

PROGRAM MANUAL

BreakThru⁺

From Catechism to *Christ*

Updated September 2019

Prepared by
Erin Haligowski
*Director of Youth
& Family Ministries*

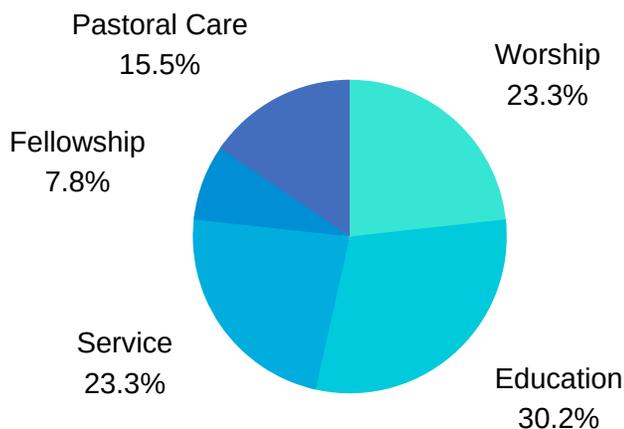
TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT IS CONFIRMATION?	1
Welcome	
According to the ELCA	
Program Goals & Eligibility	
PROGRAM STRUCTURE	2
Bridge Year (6th Grade)	
First and Second Year (7th & 8th Grade)	
Small Groups	
Confirmation Prep (9th Grade)	
EXPECTATIONS	3
PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES	4
Education: What is a Learning Event?	
Worship	
Service	
Fellowship	
Retreat	
Confirmation Preparation	
PARENT INVOLVEMENT	7
CONFIRMATION CELEBRATION	8
PROGRAM FEE INFORMATION	8
CONTACT INFORMATION	9

WHAT IS CONFIRMATION?

WELCOME

Welcome to a Confirmation program that will literally change your life! You are about to embark on YOUR personal faith journey to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ and with God's people. You may already have a head start if you have been coming to church for a number of years. You may have some knowledge of the Bible and the stories it contains. However, we also recognize that you may not know Jesus at all or may only be here because your parents are making you attend. Wherever you are in your faith life... it is OK! We are here to help you along your journey. There will be hard work, but there will be lots of fun along the way too! God promises us that he will always be with us no matter what, and we pray that while you are here you will find Him too.



ACCORDING TO THE ELCA...

"Confirmation ministry is a pastoral and educational ministry of the church that helps the baptized through Word and Sacrament to identify more deeply with the Christian community and participate more fully in its mission."

Confirmation, also known as Affirmation of Baptism, marks the completion of the congregation's confirmation ministry, a period of instruction in the Christian faith as confessed in the teachings of the Lutheran Church. Those who participate in this program were already made members of the Church in Baptism. Confirmation includes a public profession of the faith into which the candidates were baptized, underscoring God's action in their baptism.

PROGRAM GOALS & ELIGIBILITY

Epiphany Lutheran Church seeks to provide a confirmation ministry that is relevant to the community in which we serve while building upon our rich Lutheran heritage. We aim to affirm the faith of our students and lead them towards a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We view confirmation ministry as a joint venture between the youth ministry of this church and the parents of every student. Recognizing that confirmation flows from baptism and is the responsibility of the entire congregation, we seek caring adults from among our members to act as guides to our students and facilitators of our program. We believe that discipleship goes hand in hand with authentic Christian fellowship and Biblical truth. One is just as important as the other. In fact, one can't exist without the other. Consequently, it is our goal that each of our youth experiences both Biblical truth and fellowship throughout the course of the program.

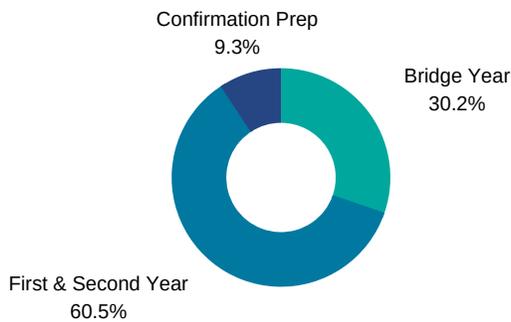
- Baptized Christian
- First Communion
- At least 6th Grade

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Confirmation at Epiphany Lutheran Church begins at the start of 6th grade and culminates with the Rite of Affirmation of Baptism on Reformation Sunday of the student's 9th grade year.

BRIDGE YEAR (6TH GRADE)

Confirmation Orientation will be held in September for students 6th grade and older wishing to begin their confirmation journey. Students will participate in Learning Events as a whole confirmation class throughout their 6th grade year. During this year, there is also the expectation that students will begin working on the completion of additional program responsibilities in the areas of worship, cwervice, and fellowship.



FIRST & SECOND YEAR (7TH & 8TH GRADE)

Over the course of these two years, students will study the Old and New Testament, Peer Ministry Leadership, and the basic parts of Luther's Small Catechism, including the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. During these two years, there is also the expectation that students will complete additional responsibilities in the areas of worship, service, and fellowship.

SMALL GROUPS

The confirmation journey includes both large group instruction and small group discussion. Students will participate in a small group led by adult small group guides during their first and second year of study. These groups are typically designed to be both class- and gender-specific so that youth are comfortable sharing with each other. Small groups meet during each Learning Event following the large group instruction, and materials are provided for small group discussions.

Our greatest desire for small groups is that they become a place where students can connect with one another and form meaningful relationships with significant adults: to know and be known. Additionally, we believe that for authentic fellowship to occur, it must be guided by Biblical truth. Each week we will study and discuss Biblical passages. A portion of the small group time will be devoted to the application of Biblical truths to our lives. Small groups are not designed for "classroom" study (all book knowledge, nor are they designed to be a giant party (all play). Instead, the small group is a place for students to form relationships with others and God so that they can grow in their faith. Small groups make each interaction and each moment a faith-life-learning moment.

We believe in small groups because they provide a safe space for students to...

- ✓ ...be known and accepted.
- ✓ ... discuss important life issues.
- ✓ ...be accountable to a mentor.
- ✓ ...be challenged to grow spiritually

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION (9TH GRADE)

Students spend the summer and early fall of their 9th grade year doing final preparations for the Rite of Affirmation of Baptism. Students spend the summer completing a Discipleship Project, and then attend Learning Events in the fall in preparation for confirmation. There are no specific additional responsibilities during this part of the program. Students will use this time to work on their Discipleship Project, wrap up the season with their small group, and prepare for the Confirmation Celebration.

EXPECTATIONS

A successful and relevant confirmation ministry must be a partnership between students, families, and the congregation. Expectations include the following:

AS A STUDENT...

- that you are a baptized member of the body of Christ
- that you have taken or are registered to take First Communion instruction
- that you study the materials, read the Bible, attend worship, and pray regularly
- that you become involved in our community of faith by attending class and youth activities
- that you take responsibility for and grow in your faith
- that you are prompt and prepared for Learning Events
- that you can communicate your needs for help with the material to your Small Group Guide
- that you will serve Epiphany Lutheran Church through the expectations of this program

AS A PARENT OR GUARDIAN...

- that you will be an example of Christian behavior and commitment to your child
- that you will read your Bible and pray regularly
- that you will encourage your child in their faith journey
- that you will lead by example by nurturing your own faith and commitment to Christ by being faithful in your participation in worship, education, service, and fellowship in the life of Epiphany Lutheran Church

AS THE CONGREGATION OF EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

- that we will expect our adult guides, teachers, and other facilitators of this program to lead by example by nurturing our own faith and commitment to Christ by being faithful in participating in worship, education, service, and fellowship in the life of Epiphany Lutheran Church
- that we will be creative in helping you grow in faith through this program
- that we will challenge and feed your faith
- that we will work with each student to the best of our abilities to meet the needs of the families that we serve

REALITY CHECK: We have our work cut out for us, and it will take the cooperation of students, parents, and the congregation to make it happen. Keeping the lines of communication open is imperative to the success of this confirmation ministry. We expect you to keep us informed of anything that will affect your student's ability to fully participate.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Participants in Epiphany's confirmation ministry are expected to participate in the following faith growth opportunities:

EDUCATION: WHAT'S A LEARNING EVENT?

The education portion of this ministry covers the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and teachings of Luther's Small Catechism and prepares youth for adult membership and participation at Epiphany Lutheran Church and in the Body of Christ. Our educational curriculum is taught during our BreakThru Learning Events, the wonderful times on Sundays when we gather together for music, games, learning, and time with our small groups. Learning Events are scheduled on select Sundays, and a schedule will be distributed well in advance at the beginning of each year.

What to Bring: Parents, since your students cannot drive, it is *your* responsibility to see that they arrive on time for every Learning Event. Please store coats and hats in the proper areas before coming in to the Learning Event.

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend every Learning Event as part of the confirmation journey. We want to emphasize that **regular attendance is extremely important** not only for learning content, but for the small group discussion and conversation that accompanies the large group presentation and course material. If a student cannot attend a particular event, then he or she is to inform his or her small group guide.

WHAT TO BRING

- Bible
- The Lutheran Handbook
- Confirmation Binder
- Pen and Highlighter

PLEASE NOTE:

We understand that certain family circumstances could affect these attendance requirements. Please speak with the Director of Youth & Family Ministries about any specific circumstances so that reasonable arrangements can be made.



Students are allowed *one* excused absence per year. After one missed Learning Event, students are expected to complete a make-up assignment with a parent for any additional missed Learning Events.



WORSHIP

During the confirmation journey, students are strongly encouraged to participate in regular worship with their families. Weekly worship connects us with the body of Christ, but even more specifically to the faith community of our family, neighbors, and friends at Epiphany Lutheran Church. *Worship Reflection* forms are available at both campuses.

All students should complete a minimum of 30 *Worship Reflections* during the course of the program year (or 10 per year). All *Worship Reflections* should be completed by the end of the student's 8th grade year.



PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Participants in Epiphany's confirmation ministry are expected to participate in the following faith growth opportunities:

SERVICE: WE LOVE JESUS BY SERVING OTHERS

There is an important connection between faith and service, and at Epiphany Lutheran Church, our vision is to see our faith lived out in service: *"Epiphany Lutheran Church loves Jesus by serving others!"* We acknowledge and reflect the love of God by demonstrating a faith that is ALIVE by providing meaningful study and opportunities for service. Students are expected to accumulate a minimum number of service credits throughout the course of the program.

Generally, students will earn one (1) service credit for each hour of service. The primary exception to this is that for **long-term service programs** (overnight or week-long events), the maximum number of credits that a student can accumulate is eight (8). Students are encouraged to find opportunities for service in each three categories: Worship, Congregation Life, and Community Service. Different examples of opportunities for service are noted for each category as follows, but the possibilities are endless!

SERVICE [SUR-VIS]

noun

- 1. an act of helpful activity; help; aid*
- 2. time freely given to complete a task(s) for which the student does not receive a grade or payment.*



Each student is expected to accumulate a minimum of 30 service credits during the course of the program (or 10 service credits per year). Service credits should be completed by the end of the student's 8th grade year.

WORSHIP

- Usher
- Greeter
- Communion Assistant
- Praise Band
- Audio/Visual
- Epiphany Chorale
- Handbell Choir
- Drama Ministry
- ...and more!

CONGREGATION LIFE

- Preschool VBS
- LOMO Day Camp
- Child Care Center
- Bunny Hop 5K & Picnic
- Children's Ministry
- Congregational Events
- ...and more!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Epiphany's Pantry
- Parents Night Out
- Rake & Run
- Matthew 25 Ministries
- Operation Prom Dress
- ...and more!

Students are urged to ask about or consider other service possibilities, too, where they are offering their time or talents at school, church, or in the community.

In order to receive credit for service, students should submit a *Service Credit Form*, either online or by hard copy; otherwise there is no record of the service performed. Submitted forms are kept in the student's file and become the basis for regular updates that students, parents and guides will receive to keep them informed. *Service Credit Forms* are available at both campuses, from the *Director of Youth & Family Ministries* and during Learning Events for students to pick up, fill out, and return.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Participants in Epiphany's confirmation ministry are expected to participate in the following faith growth opportunities:

FELLOWSHIP

Throughout the confirmation program there will be a variety of opportunities for fun and fellowship. These events provide opportunities to step out of the traffic of life to build shared memories, solidify friendships, and have fun in a culture of caring, welcoming, and affirming everyone!



Students should plan to attend a minimum of two fellowship events per year, though attending more is *strongly* encouraged! Trust us, you don't want to miss these!



During the confirmation journey, we seek to provide students with the opportunity to step back and take a long, loving look at life and faith. These are can't miss touch points in your confirmation journey, with costs and dates published well in advance so that families can plan their schedules accordingly. Scholarships are available if needed.

Each year, the best of the best among our high school student leaders plan, host and lead a fall retreat for our confirmation students during a weekend away at camp. Dates and information about the retreat will be published well in advance each year so that you can plan your schedule accordingly.

All students should plan to attend *at least* one off-site BreakThru Retreat during their confirmation journey. Going to camp more than once is highly recommended!



CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

In preparation for the Rite of Affirmation of Baptism on Reformation Sunday of the student's freshman year, there will be some final program elements to help tie everything together and prepare students to transition into our High School Ministry (HSM). These responsibilities will be completed during the summer before and early fall of the student's confirmation year, and additional information will be given at the end of the 8th grade year. This time of preparation involves the completion of a *discipleship project*, and final Learning Events in the fall. Students are also encouraged to connect with Epiphany's High School Ministry during this time.

DISCIPLESHIP PROJECT

Each student will complete a Discipleship Project to share his or her faith with the members of Epiphany through the use of their spiritual gifts, talents and interests. Students are asked to create a project that shares their faith and life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It can be anything of their choosing. A completed project will include both the project itself and a written description of the project and how it shares your faith.

All confirmation program elements are tracked in each student's individual file and are available at any time for review by the student, parent or guide. These files are available in the church office or during any Learning Event. Progress Updates will be sent out periodically throughout the year, and are available upon request by the parent, student or guide.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

It is our mission to empower parents as the primary teachers, mentors and role models of faith for their children, with the church as the reinforcement - not the replacement - of the parent's duties.

"The holy grail for helping youth remain religiously active as young adults has been at home all along: parents. Mothers and fathers who practice what they preach and preach what they practice are far and away the major influence related to adolescents keeping the faith into their 20s, according to new findings from a landmark study of youth and religion... Other factors such as youth ministry or clergy or service projects or religious schools pale in comparison." (David Briggs on the National Study of Youth and Religion, Huffington Post)

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Parents are, by far, the primary means by which children learn about life and God. This must be the bedrock of our youth ministry and confirmation program. Whether through love or indifference, involvement or absence, good example or poor, no relationship will impact children more than their relationship with their parents. Put simply, church begins at home with the family. That's the way God designed it.

We seek to partner with you in your endeavor to raise Christ-following children. We want to be a resource and encouragement to provide you with the tools you need to complete this task. Ask part of the confirmation program, we have expectations not only for our students, but also for our parents. Here are the ways we hope to equip you as you travel through this journey with your son or daughter.

GOD SIGHTINGS

Just like they sound, these are circumstances, areas, or situations where you have seen God at work throughout your day. It may be as simple as seeing God in the beauty of a sunset or as complicated as reflecting on how God has orchestrated certain people, places, or events to occur in your life so that you might see His hand with you. Begin talking with your children as you are driving them to the ball fields, as you are picking them up from dance class, as you are eating dinner with them, or as you are watching TV. Talk about where and how you see God moving in your life and theirs.

FAITH 5

The FAITH5 (Faith Acts In The Home) is a simple, easy-to-implement faith practice, perfect for incorporating into your bedtime routine for five to fifteen minutes a night. When done over time, the FAITH5 carries the power to enrich communication, deepen understanding, aid sleep, and promote mental, physical, and spiritual health.



PARENT CONNECTIONS

Periodically throughout the year, parents will be asked to join us for a Learning Event. During these events, there will be opportunities to connect with other parents who are in the trenches with you, to learn information and participate in discussions about issues teens and parents are facing. We hope that these connection times will be a resource and haven for you as parents.

CONFIRMATION CELEBRATION

The Rite of Affirmation of Baptism has long been a very special tradition of the Lutheran Church. We honor and celebrate the growth in faith of our youth with their parents, families, guides, and friends with a Celebration Dinner and special Affirmation of Baptism worship service.

Confirmation will be held on Reformation Sunday in October of each year. The Rite of Affirmation of Baptism worship service takes place at 2:30pm with a Celebration Dinner immediately following. In the upcoming years, confirmation will be held on the following dates (please mark your calendars now!)

2022 (starting in 2019): Sunday, October 30

2023 (starting in 2020): Sunday, October 29

2024 (starting in 2021): Sunday, October 27

2025 (starting in 2022): Sunday, October 26

Some expenses at the time of Confirmation may include: robe rental, boutonnieres, formal class photograph, individual pictures, etc. Specific details about everything related to the Confirmation Celebration will be shared over the summer leading up to the students' freshman year. Information about confirmation rehearsal will be published well in advance.

PROGRAM FEE INFORMATION

Please see below for registration fees associated with each step of the confirmation journey.

BRIDGE YEAR (6TH GRADE)

Program Fee: \$40

The program fee for 6th graders covers the following costs: *The Lutheran Handbook* (with Small Catechism), Binder, and snacks and supplies for all Learning Events. This fee does not include the cost of a Bible or the BreakThru Retreat.

FIRST YEAR (7TH GRADE)

Program Fee: \$40

The program fee for the first and second year of study covers the following costs: background checks for small group guides, snacks and supplies for all Learning Events, and Guide appreciation. This fee does not include the cost of a Bible or the BreakThru Retreat.

SECOND YEAR (8TH GRADE)

Program Fee: \$40

The program fee for the first and second year of study covers the following costs: background checks for small group guides, snacks and supplies for all Learning Events, and Guide appreciation. This fee does not include the cost of a Bible or the BreakThru Retreat.

CONFIRMATION PREP (9TH GRADE)

Program Fee: \$20

The program fee for confirmation preparation covers the following costs: snacks and supplies for all learning events, some expenses related to the Confirmation Celebration, and guide appreciation. This fee does not include the cost of group and individual photos.

CONTACT INFORMATION

EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.epiphanydayton.org

FAR HILLS CAMPUS

6430 Far Hills Avenue
Centerville, OH 45459

AUSTIN CAMPUS

10551 Sheehan oad
Dayton, OH 45458

Office: 937-433-1449

Fax: 937-433-8715

Charlie Woodward, *Senior Pastor*

cwoodward@epiphanydayton.org

Pastor Jay Shailer, *Associate Pastor*

jshailer@epiphanydayton.org

Pastor Tracy Paschke-Johannes, *Associate Pastor*

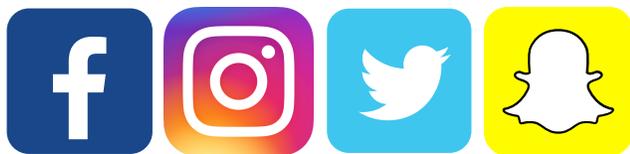
tpaschke-johannes@epiphanydayton.org

Erin Haligowski, *Director of Youth & Family Ministries*

ehaligowski@epiphanydayton.org

Jane Lane, *Director of Care of Members*

jlane@epiphanydayton.org



@ELCYouthDayton

**Text @BreakThruC to 81010 for
confirmation text updates & reminders**