

Confirmation Parent Handbook

2019-2020

Mount Calvary Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Excelsior, Minnesota
www.mountcalvary.org
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MOUNT CALVARY



Welcome!

God has called you as parents to cultivate in your child a lifelong relationship with God. By enrolling your child in confirmation, you are promising:

- to worship and pray with your child,
- talk about your faith,
- tell Bible stories,
- exemplify a Christian life, and
- serve God together.

We look forward to partnering with you in this spiritual journey.

What is Confirmation?

1. The public promise that our young people make to confess their faith and take responsibility for their developing relationship with God.
2. The public promise that parents make to accompany and support our young people in their developing relationship with God.
3. The public promise our church community, family and friends make to accompany and support our young people in their developing relationship with God.
4. The public promise God makes to always be with us, seek us, be gracious with us, include us, and love us.

The 7 CORE Confirmation Experiences

We believe these experiences are essential to cultivating a relationship with God.



1. Parental Involvement

Parents are the number one influence in the life of their child! When worshipping, loving, and following Jesus are important to you, those practices will likely be important to your child. Here are ways you can support and encourage your child in their developing relationship with God:

- Make confirmation a top priority on your calendar.
- Worship at least twice a month with your child on Saturday or Sunday. Discuss the worship service, bible readings, and sermon. Use our Worship Notes sheet as a help.
- Participate in 1 or more of the Retreats/Service Days as a Parent Chaperone – you are needed!
- Pray daily for your child and his or her relationship with God. Pray with your child. Talk about your own prayer life with your child.
- Pray weekly for and support your child's small group leader and the Mount Calvary staff.
- Continue intentionally developing your own relationship with God. Your example and integrity are frequently the most significant factors in your child's growing faith.



2. Worship

Regular involvement with the community in worship builds connection with God and God's people. Most Wednesdays during the school year we gather for worship designed for our students. Music, preaching, and audiovisuals make for an interactive worship experience. Worship leadership is shared between staff, high school students, lay adults, and confirmation students themselves. We have special Lent worship services for small groups to attend together as well.





3. Small Groups

Immediately following Wednesday worship, confirmation students gather together with a small group of their peers, guided by caring adults. Our adults guide their group for all three years to build a strong guide/group relationship. The small group has three main aspects:

- a. **Relationship and Community Building** — Our small groups help foster meaningful guide-to-student and student-to-student relationships. Groups spend significant time simply checking in with one another about life.
- b. **Sacred Space and Prayer** — Practicing speaking and listening to God is essential to our growing relationships with God. Small groups open by setting out an altar cloth and cross, lighting a candle and saying a prayer. Small group closes with prayer.
- c. **Entering God’s Story** — Each week small groups are invited to enter into a Bible story, connecting God’s story with their own story. Guides are not Bible experts, but are faithful adults trained to accompany, ask questions, and create a safe place for students to explore their growing faith.



4. Service

We are the hands, face, and voice of Christ in the world; therefore:

- a. **FAMILY SERVICE:** We expect families to serve together at an event—either in the congregation or in the community—at least once a year.
- b. **SERVICE DAY:** We expect each student to participate in their grade’s Service Day. (See schedule.)
- c. **SMALL GROUP SERVICE PROJECT:** We expect each small group to complete at least one service project of their choice during the year.
- d. **WEEKLY OFFERING:** We expect students to contribute to the offering gathered each week during Wednesday large group worship. This offering supports local and global ministries through our Serve to the Max event. Please discuss making a regular offering with your child, decide an appropriate amount to give each week, and make arrangements for your child to give his or her offering on Wednesdays.



5. Retreats

Retreats are absolutely essential to the confirmation experience. Outdoors and away from home, students experience God's presence and God's people in new and personal ways. Each retreat will focus on relationship building, experiencing God in the outdoors, free time to relax and recharge, being with and making new friends and worship. Retreats also include a special focus on one element of Luther's Small Catechism:

- The Lord's Prayer
- The Apostles Creed
- The Ten Commandments
- Baptism
- Holy Communion

The 7th/8th Grade Retreat is a two-year curriculum that alternates every other year. 7th/8th graders are expected to go both years. We offer 7th/8th grade families two weekends in October to attend the retreat in order to give families options that work in their calendar.

2018 - The Lord's Prayer and Spirituality

2019 - Baptism and God's Holy Spirit

2020 - The Lord's Prayer and Spirituality

2021 - Baptism and God's Holy Spirit



6. Mentoring

Young people need authentic, affirming, available adults in addition to parents, for example, a family friend, a neighbor, a relative, or an influential coach/teacher. In the winter of their 8th grade year, 8th grade students will meet at least 4 times with an adult mentor of their choice. We provide the four-meeting curriculum and as a family you choose a mentor for your child. Mentors will be required to attend one orientation session (see 2019-2020 Confirmation Schedule for dates & times). If your confirmand is struggling to choose a mentor, our Faith Formation staff is happy to assist you by identifying a caring adult from our congregation. Each 8th grader is required to create a confirmation faith project which is based on these mentoring conversations. We invite creativity! We want these faith projects to be an authentic expression of our young persons' relationship with God.



7. Summer Camp

God changes lives at camp. Young people will often point back to a significant camp experience or relationship when they talk about the roots of their relationship with God. The kids who feel most connected, most involved, most excited about confirmation are generally the ones who go to camp. Plus, it is tons of fun!

Mt. Calvary blocks out a week at Luther Park Bible Camp in Danbury, Wisconsin at the beginning of August each year. Mt. Calvary is the only congregation in attendance and Mt. Calvary staff run the program. Elementary and high school programs are also available; so send all the kids to camp and take a week for mom and dad! (There's even a multiple-camper family discount.)

Goal

Confirmation is the beginning of an adult relationship with God. We have designed our program so that each of our children, in their own way, can claim:

- I am a beloved child of God.
- I belong to the family of God.
- I make a difference in God's world.
- I am a part of God's story.

We pray that our children discover and embrace a lifelong journey of loving and being loved by God.



Expectations

These expectations honor your child, their small group, guides and leaders, and this community's commitment to help you cultivate your child's relationship with God.

Attendance (p22)—Present and punctual for all confirmation program events.

Worship (p6, 23)

Parents:

- Worship with your child twice a month.

Students:

- Complete 10 Worship Notes per year.*

*Exempt from this expectation: those who have attended confirmation camp the preceding summer or those are Sunday School teachers.

- Attend Lent worship and pizza dinner with your small group each year.

Small Group (p8, 24)

6th Grade Parents:

- Participate in small groups as scheduled.
- Complete HomeTime activities.

All Parents:

- Be available to substitute as a guide
- Offer to bring a snack for small group time

Students:

- Participate in small group times.

Service (p12)

Parents:

- Do a service event as a family yearly.
- Facilitate a weekly Wed. offering.

Students:

- Do a small group service project yearly.
- Give a weekly Wed. offering.
- Do Serve to the Max night yearly.

Retreats & Service Days (p25, 26)

Parents:

- Chaperone one retreat or service day over 3 years.

Students:

- Attend 2 service days over 3 years.
- Attend 2 retreats over 3 years.

Summer Camp (p16)

Students:

- Attend camp each year. (Attend at least once over three years. We recommend especially the summers after 5th & 6th grades.)

Dating & Sexuality Nights (p27)

7th & 8th Grade Parents & Students:

- Attend two 7th grade sessions.
- Attend two 8th grade sessions.

8th Grade Rite of Confirmation (p28, 29)

Parents:

- In collaboration with your child, choose a mentor for your child.
- Participate in Finale Night.
- Participate in the Rite of Confirmation on Confirmation Sunday.

Students:

- Complete 4 mentor conversations.
- Complete and turn in 4 mentor conversation reflections.
- Complete a service project with your mentor.
- Complete and turn in a Confirmation Project.
- Participate in Finale Night.
- Participate in the Rite of Confirmation on Confirmation Sunday.

FLEXIBILITY & GRACE

This is a grace-filled community. School and extracurriculars put big demands on young people and families. And life happens. We promise to work with you through pretty much any circumstance to help you along this confirmation pathway.

If something comes up, please speak to Andrea or Pastor Aaron. **We will find alternatives that work for you so that your child can get confirmed.**

Attendance

Every evening of confirmation is important. Retreats, service days, and camps are an integral part of confirmation, not options. We believe that full participation in confirmation is something which will impact the entire life of a student more so than sports or other extracurricular activities. We believe that confirmation is one of the most significant developmental activities for your child. All confirmation activities are designed to engage our children and their developing ability to relate to themselves, others, and God faithfully, spiritually, and prayerfully.

We take attendance at all confirmation events as a way to care for our students. When students are infrequently attending, our guides will contact parents to determine the reason for being absent.

There is no penalty for absences. If your child is ill please give them the rest they need to recover.

Worship Notes

Worship is an important part of our Confirmation experience and our expectation is that our students participate regularly in weekend worship with their families. We ask each student to complete at least ten worship notes each year based on a Saturday or Sunday worship service.* Worship note forms will be available in the Narthex and when each one is completed it can be dropped in the basket in the Narthex reserved for completed sermon notes.

The pastors read all the sermon notes and return them. So, ask your questions and give your comments!

A worship note form can be downloaded from our website.

You can complete worship notes for worship services at any congregation. So, if you are visiting another church or out of town, take a worship note with you.

Parents, this is a discussion tool for you to use to talk about worship with your child.

*Exempt from this expectation: those who have attended confirmation camp the preceding summer or those who are Sunday School teachers.

Small Group Curriculum

Our curriculum will focus on biblical knowledge, a Lutheran perspective on being a follower of Jesus, service to neighbor, and relationship building—all striving to create opportunities for discussion and application of God’s story in daily living. Students should bring their Bible with them every week. No specific Bible version is required, but Student Bibles (NRSV) are available for purchase (\$20). Other curriculum materials will be distributed weekly. The 6th Grade curriculum has been created by Andrea Fieldhouse (Director of Family and Youth Ministry) and focuses on our identity as Lutheran Christians. It will include a blend of parent/youth nights, large group worship, home time, and finally the creation of small groups.

The 7th and 8th graders use a curriculum designed by Pastor Aaron, connecting God’s story and the stories of God’s family to our present-day life. We will trace our Christian ancestry from Creation to Jesus and from Jesus to Today. Year 1 focuses on the stories of the Old Testament. While Year 2 will focus on the stories of the New Testament and the saints and teachers from the ancient church to modern day.

Service Days

6th Grade Service Day: Sat. Feb. 8, 2020. A day of learning and service work at Global Health Ministry's facility in Fridley.



7th Grade Service Day: Sat. Feb. 22, 2020. A day at Augsburg University, Minneapolis in their *Interfaith Bridge Building* program learning more about and connecting with our Muslim neighbors.

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8th Grade Service Day: Sat. Mar. 14, 2020. A day of learning and service work with our sister congregation, Gethsemane Lutheran Church (4656 Colfax Avenue North, Minneapolis).

Retreats

6th Grade Retreat: September 20-21, 2019 at Camp Ihduhapi in Loretto, MN. Maps and directions will be provided. Parents are requested to drop off their youth at Camp by 7 p.m. on Friday evening and pick them up at 4:00 pm on Saturday afternoon at the Camp.

The 7th/8th Grades have a joint retreat. Families have the option of choosing either weekend it is offered. Pick one. The program is the same both weekends. We offer two options so as to give families flexibility.

7th/8th Grade Retreat Option 1: October 11-13, 2019 at Luther Park in Danbury, WI. Arrive at church at 5:45pm to board the buses (eat before you come!). The buses will return Sunday by 2:00 pm.

7th/8th Grade Retreat Option 2: October 25-27, 2019 at Luther Park in Danbury, WI. Arrive at church at 5:45pm to board the buses (eat before you come!). The buses will return Sunday by 2:00 pm.

Dating & Sexuality Nights

Parents and their children attend two Wednesday nights over two weeks. Pastor Aaron and Andrea facilitate family conversations on a range of topics including:

- What is the definition of love?
- How is love truly practiced?
- What does God hope for our relationships?
- What are some practices for building strong relationships?
- What are some behaviors to avoid in romantic relationships?
- And more!

This night is designed to help families start and continue a conversation around dating and sexuality and create a supportive and trusting dialogue between parents and their kids.



8th Grade Special Nights

WED APR 22, 2020 — Picture Night 6:45 pm.

Please have your 8th grader here by 6:15 pm. Appropriate attire is requested: nice, clean, dressy clothes—church clothes—no shorts, t-shirts, baseball caps, or tank tops. Each child and guide will be receiving a 5x7 of the entire group together. Guides and parents can take their own photos if they choose. We should be done by 7:30 p.m., but don't be surprised if we run a few minutes late – it's a lot of people in one picture!

FRI MAY 15 — Finale Night 5:45 pm - 10:15 pm.

This mandatory evening for our 8th graders includes rehearsal for the confirmation service itself, time for each confirmand to create his/her stole for the confirmation service, and their last small group time. More details will be communicated as this important evening approaches.

SUN MAY 17 — Confirmation Sunday

Parents, family, and friends are invited to celebrate, pray for, and bless their children as they affirm their relationship with God in the Rite of Confirmation. There will be two services: 1pm & 3pm. Your child's small group will be assigned a service in mid-January.

8th Grade Mentoring and Faith Projects

All 8th grade students will meet with their mentor four times during the season of Lent. This can be on a Wednesday night or at any time mutually agreed upon by parents, youth, and their mentor. If you are the parent of an 8th grader, begin to talk with your student this fall about who they would like to ask to be their mentor for confirmation. The mentor can be a family friend, a neighbor, a relative, or an influential coach/teacher. They can have a significant faith background or be someone who is willing to enter into conversations about faith with your student. We provide the four-meeting curriculum and you decide as a family whom you would like to choose to mentor your student. Mentors will be required to attend one orientation session in February (see Confirmation Schedule for dates & times). If your confirmand is struggling to choose a mentor, our Faith Formation staff is happy to assist you by identifying a caring adult from our congregation. Each 8th grader is required to create a confirmation faith project which is based on these mentoring conversations. We invite creativity!

Friends

Students and families are welcome to invite friends to attend confirmation, even if they are not enrolled. Friends are welcome to join us for the large group worship experience, but not the small group sessions. Friends who would like to consider joining confirmation should have their parents contact Brenda Lund (Faith Formation Assistant) to begin the registration process and to set up an orientation meeting with Andrea (6th grade) or Pastor Aaron (7th & 8th grade).



Code of Conduct

1. Confirmation students respect themselves, each other, their small group leader, pastors, and all adult leaders. They will not insult each other, put each other down, make rude gestures, or physically harass each other.
2. Confirmation students always respect and care for Mount Calvary's building and grounds. They will pick-up after yourselves and others.
3. Confirmation students will participate fully in all activities
4. Confirmation students will come prepared and on time with all required materials.
5. Dangerous, illegal, immoral, or destructive items are prohibited, including but not limited to: drugs, alcohol, firearms, weapons, fireworks, vaping/e-cig materials, etc.
6. Confirmation students will power down and put away all electronic devices during worship and small group.
7. Confirmation students will not leave the building without an adult during confirmation.

Discipline Policy

As a community of faith, Mount Calvary is intended to be a very gracious and welcoming place. Part of that is our expectation that youth and adults will be respectful and appropriate with each other. The following is how we will address issues if they arise.

First instance – A guide brings the issue to the awareness of Pastor Aaron. Pastor Aaron will speak with the student (and/or the group if necessary).

Second instance – Pastor Aaron will speak with the student and/or the group if necessary, and parents will receive a phone call and may be asked for a meeting with Pastor Aaron, the student, and the guide to discuss and create a plan for improved behavior.

Third instance – If a third instance arises, the student will no longer participate in the group confirmation program.

Guide Background Checks

To ensure the safety of our children and adults, each year we require all our volunteers who guide and lead our confirmation program to complete a basic background check. The form is found on our website and is kept confidential.

Cost

For program year 2019-2020, the confirmation registration fee is \$155. This annual fee covers the costs of all retreats, on/off-site events, and transportation. In addition, it supports our special events and professional musicians. Scholarships are available - please contact Pastor Aaron or Brenda Lund for more information.

Bad Weather

Weather cancellations will be posted on the Mount Calvary website. If school is cancelled due to bad weather, there will be no confirmation. Parents should use their own judgment about driving to confirmation in bad weather.

Web Site

Please check our web-site for information before you contact our staff. The schedule, handbook, and other important information can be found at www.mountcalvary.org.

E-mail Reminders

E-mails will be sent out on an as-needed basis with updated information, upcoming sessions, and other information. We hope this will be an additional way to communicate with parents during the year. It is your responsibility to make sure we are made aware of any changes to your email address.

Contact Information

Brenda Lund – Initial contact for Confirmation, registration, payments, retreat info, data updates
brenda.lund@mountcalvary.org
952.474.8893, ext. 118

Pastor Aaron Werner – 7th and 8th gr., curriculum, guide support, student needs
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952.474.8893 ext. 120

Andrea Fieldhouse – 6th gr., mentoring
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Chris Anderson – service opportunities
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