



Saint Nicholas Lutheran Church
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Confirmation 8th Grade Session and Lesson Plan

Our basic teaching strategy is as follows: the 8th grade confirmation classes will meet two sessions per month. The first session will be a Family Day celebration, where parents/families and confirmands will all attend.

Each topic will be covered in two (2) confirmation sessions. The first session will be mainly content, usually presented by one of the Pastors. The second session will center on small groups working on the practicum experience for that topic. Since we learn best by doing, the capstone of each practicum will be some sort of presentation. To make the learning more interesting, one or more groups of 8th grade confirmands, led by their mentor(s), will present the results of their practicum work to the assembled families during the Family Day celebrations.

Each group will be expected to do all of the required practicums and 2 of the optional ones of their choice – if there are no volunteers for a particular optional practicum topic, the Pastors may assign a group to present on it.

Eight topics will be covered during the year, corresponding to the goals outlined in appendix 1 (page 4).

1. Use of the means of grace (worship) 9/16-10/21
 - a. What do we do at worship? What are the parts of it? How do we worship reverently? What are the sacraments? What role do they play in Christian life? What is the LBW? How is it organized? Introducing the ELW. Places and parts of the worship space. All 8th grade confirmands will do Practicum 1, 2, and 3 below.
 - b. Practicum 1 Attend services together for a few weeks. After each service, discuss your reactions, questions, impressions.
 - c. Practicum 2: 8th grade confirmands will design and lead a short worship at the 10/7 Family day celebration
 - d. Practicum 3: 8th graders do a presentation of the colors of the liturgical year for the 11/4 Family Day Celebration
2. Use of the means of grace (scripture) (11/4-11/18)
 - a. What is the Bible? How is it organized? What kinds of literature does it contain? How do we understand it? What about translations and

- languages? (All 8th grade confirmands will do Practicum 1 and 2, below).
Practicum 3 is optional.
- b. Practicum 1: Read the Gospel of Matthew. Keep a notepad of anything that strikes you as inspiring or difficult or important. Meet with group/mentor to discuss
 - c. Practicum 2: Design and lead a bible study for 12/02 Family Day. This can take the form of a skit or play with discussion to follow.
 - d. Practicum 3: Participate in a Bible Bowl team.
3. Use of the means of grace (creeds, catechisms, confessions) (12/02)
 - a. What are the historic creeds? How are they organized? Review of the creeds and the Small Catechism. Review of the Lutheran history and tradition. All 8th grade confirmands participate in Practicum 1, below.
 - b. Practicum 1: Do a skit of Luther's life for 01/06 Family Day celebration.
 4. Christian life and choice (01/06-01/20)
 - a. What are the bases of moral reasoning in the Lutheran tradition (law and gospel, congregation as a community of moral deliberation, grace, confession, repentance, forgiveness and penance). All 8th grade confirmands will do Practicum 1. Practicum 2 is optional.
 - b. Practicum 1: Volunteer together at one of the local agencies supported by Saint Nicholas. Discuss.
 - c. Practicum 2: Discuss an issue that is important to teens. Present at 02/03 Family Day.
 5. The Congregation and its work (02/03-03/16)
 - a. What are the ministries of the congregation? How is the congregation organized? Who are the Sponsors? What do they do? (All 8th grade confirmands will do Practicum 1 **and** Practicum 2.)
 - b. Practicum 1: Get a copy of the church budget, find out where the money goes. Discuss how you decide whether and how much of a financial commitment you want to make to the church.
 - c. Practicum 2: Attend a council or sponsors meeting together. Discuss what went on. Decide which committee or task force confirmand wants to be involved with at the end of confirmation.
 6. Issues, traditions and leadership of the congregation
 - a. What is the history of SNLC? Who were the previous ordained and lay leaders? Build a timeline. What are the issues of the community? How is SNLC part of the community? (All 8th grade confirmands will do Practicum 1. Practicum 2 is optional.)
 - b. Practicum 2: Interview current and past leaders of the congregation. Report back.
 7. Expressions of the Church (3/30 – 4/27)
 - a. How is the ELCA organized? What does it do? Who are the church's leaders? What do they do? (All 8th grade confirmands will do Practicum 1. Practicum 2 is optional.)
 - b. Practicum 1: Interview a Bishop or an assistant to the Bishop.
 8. Faith Statement (3/30-4/27)

- a. 1 Peter 3:15 says, in part, “Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.” Yet our faiths are never fully formed, but continue to evolve over our lifetimes. How do you understand your faith journey to this point? Who has influenced it? How do you hope for it to grow and unfold? All 8th grade confirmands will complete Practicum 1.
- b. Practicum 1: Write your faith statement for presentation to the congregation on Pentecost.

The usual Family Day Confirmation classes and adult activities will be organized as follows:

12:30-1:00PM Youth activity (outside if possible) during lunch set-up.

1:00-1:30PM Lunch

1:30-2:00PM Practicum presentation

2:00-3:00PM Content Presentation for confirmands; adult classes

3:00-3:30PM Small group work for confirmands and adults

The usual non-Family Day Confirmation classes will mix content presentations and small group work on practicum projects.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Confirmation Day will be Pentecost Sunday, May 11 (Yes, Mother’s Day).

Appendix 1: Goals of a Confirmation Program

Broadly speaking, the goals of a confirmation program can be thought of in terms of *Information* and *Formation*. While these are not mutually exclusive, they are somewhat different in emphasis, in appropriate teaching methods and ultimate aims. Let's contrast them:

Aims	Information	<i>Formation</i>
Discipleship	Learn about discipleship	Learn to be disciples
Jesus	Learn about Jesus	Learn to follow Jesus
Bible	Learn about the Bible	Learn to use biblical thinking, decision-making
Creeds, catechisms, commandments	Learn about creeds, catechisms, commandments	Learn to live into creeds, catechisms, commandments
Social Issues, Larger Church, This Congregation	Learn about social issues, larger church, this congregation	Learn to live as a Christian in world; experience larger church, this congregation
Methodology	Cognitive	Experiential
Teacher	Content expert	Mentor

The curriculum as a whole and individual sessions need to balance these two aims: part of our sessions should have a cognitive focus and part should have an experiential focus; part content, part life-lessons.

Finally, as shown in the last line of the table, the aim of imparting information is the job of a content expert. The aim of experiential learning is the job of a mentor. Thus, the 8th grade confirmands will need both content experts and mentors. We are thinking at this point of having small groups of 3-4 confirmands per mentor. Mentors are best drawn from the parents of the 8th graders – whether a confirmand should or should not be in a group led by his/her parent can be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Considerations for the 8th Grade curriculum

Based on the constitution of the congregation, confirmed members of the congregation:

1. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacrament
2. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and teachings of the Lutheran church

3. support the work of the congregation, synod and churchwide organization of the ELCA
4. are allowed to vote in congregational elections
5. are eligible to hold office in the congregation

To become a confirmed member of the congregation requires that we understand these privileges and duties both intellectually and experientially.

- To make “regular use of the means of grace” means to attend worship services regularly and to take communion -- this means that we need to understand and regularly experience what happens at worship and in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.
- Since the Word is a means of grace, being a confirmed member also means that we will read scripture regularly – this means that we need to know how to read scripture and the basics of what it contains and that we develop habits of life that support regular reading of scripture.
- Finally, since the creeds, catechism and the Lutheran confessions form part of the traditions of the Lutheran church, we need to understand their contents and how they apply to the way we live.
- To live a Christian life means all of the things we just said, and also that we understand at least the basics of moral reasoning in the Lutheran context, the teachings of the Lutheran Church and that we live into being a Lutheran Christian in the world.
- To support the work of the congregation, synod and church-wide organization of the ELCA means that we are familiar with all of these expressions of the church, that we understand the steward role of the Christian and that we have experience in the various expressions of the church.
- In order to be an informed voter in congregational elections, we need a basic understanding of the work of the congregation, the issues the congregation faces, the mission and hopes of the congregation in extending the reign of God and that we participate in this work.
- In order to hold office in the congregation, we need a sophisticated understanding of who and whose we are, the basic documents and processes we use to govern ourselves, our traditions and history as a congregation and how we are called to confess Christ in this place.

These things really are the business of a lifetime’s work and we only have a year. So, what we hope to do is teach the beginnings of each of these points.