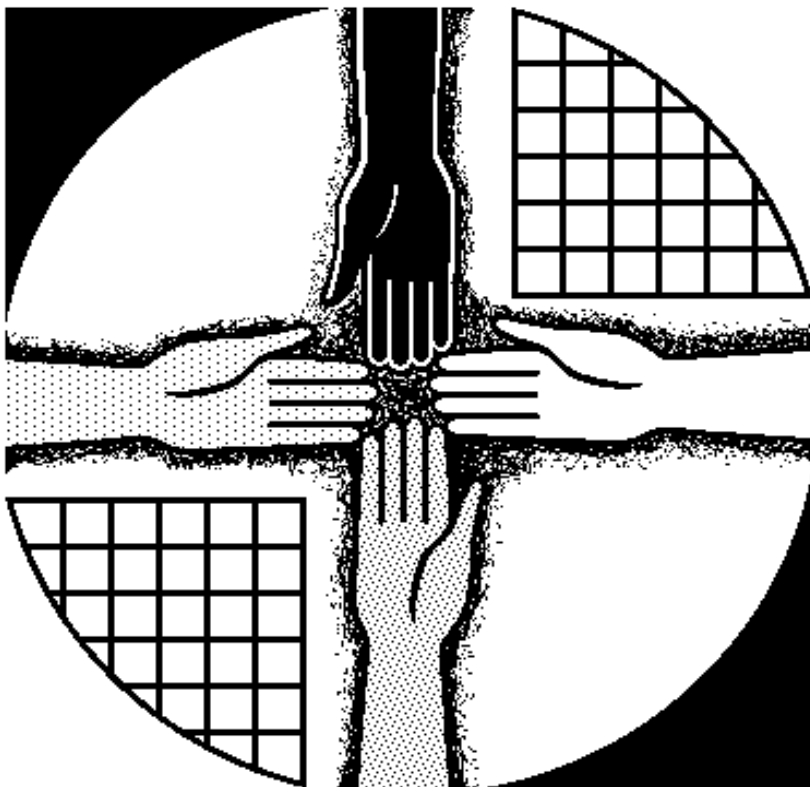




2008-09

Confirmation

Handbook



Mission Statement

We are deeply committed to our Savior Jesus Christ – desiring to lengthen and strengthen His kingdom through worship and caring groups.

First Lutheran Church

1644 Nursery Road, Clearwater, FL 33756

Church (727) 462-8000 ext. 100

School (727) 462-8000 ext. 200

I. DEFINITION OF CONFIRMATION

First Lutheran's Confirmation Ministry is a parent-driven, pastor-assisted educational ministry of the church which assists all participants to mature in their growth as baptized believers of the Lord Jesus Christ and assume responsible roles in the community of believers.

II. GOALS FOR CONFIRMATION MINISTRY

The goals of First Lutheran's Confirmation Ministry are that the confirmands as baptized children of God and as members of the body of Christ:

- A. know and understand the basic elements of the Christian faith, confess them as their own, and subsequently live the Christian life more fully and richly;
- B. understand that being a child of God involves a life-long commitment to the process of discipleship in which the Christian never attains state of completion on this earth but is always in a process of becoming;
- C. better understand the work God desires to accomplish in the life of the individual believer through Word and Sacrament;
- D. understand that the Church, as the people of God, can only function properly if each individual functions as an active part of the body of Christ by living their faith;
- E. identify more deeply with the Christian community through direct service and participate more fully in the mission of the church;

- F. gain lifelong, spiritual insights regarding their relationship to Jesus Christ and each other through Bible study and group activities.

III. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The objective of First Lutheran's Confirmation Ministry is to celebrate and promote the new creation bestowed on the individual through the washing of Holy Baptism and explore what it means to live as a child of God.

The above objective is accomplished through worship, education, and small group ministry. A two-level confirmation program is provided during the student's seventh and eighth grades. All confirmands are expected to:

- attend all class sessions (parents may attend, too)
- complete all assignments
- attend church and Sunday School a minimum of 75% of the time throughout the calendar year
- upon satisfactory completion the student is eligible for confirmation

IV. CONFIRMATION MINISTRY: PART OF THE TOTAL CONGREGATIONAL APPROACH

The walk of faith begins when a person receives new life in Holy Baptism. Since service is part of adult congregational life, all students in the program are trained and required to serve as acolytes and sound technicians in worship services. The Sunday school curriculum enhances the units of instruction taught in the class sessions and also focuses on the needs of the early adolescent.

Throughout the process, this mentor/disciple approach seeks to build and maintain a "Confirmation Fellowship." Along with this sense of community, the student will begin to develop meaningful adult level relationships within the congregation, thus building pride in their membership in the body of Christ, and enabling them to rejoice in having been called to live as a disciple of Christ.

V. ORIENTATION

- A. In most cases, the catechumen has been brought to the waters of life in baptism as an infant or child. The parents, in sacred obedience to the Lord's command in regard to baptism, begin the mentoring process of Christian discipleship (growth) and maturity for their child.

- B. In the majority of cases, catechumens coming into the confirmation program have received some Sunday school instruction. This is necessary for well rounded growth and successful completion of the confirmation program. In the Rite of Confirmation, the catechumen promises to live life as a disciple by "conforming his/her life to the divine Word of God, to be faithful in the use of God's Word and Sacrament (which are God's means of grace) and in faith, word, and action remain true to the one true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - even to death."

- C. Baptism saves and confirmation solidifies that hope of salvation, but baptism and confirmation by themselves do not guarantee that a child will remain faithful until death.

- D. Statistics bear out the fact that many catechumens stay active in youth ministry and worship simply because of their need for peer acceptance. In the catechetical process, the child develops friendships and relational experiences that often prove long-lasting and beneficial into adulthood. However, peer group acceptance is not in and by itself sufficient to keep the growing teenager in the one true faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- E. PARENTAL GUIDANCE AND MENTORING (MODELING) OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS ABSOLUTELY THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT IN THE CHILD'S FAITH-MATURING PROCESS. If the parent(s') desire is that their children stay active in the church and grow in their commitment to the

Lord, it is crucial that the parent(s) model that desired behavior by living the life of a true disciple.

- Negatively, unless parents continue to model a life worthy of their calling in Jesus Christ, their children will almost certainly be inclined to follow the pathway of the parents and become inactive and/or have low-commitment in their spiritual life. Faith, when not applied and practiced, becomes stagnant. Such a child could lose the saving faith in Christ altogether and forfeit heaven.
 - Positively, the more parents model true spirituality and practice it, the more likely their children will remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, and also practice their faith openly in the body of Christ, their homes, and communities.
 - When enrolling a child in the confirmation program, parents are reminded that it is their God-given duty and obligation to mentor their children through Christian example, nurture, and admonition.
- F. To assist parents of catechumens in becoming more involved in the spiritual growth and development of their children, the following concepts have been introduced into the confirmation program.

Parent Mentoring

The goal of the parent mentoring is to build spiritual closeness with their child, and at the same time assist the parents to mature spiritually by deepening their personal discipleship and increasing their commitment to their Savior, Jesus. By working on the same assignments as their children, a lifelong, spiritual bond with their children will be established, causing both parent and child to grow and mature in their relationship with the Lord.

VI. REQUIREMENTS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Christians are always reaffirming or reconfirming their faith in Jesus Christ. That's the life of a true disciple and believer. We are never to think in terms of "completing" our faith. However, a student is eligible to confirm his/her faith after satisfactorily completing all requirements of the confirmation ministry.

A. Church and Sunday School Attendance

All participants in the confirmation ministry, are required to attend at least 75% of the normally scheduled Sunday school classes and worship services during the calendar year. If this requirement is not met, the student will not pass and, therefore, postpone their Rite of Confirmation to a later date. Those who may have "special" or "unusual" circumstances are asked to speak with the Pastor about special accommodations.

B. Student Behavior

The classroom is the environment in which learning, discussion and sharing take place. It is also a place where those desiring to be confirmed must demonstrate their growing spiritual maturity by showing a willingness to become disciples. If the child is resentful or resistive to spiritual instruction, we will not force them to be confirmed. It would be better for them to postpone confirmation until they are more spiritually mature.

C. Attendance

Parent(s) and students are expected to strive for 100% class attendance. In case of an absence, the parents must notify the church office prior to the class session. PARENTS AND STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO MAKE UP WORK PRIOR TO THE NEXT CLASS SESSION.

D. Requirements/Expectations & Completed Units Of Study

- Score 70% or higher on the "Readiness For Confirmation Exam"

- 75% CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL through the calendar year
- 100% class attendance
- Serve as acolytes when scheduled

VII. STRENGTHS OF THIS CONFIRMATION MINISTRY

- A. A thorough course of instruction aimed at developing maturity in the realm of Christian discipleship
- B. A tremendous tool for establishing a lifelong, spiritual relationship with their parents
- C. Provides for cross-generational spiritual communication
- D. Puts both parent(s) and student on the pathway of wholesome growth in their relationship with the Lord
- E. Affirms and supports the parent(s) Biblical role as spiritual leader of the household
- F. Children are personally, spiritually mentored by those who have the greatest possibility of making a positive impact on their lives – their parent(s).¹

¹ The confirmation Handbook and a completed copy of the “Readiness for Confirmation Quiz’ is available online at <http://www.flcclearwater.org/pdf/files/readiness.pdf>