



## **Confirmation Information**

## **What is Confirmation?**

The word “Confirmation” typically refers to two different things:

1. The instruction or classes focused on God’s Word & the Small Catechism
2. The Rite of Confirmation

Most of what is written in this document refers to the instruction, classes, and process that take place to help prepare youth for the Rite of Confirmation.

## **What is the purpose of a Confirmation process?**

Confirmation’s purpose is to carry out Christ’s command to, “Go and make disciples of all nations...” from Matthew 28. In light of this, Confirmation should help shape those who go through the process into disciples of Christ.

## **What has been Immanuel’s Confirmation process?**

For at least the last three years, Immanuel has had a three year Confirmation program. Youth typically started in 6th grade with a Bible Overview class, continued into a Catechism class in 7th grade, and finished with an Apologetics class in 8th grade. At the end of the Apologetics class, confirmands would go through the Rite of Confirmation on the Sunday following Easter.

## **Why make a change?**

We are making this change to have a more effective process that helps shape lifelong disciples of Christ who not only know what God’s Word says, but believe it, trust it, and live it out in their daily life. These changes are being made out of the desire to help shape our youth in a way that prepares them for eternity with Christ.

These changes are being made in light of Christ’s promises and commands, but also in light of our families’ needs and schedules. These changes aim to give needed flexibility for the lives youth have now, to include discussions on topics that are relevant for today, and to focus on a holistic approach that includes more than just classroom instruction, while also including new requirements that challenge them to take their faith seriously.

Another major reason for this change is the reality we face. In an article on Confirmation's history, Geoffrey Boyle writes, "The reason to reconsider is the obvious problem we face: the confirmed are leaving and no longer coming back."<sup>1</sup>

Research led by the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod's Youth Ministry office has confirmed this. They have shown that 1-in-3 confirmands, about 31%, remain in an LCMS church post-confirmation. Before that though is a more worrying stat, as only 44% of children that are baptized in the LCMS will still be there for confirmation. This means that from baptism to post-confirmation, only 14% of youth will remain in or connected to an LCMS congregation.

Immanuel's history is better when it comes to Confirmation, but not far better. From those who went through the Rite of Confirmation over the last five years, 43% of those youth have not been in worship or other activities at Immanuel since the start of 2026. That is 24 out of 56 confirmands that have not been connected to a church since the start of this year.

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey R. Boyle, "Confirmation, Catechesis, and Communion: A Historical Survey", *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 79:1-2 (January/April 2015): 142.

## **What will Immanuel's reimagined process be?**

Instead of a three year program, our Confirmation process will consist of four phases that can start the summer after 4th grade and end as early as the fall of 10th grade. The four phases will need to be completed in order and there are additional requirements which are listed below. The four phases are:

### **Phase 1: Foundations (1 year)**

The first phase of Confirmation gives youth a firm foundation in Christ, through the basics of the Christian faith. In this phase, youth will spend time learning the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed in their homes. With the pastors, they'll also learn about the Sacrament of the Altar and prepare to receive Holy Communion for the first time.

### **Phase 2: God's Word (6 months)**

The second phase of Confirmation teaches youth how to read and understand God's Word. In this phase, youth will spend time learning how to navigate their own Bibles, learning the overarching story contained in God's Word, and reading through one of the Gospels.

### **Phase 3: Growing in Faith (4 years)**

The third phase of Confirmation shapes youth through Bible studies, activities, and different opportunities, focused on different topics. In this phase, youth will spend time learning about the Christian life, apologetics, and Church history.

### **Phase 4: Confirmation (2 months)**

The fourth phase of Confirmation prepares youth to stand before the congregation to confess their faith in Christ. In this phase, youth will spend time reflecting on their growth as disciples, making plans to continue growing into the future, and confirming the faith publicly.

## What requirements will there be?

Within the four phases, there will be specific requirements that must be met to complete each phase. There are also other requirements that span the entire Confirmation process and must be met before starting *Phase 4: Confirmation*.

### Phase 1: Foundations

There are two requirements to completing Phase 1.

1. Completion of lessons 1–31 in the *Luther's Small Catechism for Kids Student Book*.
2. Completion of the First Communion class.

### Phase 2: God's Word

There are two requirements to completing Phase 2.

1. Completion of the *How to Read the Bible* class, offered during the Spring Eph4 session.
2. Completion of the *Overview of the Story* class.

### Phase 3: Growing in Faith

There are three requirements to completing Phase 3.

1. Completion of ten *Growing in Faith* classes.
2. Serve in the congregation for three years in total.
3. Serve in the community at least once each year.

More information can be found in later sections on each of these requirements since they need more extensive explanations.

### Phase 4: Confirmation

There are two requirements to completing Phase 4.

1. Completion of *Preparation for Confirmation Day* class, offered during the Fall Eph4 session.
2. Participating in the Rite of Confirmation on Confirmation Sunday, which will take place on Reformation Sunday.

## Other Requirements

There are two other requirements that must be met before starting phase 4.

1. Sunday Morning Attendance
2. Attending one *Life Together* retreat

These requirements can be completed at any time once a youth has begun the Confirmation process. More explanation on them can be found in later sections.

## ***Growing in Faith classes***

*"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."*

### **Colossians 2:6-7**

During the third phase of our Confirmation process, confirmands will need to complete ten *Growing in Faith* classes. The classes will consist of Bible studies on different topics, and many will include an activity or project to help reflect on what we've studied.

These classes fall into one of three categories:

1. Christian Life
2. Apologetics
3. Church History

Confirmands will need to complete 3 classes regarding Christian Life (two of which must be the classes on baptism and worship), 3 classes regarding Apologetics, and 1 class regarding Church History. The 3 other classes can come from any of the categories confirmands choose to do.

In order to complete a class, confirmands must attend all class sessions and complete any activities associated with that specific class. The different classes are designed to be between 4-8 weeks long, depending on the topic, and so no sessions can be missed (with exceptions for things you cannot control).

Classes will be regularly held during the Eph4 sessions throughout the year. Some classes may be offered at special times (for example: during Confirmation Camp at Camp Luther) and those opportunities will be communicated well in advance.

## **Serving**

*“Jesus called [his disciples] to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

**Mark 10:42-45**

Service is a key aspect to the Christian life. To help confirmands grow, they will be expected to serve in both the congregation and the community.

## **In the Congregation**

Once youth have begun the third phase, it will be expected that confirmands serve in the congregation in some way for three years in total. Each summer, they can choose which way they would like to serve, as long as the option they choose is in need of volunteers, and then they must serve according to the satisfaction of the person leading that group. Confirmands can serve in the congregation by being a part of one of the following:

- Choir
- Praise Team
- Tech Team
- Ushers
- Readers

If other opportunities to serve in the congregation become available, they will be added to this list and communicated to families.

## In the Community

During the third phase, confirmands will also be expected to serve in the community at least once each year. Ideally, this service would take place alongside other congregation members that are not a part of their family, but that isn't a strict requirement. A few of the opportunities that are already available that members of Immanuel take part in are:

- The Day of Caring
- FOCUS Food Pantry
- Operation Christmas Child
- VBS

Other opportunities will also be added to this list and communicated to families as they become available. Confirmands are able to do the same activity each year, if they so choose.

## Church Attendance

*"So those who received [the Apostle Peter's] word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."*

**Acts 2:41-42**

Gathering together for worship has been at the center of the Church's life since the days of the apostles. This is not only because it gives us a time of fellowship together, but because, in our worship services, God does so much for us.

In the words of Absolution we hear of God's forgiveness from the mouths of the pastors as if it is God speaking Himself. In the readings, we hear the stories of what God has done, the commands He has given, and the promises He has made. In the sermon we hear God's Word applied to our lives. And in the Sacrament of the Altar, we receive Christ's body and blood which gives to us eternal life.

Since gathering together for worship is so important to the Christian life, confirmands will be expected to attend worship in-person regularly. **To meet this requirement, confirmands must have a 75% attendance rate to worship services during four**

**quarters.** In one quarter (twelve weeks), a confirmand must attend a worship service with a guardian for nine of those weeks. At Immanuel, those services will be on either Sunday morning or Monday evening.

The quarters in which this is accomplished are chosen by the confirmand and their family. This can begin as soon as confirmands start phase one and must be completed before starting phase four.

## ***Life Together Retreats***

*“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”*

**Hebrews 10:24-25**

Fellowship with other believers is a great blessing we are given by God. To encourage fellowship and for confirmands to grow together in their faith with each other, **they will be required to attend one *Life Together* retreat before starting phase four.** They can go on a retreat once they’ve started phase one.

The *Life Together* retreats are trips that span at least two nights and are organized by Immanuel. A few of the opportunities that will be available are:

- Winter Blast at Camp Luther
- Summer Mission Trip
- LCMS Youth Gathering
- Camping at Lifest

These trips will have a cost associated with them, but if for any reason the cost would be a barrier to you and your family, please speak with Pastor Bryce. We will make arrangements.

## **More Information & Other Resources**

For more information, resources, schedules, and sign-ups please check the Youth Ministry page of Immanuel’s website ([immanuelrapids.com/youth-ministry/](http://immanuelrapids.com/youth-ministry/)).