



Confirmation Handbook 2025-2026

St. Michael Lutheran Church

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What is Confirmation Class?

- Confirmation Class is a way the church helps parents teach the faith to their youth.
- Confirmation Class is a way for youth to learn what we believe as Christians about God, His Word, and the world around us.
- Confirmation class focuses on the six chief (main) parts of Martin Luther's catechism.
- Confirmation class is in preparation for the Rite of Confirmation, which is not graduation but the beginning of our young people taking personal responsibility for their life of faith.

The Rite of Confirmation is not a sacrament in that it is not instituted by Christ and it has no physical element to which God has attached His Word and promise of grace and forgiveness. But even so, Confirmation is an ancient rite of the church that affirms one's infant baptism. The instruction that leads up to it is important for Spiritual growth and development toward more mature faith, and that instruction helps in preparation for worthy reception of the Lord's Supper.

Purpose

Confirmation Class is designed to help families instruct young people in the basics of the Christian faith as set forth in Martin Luther's Small Catechism, a summary of the theology that is in the Bible. The curriculum helps create a heart for Christ and for people, and equips students to live a life of service to God and their fellow humans. We strive to go beyond simply gaining knowledge to the point of helping young people have a more personal relationship with God and apply Biblical teachings to their everyday life. We seek to accomplish this purpose in various fun and creative ways, and by using doctrinally approved curriculum developed by Concordia Publishing House, the official publishing company of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

Why should my youth go to confirmation class and be confirmed?

Some churches stress the importance of everyone making their own choice to believe in Jesus. In the Lutheran church, our understanding is that God chooses us (see John 15:16), giving us faith as we hear the Good News of what Jesus has done for us. For many of us, this Gospel and the resulting faith came through the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Confirmation class gives youth the understanding of what God has already done for them in baptism. It helps youth see that what we believe as Lutherans is in fact taught in the Bible. When youth are confirmed, they are publicly saying they believe what they learned in confirmation class is biblical; are affirming the faith God gave them in their baptism; and are publicly promising to stay in the Christian faith all their lives.

What do we believe and teach in Confirmation Class?

Confirmation Class is preparation for the Rite of Confirmation and is ordinarily a three-year program in both St. Michael Lutheran School middle school Bible classes and in our Wednesday evening Confirmation Class for non-St. Michael Lutheran School students. The topics of instruction over the three years are the following for the Wednesday evening class:

- Year A - Apologetics
- Year B - Bible Overview
- Year C - Small Catechism

At St. Michael Lutheran School, sixth graders will be studying church history, seventh graders will be studying Luther's Small Catechism, and eighth graders will be studying Christian Apologetics and the Bible.

Sixth Grade - Church History
Seventh Grade - Luther's Small Catechism
Eighth Grade - Apologetics/Bible

In addition, every year, we include four special sessions on the Lord's Supper in preparation for receiving Holy Communion. Since all confirmands must take this instruction at some point in the three years of their confirmation instruction, we now include these four Lord's Supper lessons during the Sunday Learning Hour (from 9:45 am to 10:45 am). This will prepare students, if they and their family so desire, to have their First Communion prior to their Confirmation.

Early Communion Instruction & Preparation

We will be offering early Holy Communion instruction for students in fifth grade and up, and everyone must have instruction in the Lord's Supper sometime before they are confirmed. It is a special time of learning and spiritual growth, preparing children to receive the Lord's Supper, if the family so desires, before their confirmation. We will approach this instruction with reverence, recognizing the profound gift of the Lord's Supper, and we invite parents to be an integral part of the journey. Together with their child, parents will explore the meaning of the Lord's Supper, learning not just the Biblical teaching, but how it personally strengthens faith and deepens the relationship with Christ.

Through Bible study, thoughtful discussions, and a focus on the real presence of Jesus in the sacrament, students will gain a greater understanding of what it means to receive Christ's body and blood. The goal is not only for students to be prepared in knowledge but to grow in their faith and approach the table with a heart of gratitude and reverence. Early reception of Holy Communion is a blessing for both the child and the family, and we are honored to walk alongside you in this beautiful step in the life of your child's faith.

This course will take place during the Learning Hour time between the 8:30 and 11:00 am Sunday morning worship services (9:45 – 10:45) on March 1, 8, 15, and 22. As has been our custom, if the family agrees to a first communion occasion prior to the student's confirmation just let the pastor know prior to that communion service of choice.

Expectations

So that the above purpose might be met, it is expected that students will . . .

- **Worship** our Triune God faithfully, regularly receiving His gifts of grace and forgiveness, and giving Him the praise that He is due;
- **Commune** regularly and faithfully at the Lord's altar (after completing instruction and at a time agreeable to their parents and pastor);
- **Participate** in church Sunday School classes as able;
- **Attend class** sessions regularly and cheerfully, inform the teacher in advance whenever unable to attend, and make up any missed work;
- **Actively participate** in class by listening carefully, responding appropriately, and giving undivided attention to the various class activities (pastors may restrict use of cell phones or other electronic devices as needed);
- * **Enjoy monthly fellowship and servant events** provided by junior high youth ministry;

- **Memorize** and internalize sections of Scripture and the Small Catechism as assigned;
- **Take part in special events** such as Confirmation Camp and Youth Gatherings. Youth should go to at least one camp throughout the three years (these events are so much fun that we are sure that you will want to go to more);
- **Participate in a ministry role**, including such things as acolyting in worship; ushering, working in the worship tech booth, etc...
- **Participate in the monthly fellowship/servant event.**
- **Complete** three years of instruction (or the equivalent, as determined by the pastors);
- **Write a 500 word Essay** on the topic of "On Being a Christian" (in the 3rd year);
- **Read a portion of this essay/project** to the congregation on the day of confirmation;
- **Participate in the Oral Examination** to demonstrate what they have learned to their family, and to the congregation (completed in the 3rd year, a study guide will be provided for preparation).

** All junior high youth are expected each month to take part in the planned fellowship and/or servant events so that St. Michael Lutheran School students and public school students will have a chance to get to know each other and feel like a part of the same confirmation class. These times together help us grow in faith, as we remember that God has made us His people—not to walk alone, but to walk together. Fellowship strengthens our bond as brothers and sisters in Christ, while acts of service give us the chance to show Christ's love in action. Both remind us that following Jesus means living as His people, growing in Him, and loving others in His name. Ideally, these events will be parent planned, and their participation will be needed, including for transportation as many activities will take place at off-site locations.*

After the students have been confirmed, it is our desire that they would be. . .

- Active members of the Lutheran Church, worshiping and communing regularly.
- Active participant in Bible study, both corporately and privately,
- Responsible stewards of their time, talent, and treasure, cheerfully giving a first-fruit proportion of their income to the Lord's work,
- Witnesses to their Christian faith as the Holy Spirit provides opportunity to tell other people the Good News about Jesus.

What's the role of a parent/guardian in confirmation?

- For Wednesday night Confirmation Class, at least one parent is encouraged to be present in class with their student from 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm. Afterwards, parents can help answer questions and reinforce what was taught, perhaps in family devotional time.
- Review with youth the key Bible verses and portions of Luther's Small Catechism.
- Work with the pastor to schedule acolyting or serve in other capacities.
- Generally encourage faith growth and development in your youth.

Absence policy

Attendance in Confirmation Class is very important in preparation for Confirmation. Students are expected to be present for all classes and events, communicating to the pastor in advance of any absences or special circumstances that impede attendance. If students are absent from class, it is up to the parents to teach their students the information that they missed. Chronic failure to attend class may very well jeopardize the student's ability to be confirmed.

Inclement weather policy

If Portage Public Schools is closed or dismissed early for inclement weather, so also is St. Michael Lutheran School and our Wednesday night Confirmation Class. If the roads become hazardous in the afternoon on days when school was open in the morning, we will send out an email by 4:00 pm to let families know that Wednesday Confirmation Class has been canceled.

Materials needed

- Luther's Small Catechism
- ESV Bible (*if you do not have one, see Pastor Maske*).
- Writing utensil

The Bible, Catechism, and curriculum will be gifted to the students, along with a three ring binder of information and a canvas tote bag to put all the items in. Please put your name on the bag and bring all these items to class each and every time.

What is the Confirmation Class Schedule for Non-SMLS Students?

Wednesday Evenings - 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

* September 10, 2025 through May 6, 2026 (allowing for holiday breaks)

* Oral Examination: Wednesday, May 13, 2026 (5:30 pm)

* Rite of Confirmation: Sunday, May 17, 2026 (11:00 am)

Adjusted Wednesday Schedule for Advent and Lent

In Lent and Advent, Confirmation class is expected to attend the special congregational worship services that occur after class from 6:30 to 7:00 in the sanctuary. A light meal prior to Wednesday night class (from 5:00 to 5:30) will be available in the gym as an option for families who desire it.

What is the Confirmation Class Schedule for SMLS Students?

For the first time in the history of our school, this 2025-2026 school year has a standalone 6th, 7th, and 8th grade so that there are no combined grades. The Bible class that we teach these Middle Schoolers meets on Wednesdays and Thursdays and doubles as their Confirmation Class for those who desire to be confirmed at the end of their 8th grade year. The 6th graders meet from 2:25 to 3:10, the 7th graders from 12:45 to 1:30, and the 8th graders from 1:35 to 2:20.

Prayer Partners

During their last year of Confirmation Class, students who intend to be Confirmed will be assigned an anonymous Prayer Partner. This Prayer Partner will pray for them regularly in their own personal prayer life, and in many instances will give the student little anonymous expressions of encouragement and support all throughout the school year. At the conclusion of the Oral Exam, the Confirmands will learn who their Prayer Partner has been, and they are encouraged to express their thanks and appreciation to this person for their special ministry to them. In the past, this has often resulted in a special relationship between the student and Prayer Partner long after the school year is over. If you know of someone who would like to be a Prayer Partner for a Confirmand please let the church office know.

Confirmation Preparation Schedule (Non-SMLS Class)

2025-2026 (Year A – Apologetics) – Wednesday Night Class

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Lesson Topic</u> |
|--------------------|--|
| 9/7 | Parent/Student Orientation |
| 9/10 | Unit 1:1 - What Is Apologetics? |
| 9/17 | Unit 1:2 - What Is a Worldview? |
| 9/24 | Unit 1:3 - What Are Law and Gospel? |
| 10/1 | Unit 1:4 - How Do We Speak the Truth in Love? |
| 10/8 | Unit 1:5 - What Tools Do We Use In Defending the Faith? |
| 10/15 | Unit 2:6 - Did Jesus Even Exist? |
| 10/22 | Unit 2:7 - Who Is Jesus? |
| 10/29 | Unit 2:8 - Did Jesus Really Die and Rise Again? |
| 11/5 | Unit 2:9 - When Will Jesus Return? |
| 11/12 | Unit 3:10 - How Do We Know There Is a God? |
| 11/19 | Unit 3:11 - How Do We Know the Bible Is True? |
| 11/26 | <i>Thanksgiving Break</i> |
| 12/3 | Unit 3:12 - How Did the Bible Come to Be? - Advent Service 1 |
| 12/10 | Unit 3:13 - What Do We Know About Who God Is? - Advent Service 2 |
| 12/17 | Unit 4:14 - Is the Creation Account True? - Advent Service 3 |
| 12/24 | <i>Christmas Break</i> |
| 12/31 | <i>Christmas Break</i> |
| 1/7 | Unit 4:15 - What Do We Know About Evolution? |
| 1/14 | Unit 4:16 - Why Does the Account of Adam and Eve Matter? |
| 1/21 | Unit 4:17 - Is There Evidence of the Flood? |
| 1/28 | Unit 4:18 - Is the God of the Old Testament the Same God as the New? |
| 2/4 | Unit 5:19 - What Is My Identity? |
| 2/11 | Unit 5:20 - Does Human Life Matter? |
| 2/18 | <i>Ash Wednesday (6:30 Communion Service)</i> |
| 2/25 | Unit 5:21 - As a Christian, Can I Like Science? – Lenten Service 2 |
| 3/4 | Unit 5:22 - Why Do Bad Things Happen? – Lenten Service 3 |
| 3/11 | Unit 5:23 - What About Demons and Angels? – Lenten Service 4 |
| 3/18 | Unit 5:24 - What About Ghosts and Aliens? – Lenten Service 5 |
| 3/25 | Unit 5:25 - Is There a Hell and Heaven? – Lenten Service 6 |
| 4/1 | <i>Holy Week (no class or worship service)</i> |
| 4/8 | Unit 5:26 - What About Miracles? – Review for Oral Exam |
| 4/15 | Unit 5:27 - What Does God Want Me to Do? - Review for Oral Exam |
| 4/22 | Unit 5:28 - What Does God Say About Marriage? - Review for Oral Exam |
| 4/29 | Unit 5:29 - What Does God Say About Gender? - Review for Oral Exam |
| 5/6 | Unit 5:30 - Things to Know in Defending the Faith - Review for Oral Exam |
| 5/13 | <i>Oral Examination</i> |
| 5/17 | <i>Confirmation Sunday (11:00 am Service)</i> |