

Abundant Life Lutheran Church Youth Catechumen (Discipleship/Confirmation) Program

Confirmation or Catechumen?

Confirmation has always been viewed by Lutherans as the time when a young Christian takes their first adult step in the faith by making a personal, public commitment to Christ and beginning to take responsibility for their own faith walk.

Unfortunately, most Lutheran churches drifted into primarily offering knowledge as the route to Christian maturity. But Christian discipleship is about much more than knowledge; it is about being formed into a disciple by *practice*. I can know a great deal about the game of football, but this does not mean that I am ready to take the field for even a scrimmage game. In fact, if I have never strapped on pads, done some basic physical conditioning, or practiced with the team before, what is likely to happen is that I am going to get hurt.

If you are given lots of Christian knowledge, but no practice in using it, that is what is going to happen to you. Life is hard, and the powers arrayed against us—sin, death, and the devil—hate us and want to hurt us. You need to be formed for the playing field of life, not just have a head knowledge of the faith. The word the Church historically used for those who are being formed as Christian disciples is *catechumen*. From now until the time you schedule your confirmation at a worship service of the church, you are a *catechumen*.

The Model

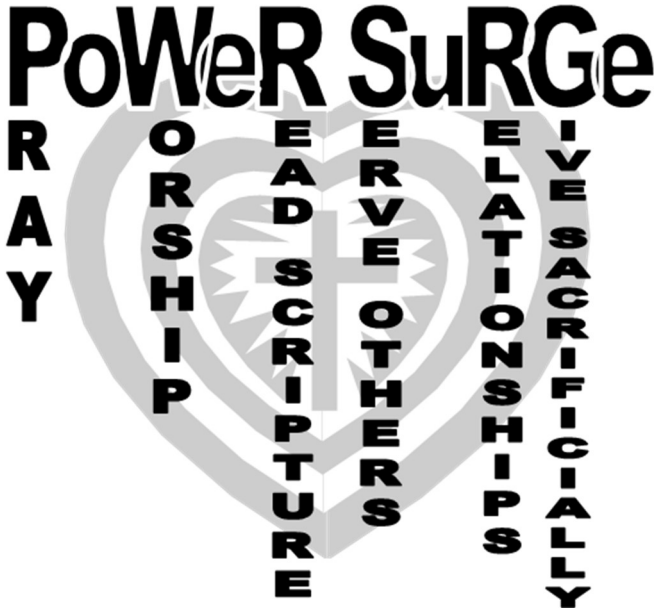
In 1 Samuel 17, the boy David takes it upon himself to challenge the Philistine champion Goliath, who no Israelite soldier will fight. The king offers David his armor and sword, but David knows he cannot use them, for “he has not tested them.” Instead, David takes the weapon he knows best as a shepherd—a sling he uses to drive away predators from the sheep—and five smooth stones from a nearby brook. With these items (and more importantly, faith in God) he defeats the giant warrior.

Our confirmation process will focus on developing the *practices* of Christian discipleship as well as mastery of a few key Christian beliefs. This means it will be different than what you may have experienced in confirmation in some key ways, for the focus will be more on Christian living than memorizing doctrine.

Our goal in this program is not to make your youth (or you!) a Biblical scholar, but instead to give you “smooth stones” that will be of practical use in the daily attempt to live as a disciple of Jesus. Therefore, the focus of our program will be the six smooth stones of *prayer, worship, Bible basics, service, relationship with Christ and other Christians, and giving from the heart*. With these tools and a little practice, you will begin to have wisdom about how to live deeply as a Christian; this will shape your whole experience of life for the better.

These aspects of Christian living are called the *marks of discipleship*. Along with growing more emotionally mature, they give you what you need to live a rich, deeply fulfilling life—the abundant life Jesus told us he came to give us! (John 10:10)

These practices of Christian disciples unleash a Holy Spirit power surge in our lives, and they can be pictured like this:



Years One and Two

Formation takes time; it is not merely a matter of mastering knowledge. Just as there are no shortcuts to becoming a champion level athlete, so there are no shortcuts in becoming a Christian disciple. For the first two years of this confirmation program, you will be required to do the following in order to practice the skills of discipleship:

Prayer

- Open or close a regular confirmation meeting with prayer when asked to
- Lead prayers at a family gathering or with at least one parent

Worship

- Complete 30 at least sermon notes through the church's web page. (There are roughly 55 sermons per year, so this should be easy.)
- Make 20 Face Book posts in separate weeks:
(If you do not have a Face Book account or your parents do not permit you to have one, other arrangements may be made with the pastor.)
 - You may take a picture or short video (10 seconds or less) of the pastor preaching and post it with a thoughtful comment.
 - You may comment on and share a sermon podcast when it is posted midweek.
- Attend at least one Seder meal or Tenebrae service during Holy Week and write a two paragraph reflection on it. This may be turned in to the pastor or confirmation coordinator in person or via email.

Reading Bible

- Attend at least 70% of the regular confirmation classes to gain Bible knowledge
- Bring your personal Bible to class with a pencil and highlighter (optional) to take notes
- Complete Bible homework as assigned

Service

- Participate in service opportunities when scheduled
- Attend at least one Leadership or Rooting, Growth, or Flourishing meeting
- Help lead/organize at least one such activity with a team of other catechumens and help from your parents or other church members

Relationship with Christ and other Christians

- Spend 2-20 minutes of quiet and stillness with Jesus every day
- Pray daily
- Identify a personal Christian mentor and work with them for at least twelve months.
(Best done as soon as possible: see guide at end of booklet)
- Participate in at least one confirmation camp week (or summer mission trip if older than 8th grade; see pastor for details)
- Participate in at least 70% of non-class confirmation activities when scheduled

Giving

- Talk with parents about your family's practices of giving to God's work in the world
- Schedule and give some of your *personal* money to the church or another Christian ministry

Final Commitment

Once you have completed your first two years' requirements (they may be completed as quickly as you choose), spoken to your personal mentor about it, and they have talked to the pastor about your readiness, you will enter into the final stages of preparing to make your public commitment to Christ.

At this time, you will:

- Schedule a meeting with the pastor to discuss your decision and choose a confirmation day; make sure to inform your friends and family so they can celebrate your decision to follow Jesus with you!
- Develop and implement a workable *personal rule of life* to guide you as a Christian. Present and discuss this rule with the pastor.
- Participate in worship and/or fellowship setup, tech, service, or cleanup at least four times and lead your family in doing the same with you.
- In concert with the pastor, personal mentor, and (possibly) parents, design and execute a ministry for ALLC that involves worship, service, fostering relationships, or service to others.
- Prepare a personal creed ("I believe" statement) under the pastor's guidance. On your confirmation day you will either read this creed to the congregation or a video of you reading it will be played for the congregation. This creed may contain elements of the Apostles' or Nicene Creeds, but may not be a copy of them; it is to represent your personal understanding of what it means for *you* to be a disciple of Jesus.
- Build your confirmation stole, which should reflect your personal creed and will be placed over your shoulder on the day of your confirmation.
- **OPTIONAL:** participate in an *Alpha, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, or Emotionally Healthy Relationships* course when they are offered through the church.

What You Will Need

Catechumens will need their Bibles for *every* class. The Bible is God's gift to us, and the chief means He uses to speak to us, grow us, and guide us by His Holy Spirit. Please contact me if you need a Bible of your own; we will find you one, or if you wish to purchase a new one, I recommend the Quest Bible, NIV edition. You will be writing in your Bible as part of the confirmation process, so it is important for you to have one of your own.

You will also need internet access and a Face Book account to post sermon notes. If this is a problem for you or your family, we can make other arrangements, but the easiest way for you to complete the requirement of responding to sermons is to have internet access. Catechumens may use a parent's Face Book account if they are not permitted to have one of their own yet.

Occasionally, confirmation activities are not held at the church. These activities are not optional; they are part of your Christian formation. While they are designed to be fun, they are merely "for fun" and will teach you something important. These activities may require you to bring along an attendance fee. If this is a difficulty for you, please talk to Pr. Brett personally; *no one* will be excluded from *any* activity because of a lack of funds.

The Role of a Parent

The goal of our confirmation (or *catechumen*) program is foster the convictions and skills of Christian discipleship in both our youth and their families. As such, parents are an important part of the process; not as a teacher, but as people who role model for youth an openness and commitment to *ongoing* Christian growth, whatever their present level of knowledge and/or practice.

The best ways for parents to do this are to help our youth prioritize the distinctively Christian aspects of their lives, especially prayer, attendance at worship and confirmation events, intentionally using their faith to make choices, and Bible reading. Please note that these *are not* things parents need *specialized Christian knowledge* to do. What is needed is a commitment to do it; the family can reinforce this commitment by role modeling for each other talking about the faith and doing the things disciples do at home.

Years One and Two Checklist

Prayer

- Lead prayers at a family gathering or with at least one parent.

Completed: ___ / ___ / _____

Worship

Sermon Notes (30):

Don't forget, podcasts of sermons are posted midweek if you need help remembering what was said in them.

*Sermon notes must be posted within **two weeks** of sermon being preached.*

- Sermon Note 1 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 2 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 3 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 4 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 5 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 6 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 7 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 8 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 9 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 10 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 11 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 12 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 13 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 14 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 15 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 16 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 17 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 18 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 19 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 20 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 21 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 22 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 23 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 24 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 25 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 26 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 27 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 28 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 29 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____
- Sermon Note 30 Completed: ___ / ___ / _____

Face Book posts in separate weeks (20):

You may take a picture or short video (10 seconds or less) of the pastor preaching and post it with a thoughtful comment or comment on and share a sermon podcast when it is posted midweek.

- Post 1 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 2 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 3 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 4 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 5 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 6 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 7 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 8 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 9 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 10 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 11 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
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- Post 17 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 18 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 19 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Post 20 Completed: ___ / ___ / ____

Attend at least one Seder meal or Tenebrae service during Holy Week and write a two paragraph reflection on it. This may be turned in to the pastor or confirmation coordinator in person or via email.

- Date Attended: ___ / ___ / ____
- Reflection Completed: ___ / ___ / ____

Year 1 Class Attendance

- Date Attended: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Homework Assignment: _____
Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Date Attended: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Homework Assignment: _____
Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Date Attended: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Homework Assignment: _____
Completed: ___ / ___ / ____
- Date Attended: ___ / ___ / ____

- Homework Assignment: _____
Completed: ___/___/_____
- Date Attended: ___/___/_____
 - Homework Assignment: _____
Completed: ___/___/_____

Year 2 Class Attendance

- Date Attended: ___/___/_____
 - Homework Assignment: _____
Completed: ___/___/_____
- Date Attended: ___/___/_____
 - Homework Assignment: _____
Completed: ___/___/_____
- Date Attended: ___/___/_____
 - Homework Assignment: _____
Completed: ___/___/_____
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 - Homework Assignment: _____
Completed: ___/___/_____
- Date Attended: ___/___/_____
 - Homework Assignment: _____
Completed: ___/___/_____

Service

- Service Project: _____
Date Attended: ___/___/_____
- Service Project: _____
Date Attended: ___/___/_____
- Service Project: _____
Date Attended: ___/___/_____
- Service Project: _____
Date Attended: ___/___/_____
- Service Project Led:** _____
Date: ___/___/_____

Relationship with Christ and other Christians

- Daily Discipleship Practices
 - 2-20 minutes of stillness before God
 - Bible Devotional Reading (Listening to God)
 - Prayer: ACTS:
Acclamation (praise), Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication (asking)

- Confirmation Camp Attendance Date: ___ / ___ / ____
- Non-Class Confirmation Meetings:
 - Event: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Event: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Event: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Event: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Event: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Event: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ____
- Personal Mentor Name: _____
 - Date of Meeting 1: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Meeting 2: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Meeting 3: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Meeting 4: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Meeting 5: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Meeting 6: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Meeting 7: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Meeting 8: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Meeting 9: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Meeting 10: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Meeting 11: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Meeting 12: ___ / ___ / ____

Giving

- Talk with parents about your family's practices of giving to God's work in the world.
 - Date of Conversation: ___ / ___ / ____
- Schedule and give some of your *personal* money to the church or another Christian ministry
 - Date of Planning: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Ministry Supported: _____
 - Plan Implemented: ___ / ___ / ____

Final Commitment

Once you have completed your first two years' requirements, spoken to your personal mentor about it, and they have talked to the pastor about your readiness, you will enter into the final stages of preparing to make your public commitment to Christ. At this time, you will:

- Meeting with Pastor: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Date of Confirmation: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Friends and family invited:

- Write a truly workable *Personal Rule of Life* : ___ / ___ / ____
 - Presented to Pastor: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Revised: ___ / ___ / ____

- Participate in worship and/or fellowship setup, tech, service, or cleanup
 - Ministry: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Ministry: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Ministry: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Ministry: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ____

- Design and execute a Ministry for Abundant Life that involves worship, service, fostering relationships, or service to others:
 - Ministry Description: _____

 - Discussed with Personal Mentor: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Presented to Pastor: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Ministry Implemented: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Reviewed with Pastor: ___ / ___ / ____

- Write a Personal Creed: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Discussed with Pastor: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Revised: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Video recorded: ___ / ___ / ____ **OR** presented in worship ___ / ___ / ____

- Built confirmation stole: ___ / ___ / ____
 - Presented to Pastor: ___ / ___ / ____

- OPTIONAL:** Participated in _____ course: ___ / ___ / ____