

CONFIRMATION FAQ

What are the differences between CORE/Summit and Confirmation?

CORE (6-8th grade) and Summit (9-12th grade) are weekly student gatherings that runs during the school year. They are a place where all students can grow in their faith, invite their friends, and grapple with the real life issues they are facing daily. It consists of a fun and impactful large group time with a student-led band, relevant teaching, and small group discussions led by adult mentors. CORE meets in Cornerstone on Sundays from 11am-12pm and Summit meets on Wednesday evenings in Cornerstone from 7:00-8:15pm.

Confirmation, on the other hand, is for those students who are serious about making a greater commitment to understanding the Christian faith and publically professing their faith through the Rite of Confirmation. It is an optional faith development program that any student (8th-11th grade) can participate in if they desire to explore Luther's six chief parts of the Christian faith (The Apostles' Creed, The Ten Commandments, Baptism, Confession & Absolution, The Lord's Supper and Prayer). As a part of Confirmation, students will be expected to engage in deeper study of the Bible and Luther's Small Catechism as well as participate in discussion groups. Once the Confirmation requirements are completed, students can publically profess their faith and participate in the annual Confirmation Service in November.

Why do we expect Confirmation students to attend CORE and Summit?

Confirmation is NOT a replacement for weekly worship and student ministry engagement. We at Pathfinder believe in the value of pursuing a whole life through Jesus, and we know this doesn't come from pursuing just one aspect of our faith. Confirmation provides an extra layer of knowledge and examines the fundamental doctrinal beliefs of our faith. Regularly attending CORE or Summit encourages the building of relationships and examining a student's faith on a personal level. They are Pathfinder's best venue for spiritual growth in teens.

How old does my student have to be?

Any student in 8th-11th grade is welcome to participate in Confirmation. Our current model includes the majority of students beginning in January of their 8th grade year in order to participate in the Rite of Confirmation in November of their 9th grade year. However, many students feel waiting until high school before beginning the Confirmation program is appropriate for them and we encourage families to put a lot of thought and prayer into making the decision about when to begin Confirmation.

What are the expectations of Confirmation and why are they important?

Confirmation (including attending CORE/Summit) is a great way for students to develop their faith by going deeper in their relationship with God. There are multiple components that contribute to this development, such as gaining knowledge/understanding, building community with Christian peers, serving God and others, and owning their personal faith. The expectations for Confirmation have been created to teach and reinforce these essential components*.

Students will be expected to:

- ***(Mandatory) Work through six key doctrines of the Christian faith*** (also known as "The Six Chief Parts" from Martin Luther's Small Catechism) as well as two additional units. Students will view an introductory teaching and then work through related material individually/ with parents, completing online study questions for each unit. *(Knowledge)*
- ***(Mandatory) Attend Required Discussion Groups*** for each of the eight units after submitting the online questions. *(Understanding)*

- **(Mandatory) Write a personal Statement of Faith** and share it with their small group or a Student Ministry leader after attending the discussion groups. *(Ownership of Personal Faith)*
- **(Mandatory) Complete required service hours** prior to the Rite of Confirmation at Pathfinder Church and/or in the community. See below for service hour requirements. (Hours must be completed within the calendar year of the Confirmation ceremony and be completed by Oct 15, 2023). *(Acts of Service)*
- **(Mandatory) Attend the Confirmation Day Retreat** in the summer (more information below). *(Christian Community)*
- **(Mandatory) Regularly attend Sunday morning CORE (middle school) and Summit (high school)** large group teaching and small group discussions. *(Life Application and Christian Community)*
- **(Highly Recommend) Attend the Middle School or High School Retreat** each year. *(Christian Community)*

How is Confirmation for 2023 structured?

The Confirmation process will be utilizing both online elements and live, face-to-face discussions. The following steps will need to be taken to register and participate in the program.

- Register and pay online at <https://pathfinderstl.org/confirmation/>
- For every unit, students will download the Unit from the Confirmation webpage.
- Students will type in their answers and submit them to confirmation@pathfinderstl.org
- Students can complete the unit's work at their own pace, saving the document each time they make progress.
- Completed questions will be reviewed by parents and then submitted by students.
- Attend the required discussion group for the unit (dates below).
- After the discussion group, the next unit's curriculum will be made available online.

Who will be teaching and leading the discussion groups?

Our pastors, student ministry directors, and called teachers will teach and facilitate the discussion groups.

What if my student has to miss a discussion group?

We allow students to miss one discussion group without making it up. If they miss a second, it is the student's responsibility to schedule a time to meet with the Student Ministry directors and discuss the material within 30 days of the missed discussion group. If a third discussion group is missed, it cannot be made up and your student will not be able to be confirmed this year.

What happens at the Day Retreat?

The day retreat is mandatory. It is an opportunity for confirmands to build relationships, have intentional discussions and ask questions in an open environment. The day will include their final discussion group, an activity for them to intentionally think through and choose their Confirmation verse, and guidance and time spent towards writing their Statement of Faith. Both date options will be identical and students only need to attend one of the two dates.

How does my student get registered for CORE and Summit?

You can register your student online at <https://pathfinderstl.org/students/>. There are no fees to attend CORE or Summit.

Why self study?

While solid teaching is an important part of our spiritual growth, the personal disciplines of prayer and Bible study are essential for continued, sustained growth. In a self-study model we are putting greater responsibility on students to take ownership of their spiritual growth. We are also helping them develop habits and disciplines that will serve them over their entire LIFEjourney. In addition, we believe that when students can work through the Confirmation materials at their own pace, they will be better positioned to live out their Confirmation vows.

What are the benefits of parents being involved in this meaningful process?

The original intention for the Small Catechism was for Confirmation to be done in the home. We know that whole families will be strengthened in their faith when they have an opportunity to view the teachings, have discussions, and answer the questions together. An added bonus is that this approach will give busy students and families the much-needed flexibility to complete the requirements according to their own schedules.

What if I don't feel equipped to help my student?

Growth happens through struggle. We expect that students, and even parents, may struggle with parts of their Confirmation studies. That is normal and to be expected. Parents will be given answer guides. However, many questions are open to interpretation and are answered differently by each student.

How long will it take?

The Confirmation program is designed to be completed in one calendar year. The discussion groups are scheduled three to four weeks apart beginning in February and ending in October. This basic structure helps keep students on pace to participate in the Confirmation ceremony in November.

How does my student complete their service hours?

Service hours include 3 separate requirements*:

- **Pathfinder Team:** 10 hours of service on ONE Pathfinder team (Church Tech, Kids Min Tech, Student Min Tech, Student Min Band, Small Group Leader for Kids Min or CORE, Hospitality, Facilities).
- **Pathfinder Events:** Serve at 2 different Pathfinder events (Christmas or Easter events, Summer Blast, July 4, Friday Frenzie etc). Communication will be sent out frequently when events are coming up so confirmands can sign up to serve.
- **Community Service:** Serve in 2 separate opportunities out in the community. This is unpaid service that benefits another person or group (children, senior citizens, ESL learners, church, community events, etc.)

*Service hours must have been completed in the same calendar year as Confirmation.

What about First Communion?

Holy Communion (The Lord's Supper) is an incredible gift where God gives His people the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, which brings forgiveness, life and salvation. Parents and students should make a mutual, prayerful decision about when to begin receiving Communion based on the student's personal faith in Jesus and their ability to properly examine themselves.

- Confirmands will follow the same steps for the Lord's Supper as the other units (view the online video, answer study questions, and attend the discussion group) regardless of whether or not they have already taken First Communion.

- Pathfinder Church also offers a Lord's Supper teaching for anyone in the congregation that is not participating in the Confirmation program but wants to learn more about communion.
- **First Communion will be celebrated on August 6, 2023 in main worship services.**

What are ALL of the important dates I need to know for the 2023 program?

November 20, 2022- Registration Opens

December 4, 2022- Parent Info Meeting // 12:15pm – 1:00pm in Cornerstone

January 8, 2023- Parent Info Meeting // 12:15pm – 1:00pm in Cornerstone

January 9, 2023- Registration Closes

February 5, 2023- Discussion group Unit 1: Apostles' Creed // 9:00am Cornerstone

March 5, 2023- Discussion group Unit 2: 10 Commandments // 9:00am Cornerstone

April 2, 2023- Discussion group Unit 3: Lord's Prayer // 9:00am Cornerstone

April 23, 2023- Discussion group Unit 4: Baptism // 9:00am Cornerstone

May 21, 2023- Discussion group Unit 5: Lord's Supper // 9:00am Cornerstone

July 22, 2023- Day Retreat Option 1 (Discussion group Unit 6: Confession & Absolution)

August 5, 2023- Day Retreat Option 2 (Discussion group Unit 6: Confession & Absolution)

August 6, 2023- First Communion // Confirmation Verse due / SOF draft due

September 10, 2023- Discussion group Unit 7: The Bible // 9:00am Cornerstone (Faith building practices)

October 1, 2023- Discussion Group Unit 8: Faith Building Practices // 9:00am Cornerstone (Bringing it all together)

October 15, 2023- Final Statement of Faith AND Service Hour Forms Due

November 2, 2023, 6:30pm- Confirmation Rehearsal and Celebration (Mandatory)

November 5, 2023- 4:00pm- Confirmation Service

What does it mean for a student to profess their faith? What will they ultimately profess at the end of the Confirmation program?

To fully understand what students will profess during the Rite of Confirmation, please read the Leader prompts and student Responses below.

LEADER: As one of your pastors, I ask you, before God and His Church: Do you this day, in the presence of God and of this congregation, acknowledge the gifts which God gave you in your Baptism?

RESPONSE: I do.

LEADER: Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?

RESPONSE: I do.

LEADER: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?

RESPONSE: Yes, I know and believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

LEADER: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son?

RESPONSE: Yes, I know and believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

LEADER: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

RESPONSE: Yes, I know and believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

LEADER: Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?

RESPONSE: Yes, by God's grace and with His help.

LEADER: Do you believe the Holy Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God?

RESPONSE: I do believe.

LEADER: Do you desire to take next steps on your LIFEjourney with us, as a part of this congregation?

RESPONSE: I do.

LEADER: Do you intend faithfully to conform all your life to the divine Word, to be faithful in the use of God's Word and Sacraments, which are His means of grace, and in faith, word, and action to remain true to the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even to death?

RESPONSE: I do so intend by the grace of God.