



7th grade

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is one of the most celebrated steps in the life of the church, and we think it's really great to have it in the 7th grade. Why is that?

The preteen brain is constantly building and losing neurons – causing your preteen to be literally “brain-dead” (and you thought you were crazy!). More importantly, the brain goes through the “use it or lose it” principle, meaning that the parts of their brains they use in their preteen years are the parts that will stick with them for their entire lifetime.

Because of these facts, it makes perfect sense for a student to hear about where their faith comes from and what it means to own that for, perhaps, the first time. For many of our teens, their faith began with the commitment their parents made at the time of their baptism to raise them in the life of the church. Teenagers have the opportunity to claim that faith as their own and continue to be part of the church.

The units of the year include:

Know Your Story: We begin the Confirmation year by reviewing the story of God that we began studying as a child and that we reexamined in 5th and 6th grade. We'll talk about how this story is threaded through life, even in some of our favorite movies and books! We'll also talk about where the Bible came from and give each Confirmand a Bible to use throughout the year.

Confirm Your Faith: The next stage of Confirmation talks about what it means to be a Methodist but more importantly, a follower of Jesus. We'll talk about salvation, discipleship, and the different things that unite a church like the sacraments and Lord's Prayer.

Live Your Commitment: The story that God has crafted since the beginning of time continues with our own stories, and we'll begin connecting the two together. We'll answer the teens' toughest questions about faith and offer an opportunity for them to share their personal stories in small groups. We conclude Confirmation with a weekend that includes their spring retreat and the Confirmation service.

Other important components of Confirmation:

- Small Groups bond Confirmands together through this shared experience over the course of the year
- Mentors that Confirmands meet with six times a year disciple them throughout the process
- Service so that Confirmands can begin practicing their faith
- Connection into the life of the church during seasons of Advent and Lent
- Retreats that provide experiences to go deeper in their faith

statement of faith & doubt

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth...*

- *Apostle's Creed*

Every Sunday morning at St. Luke's we recite a creed together in our traditional worship services. A creed is a statement of faith that is accepted by a group of people—Methodists recognize the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed, while affirming many others as well.

When we recite a creed together, we recognize that our faith is bigger than our own—that the beliefs we profess are affirmed not only by the hundreds of voices that surround us in our local congregation, but also by countless Christians in churches around the world who profess the same words. Even more mind-blowing is when we realize how creeds have stood the test of time—especially when reading a creed like the Apostle's creed, we are reciting words that for almost two thousand years have defined the core of the Christian faith.

While a creed is a statement of faith that summarizes a group's communal beliefs, we also acknowledge that faith is also an individual and personal belief. There are things that we believe and practice that are in addition to the creeds that we recite. In fact, some of the people sitting next to you reciting the same creed as you may have different beliefs that are different than yours about certain things, but are still a part of the same church.

This month's challenge for the confirmand: Locate a hymnal from the sanctuary at church and go to the last pages to read through all ten creeds that we are listed (#880-889, about six pages worth). Select and copy eight statements that resonate with your own beliefs and convictions. Also select two statements that you wrestle with—that you doubt or don't fully understand. Write these down on the same paper.

This month's challenge for the parent: Read through the same creeds and identify two statements that you also struggle with. Share these with your Confirmand—ironically, sharing our doubts with one another often opens the door to discuss our faith as well. Some questions to guide this discussion might be:

- What statements of faith did you not second-guess at all?
- What kinds of statements do you have the hardest time with?
- Do you think that others doubt the same things that you doubt?

At the end of the unit, all of our Confirmands will bring these Statements of Faith & Doubt to their small groups and discuss. We'll take the day to discuss these statements and explore how doubt and faith intersect.