

## FOR CONFIRMATION PARENTS:

# Confirmation Ministry at Grace, Glendora, CA

Confirmation is a process of study, learning, worship, fellowship, service and growth in all aspects of the Christian faith, led by the Pastor. It needs to be done in an engaging, interesting, stimulating and creative way so that it is a positive event for the young person  $\neq$  not something to endure or something being forced on someone.

Different Lutheran churches do confirmation in different ways. Also, the time involved on the part of the students varies from one Lutheran church to another. And a church=s unique circumstances impact how confirmation is and can be done.

Parents: you need to provide your input on a number of things, including:

1. Can your student be present, minus sickness/emergency, each Thursday evening from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. during the school year, with summers off?
2. Do you have any objection to the program being a 2-year program?
3. Do you have any objection to homework assignments, field trips and memorization?
4. Are you able/willing to participate in helping me with the meal at the beginning of each class session, on a rotating basis?
5. Are you able to chaperone on field trips?
6. Are you agreeable to having your young person go on periodic Friday-Saturday retreats?

I propose an annual format, which I have considerable experience with and have found to be very good for the students  $\neq$  their interest, their cognitive learning, their motivation and their spiritual growth and maturity.

Here are the format components of what I propose:

Summers off.

Year begins first Thursday after Labor Day with 6 weeks of classes (September 9, 16, 23, 30, Oct. 7 and 14 ), one hour each week. Then three weeks off.

Weekend retreat (Nov. 12-13), sleeping over at a retreat center away from Glendora. Leave Friday from church around 6 p.m. after a pizza supper. Return by 6 p.m. on Saturday. Retreat would have adult chaperones. Would cover 6 weeks of classes and be combined with relaxation, recreation, worship, study time, preparation time, free time. After retreat 3 weeks off.

Then weekly classes Dec. 16, 23, 30, Jan. 6, 13, 20. Then 3 weeks off.

Then weekend retreat Feb. 18-19, 2010. Then 3 weeks off.

Then weekly classes March 17, 24, 31, April 7 and 14. Off April 21. Class on April 28.

Then 3 weeks off.

Then weekend retreat May 27-28.

Then June-August off.

Then, classes would resume the first Thursday after Labor Day and follow a pattern like the first year, with Confirmation occurring on Reformation Sunday in October. (Classes would resume in the fall of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year for 2 months)

Confirmation in this scenario then occurs at the beginning of the church school year and is an encouragement to new adult Christians to continue in their study and worship, rather than being seen (when done in May) as a graduation, with the summer off and more worldly enticements to stay away from church (and much harder to get started back in the fall after being away all summer from study).

This approach assumes a two-year confirmation program, with First Communion occurring no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The Pastor would be the teacher, assisted by adult chaperones on the retreats and field trips.

In addition to the weekly classes and retreats, there would be some field trips, homework, sermon notes, community service hours and memorization requirements.

Field trips in the two-year program would include an all day bus trip to visit California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks and California Lutheran Homes in Alhambra.

Other field trips in the two-year program would include a visit to a local Roman Catholic Mass, an Islamic Mosque service, a Jewish Sabbath service and an African American Baptist worship service.

Memorization requirements over the 2 years would include Martin Luther=s explanations of each of the three articles of the Apostles= Creed, the Lord=s Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, as found in The Small Catechism. I would also require students to memorize the names in order of all the books of the Bible, with proper spellings.

I would encourage students to plan and carry out their community service projects to benefit programs and needs outside Grace (being outward directed rather than inward directed).

During the 2 year program the students will also be required to view at least one good film on the life, work and teachings of Martin Luther and to write a paper on one aspect of Luther=s contributions to Christianity.

I assume that all students will not always be present and only ask that I be notified in advance when a student will not be present. I ask the parents= support in having the students make up work when they are absent and keep up with homework assignments.

It is particularly important that parents and students do everything possible to see that retreats are not missed, as these will cover the equivalent of 6 weeks of weekly classes.

Costs for retreats and field trips will be kept as low as possible and parents will be asked to contribute toward covering the costs of the retreats for their student. The church will cover costs for those students whose families are not able to contribute.

I am very open to ideas and suggestions from students and parents.

One final word: sometime during the 2 year program, I want to visit with the confirmation student and his/her parent/guardian (s) in the student=s home to talk about how confirmation is going, how the student=s faith is growing and to offer encouragement and affirmation.

Remember me and the students in your prayers as we move forward in this exciting faith journey! Thank you for all you can and will do to help. This is an experience your young person will remember and hopefully treasure for the rest of his/her life.

+Intentional Interim Pastor Tom Ford

NOTE: The first weekly Confirmation Class will be held September 9 from 6:45-7:45 p.m. at Grace.