your best judgment. If in doubt, call Pastor @ 219-629-0833.

3. **Class Visitation Policy:** Other children and adults, whether family, visitors, or prospective students, are invited and encouraged to sit in on their child's class at any time.

4. **Class books and prices:** There are six required books for the three years of Catechesis class. Each catechumen must have his/her own personal copy of each of these items. They may not be borrowed from an older brother or sister, etc. You may purchase them all at once or as needed. If a family is undergoing financial hardship the costs for the texts will be waived.

1. *Lutheran Catechesis*: \$18
2. *OT, NT, or Catechesis Term cards*: \$8 ea
3. *Small Catechism* with explanation: \$8
4. *Old Testament Catechesis*: \$3
5. *New Testament Catechesis*: \$4
6. *Holy Bible* ESV Concordia Edition: \$30

Conclusion

This confirmation program may be very different from what most parents remember about their own confirmation experiences, in that direct parental involvement is expected. It has been necessary to rethink confirmation instruction. The diversity of children (abilities, attitudes, and needs) has changed over the years. The attitude of many parents has also changed. We have gotten away from our Biblical roots, where the family was the real classroom for a child's religious education. Some parents have given away the responsibility and the joy of teaching their children. In doing so, parents have lost the closeness that comes from spending time (especially spiritual time) with their children. Children don't know the joy of learning from their parents, and parents don't know the joy of learning for themselves as they prepare to teach their children.

We believe that involving parents more fully points to a much better and more Biblical way. We hope and pray that you feel the same way too.



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