

### **When can students schedule an interview with the director of youth ministries and a pastor?**

Before a student is publicly confirmed, s/he will schedule an interview for her/himself and her/his parents to meet with the director of youth ministries and one of the pastors. In the interview they will discuss the student's faith: what s/he believes, how s/he has grown, and how s/he plans to continue to grow, etc. Beforehand, the student must prepare a statement of faith or project that expresses her/his faith in Christ, such as a song, video, picture, or story. Students may schedule an interview for any time that works well for all parties.

*Interviews usually last about 30 minutes.*

### **When will Confirmation Celebrations occur?**

Once a student has completed all expectations and is prepared to be confirmed, s/he will work with the church to set up a date and time to be confirmed. There will no longer be a set date that all students of a particular class (i.e. eighth grade) will be automatically confirmed. Confirmation will celebrate the student's personal commitment to Christ and the family's devotion to discipleship.

**Thank you for allowing Lord of Life Church and youth ministries to support your family in raising students who know, love, and glorify our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with their lives.**

This approach to confirmation may be different from some of the traditional methods that you may have experienced or that Lord of Life has used in the past. Don't worry. "It's okay to change methodology and curriculum so long as youth are served and God is glorified" (concluding remarks from "A Study of Youth Confirmation and First Communion in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod).

Please contact Brian Zielke, the Director of Youth Ministries, if you have any questions or would like further explanation .

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# What is Confirmation at Lord of Life all about?

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## *The Path to a Personal Profession of Faith*

*"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity."*

*1 Timothy 4:12*

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# What is Confirmation?

A good place to start in discussing what confirmation means and all that it entails at Lord of Life Church is to talk about what confirmation is NOT.

## First of all, confirmation is NOT a mandate found in Scripture.

In other words, nowhere in the Bible does God say, “Thou shalt be confirmed.” Along the same lines, there are no specific instructions for the Church as to what a confirmation program must look like, how it must operate, and what it must accomplish. Any and all guidelines for how confirmation has been done in the past (traditionally) have been engineered by people based on their understanding of biblical principles for raising children in the Christian faith. Principles are given by Scripture. Methods and programs are designed by people. So is confirmation biblical? No, in the sense that the Bible never explicitly mentions confirmation. Yes, in the way that we follow principles from the Bible and guide students to confirm their faith in Christ. That is the kind of confirmation that we are all about at Lord of Life.

## Confirmation is NOT equivalent to salvation.

Confirmation may play a part in leading a student to salvation or affirming their salvation, but we do not believe that if a student is not confirmed, then s/he must not be saved. Salvation is determined by faith in Christ. It is a matter of the heart and of the Spirit, not of programs and ceremonies. While we definitely want to encourage our students to be confirmed through a public profession of their faith, it is not our main goal as a church or youth ministry. Our main goals are to disciple students (growth) and to reach the lost (evangelism). We believe that while confirmation is a checkpoint of growth, it is also a process; hopefully a consistent reality in students’ lives. As a church, we find fulfillment in making disciples, students who aim to be more like Jesus each day.

*“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9*

## Confirmation is NOT just a one-time event.

If confirmation is seen as a graduation and never lived out in a student’s life, what was confirmed? James 2:17 says, “faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” Confirmation, that is growing in faith, must be an ongoing process in the life of Christians. If we ever believe that we have reached the finish line in this world, then we have become complacent, not confirmed in faith.

*“So then, just as you received Christ as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness.” Colossians 2:6-7*

## Does this mean an end to Confirmation Sunday?

As a church, we will never stop recognizing and celebrating the growth of our youth. We will always give them opportunities to publicly confirm and profess their faith. What must end is the mindset that confirmation is a destination or a graduation. To help get this point across and implement it, we have decided to publicly confirm students when they are personally ready to profess their faith, rather than confirming them together as a class regardless of where they stand in their faith as an individual.

## Won’t students who are not ready to be confirmed feel left out when their friends are being confirmed?

If confirmation is not regarded as the main objective of the youth ministry, but rather spiritual growth, we will be able to celebrate each step a student takes closer to Jesus and continue to prepare them to the point when they are personally ready to publicly profess their faith. The students who really end up left out are those who are confirmed for the wrong reasons and never challenged to understand and claim their faith as their own.

*“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment, and the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Matthew 22:37-39*

## What if a student is ready to be confirmed before 8<sup>th</sup> grade or not ready until after 8<sup>th</sup> grade?

If a student is ready to be confirmed in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, great! If a student is ready to be confirmed in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, great! If a student is never confirmed, but loves and serves the Lord with all of her/his heart, great! If and when a student is publicly confirmed will be up to the student, parents, and church leaders who have overseen her/his growth.

## What are the expectations for confirmation?

In confirmation, students publicly professes, and the church celebrates, their commitment to follow Jesus Christ in faith. Thus, the primary expectation for confirmation is that the student has surrendered her/his life to Jesus and has a growing relationship with him. Besides that we expect students who desire to be confirmed to...

- Complete Basic Training - all four sessions...
  - 1) Discovering the Bible
  - 2) Encountering Jesus
  - 3) Living on Purpose
  - 4) Searching for Truth
- Personally study the Bible - at least 30 days of devotions (suggestions can be offered)
- Understand the basics of Luther’s Small Catechism - taught and discussed in youth ministry programs
- Serve at least 10 hours in the community or an area of ministry at Lord of Life
- Participate in at least one trip, conference, or retreat
- Write a statement of faith or create a faith project
- Interview with parent(s), the director of youth ministries, and a pastor