

Other resources in the Creative Confirmation Series include:

- ◆ Bible 1: Family Matters
- ◆ Bible 2: From Bondage to Freedom
- ◆ Bible 3: Into the World
- ◆ Small Catechism
- ◆ Worship
- ◆ Community-Building Activities and Games
- ◆ Sharing the Language of Faith
- ◆ Mission/Service Projects
- ◆ Parent Conversations
- ◆ Family Book
- ◆ Youth Journal
- ◆ Study Bible: The New Student Bible
(New Revised Standard Version)
- ◆ A Contemporary Translation of Luther's
Small Catechism: Study Edition

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Planning Guide




CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION

A RESOURCE FOR LEADERS

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creative  confirmation

Planning Guide

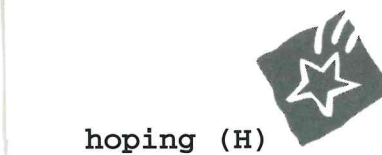


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Series Introduction

Confirmation ministry is changing! Creative responses to the challenge of communicating the church's traditional teachings to young people have produced a variety of practices in the Lutheran church.

Creative Confirmation will help leaders develop and lead a confirmation ministry program that is tailor-made for the congregation. The resource presents the traditional content of confirmation ministry in a way that respects the insights and perspectives of middle school youth. It emphasizes the following:

- ♦ basic Bible literacy;
- ♦ Small Catechism related to life;
- ♦ worship;
- ♦ active and experiential teaching approaches;
- ♦ nurturing faith development in the context of the Christian community.

Creative Confirmation resources are for the one- to three-year period of instruction in the middle school years. This resource will also fit into the variety of "longer and later" confirmation programs.

SERIES OBJECTIVES The objectives of this series are to help youth and their leaders:

- ♦ gain a basic understanding of the Bible and Luther's Small Catechism;
- ♦ participate more fully in the worship and corporate life of the faith community;

- ♦ explore in an open and supportive environment the connections between faith and daily life;
- ♦ develop relationships with peers and those of other generations within the confirmation program;
- ♦ serve within the congregation, the community, and the world.

RESOURCES

LEADER RESOURCES ♦ Creative Confirmation consists of nine leader resource books for those in the congregation who design and lead the confirmation ministry program. The Bible resource books (three volumes) and the *Small Catechism* resource book serve as the core of the program. The other resource books (*Worship, Community-Building Activities and Games, Mission/Service Projects, Sharing the Language of Faith, and Parent Conversations*) help planners and leaders build a comprehensive program.

The *Family Book* is for home use. It includes information for the parents or guardians and ideas for discussions and devotions. This resource also includes an article for use at a parent/guardian orientation meeting.

Confirmation
ministry
is
changing!

Creative Confirmation Series
Creative Confirmation Planning Guide

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As youth participate in learning activities, the Bible and the Small Catechism will be the primary resources.

YOUTH RESOURCES ♦ As youth participate in learning activities, the Bible and the Small Catechism will be the primary resources. The *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)* will be used for some sessions. Permission to duplicate particular pages in the resource books will allow leaders to distribute information or an activity to the youth for some sessions.

♦ *Study Bible: The New Student Bible NRSV* This new NRSV (New Revised Standard Version) Bible includes easy-to-use study helps for youth. Features include an Augsburg Fortress "Understanding the Bible" section, introductions to each book, "Insight" and "Highlight" inserts in the text, a subject guide, maps, and charts.

♦ *A Contemporary Translation of Luther's Small Catechism: Study Edition* This catechism features a new translation from the German of Luther's explanations in the Small Catechism. NRSV and *LBW* texts are used for the wording of the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, and Apostles' Creed.

♦ *Youth Journal* This journal is a resource for young people to use in their reflection on the Bible and Small Catechism learning. It is also a place to keep confirmation records and memories.

Bible Resource Books Overview

BIBLE 1: FAMILY MATTERS

BIBLE 2: FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM

BIBLE 3: INTO THE WORLD

The *Bible 1: Family Matters*, *Bible 2: From Bondage to Freedom*, *Bible 3: Into the World*, and *Small Catechism* resources are the core of this confirmation series. The 90 Bible stories presented in *Bible 1: Family Matters*, *Bible 2: From Bondage to Freedom*, and *Bible 3: Into the World* have been selected using criteria developed in conversations with middle school youth, seminary professors, and parish pastors who work effectively with young people. These stories capture the essence of the biblical salvation story and speak to the issues middle school youth face in daily life.

Each book contains four sessions of Bible basics. These sessions help youth and their leaders explore basic information about the Bible. The 30 Bible sessions in each book are organized around the following themes:

- ♦ *Bible 1* theme: Family Matters;
- ♦ *Bible 2* theme: From Bondage to Freedom;
- ♦ *Bible 3* theme: Into the World.

Each session includes one key Bible text and stands by itself. It is presented in an engaging and active way, and challenges youth and their leaders to respond to the story. Each Bible session lasts 20 minutes. As you plan each meeting period, group more than one Bible session or combine one Bible session with activities and ideas from the other resource books.

GOALS OF BIBLE 1, BIBLE 2, AND BIBLE 3

These resources will help youth and their leaders:

- ♦ experience the message of God's

Word through an active interaction with the biblical texts;

- ♦ gain a basic understanding of the salvation story in the Bible;
- ♦ relate the biblical texts to life experience in the community of faith and in the whole human community.

BIBLE 1: FAMILY MATTERS OVERVIEW

Young people struggle with questions about the roles and relationships they have with their families of origin, the community of faith, and the whole human family. These passages help explore the joys and struggles of family matters.

BIBLE BASICS

- ♦ Why read the Bible?
- ♦ What is the Old Testament?
- ♦ What is the New Testament?
- ♦ Why so many translations?

BIBLE SESSIONS

1. Genesis 2:18-25 Adam and Eve
2. Genesis 3 Disobedience in the garden
3. Genesis 4:1-16 Cain and Abel
4. Genesis 18:1-16 The promise of a son
5. Genesis 22:1-19 The binding of Isaac
6. Genesis 25:19-34 Jacob and Esau
7. Genesis 27:1-29 Jacob gets the blessing
8. Genesis 29:1-30 How Jacob got his wives
9. Genesis 30:25-43 How Jacob became rich
10. Genesis 32:9-32 Jacob wrestles with God

It is important to belong, but also important to follow individual callings.

11. Genesis 37:1-28 Joseph and his brothers
12. Genesis 39 Potiphar's wife
13. Genesis 41:1-45 Pharaoh's dreams
14. Genesis 45:1-15 Joseph and his brothers (reconciliation)
15. Genesis 45:16—46:7 Israel in Egypt
16. 1 Samuel 1:1-20 Hannah's child
17. 1 Samuel 3:1-18 Samuel's call
18. 2 Samuel 11:2-21 David and Bathsheba
19. 2 Samuel 12:1-15 Nathan the prophet and punishment of the king
20. 1 Kings 3:3-14 Solomon's prayer
21. Matthew 1:18-25 Joseph becomes a father
22. Matthew 2:1-23 Visit of the Magi and flight to Egypt
23. Luke 1:26-56 The announcement to Mary
24. Luke 2:1-21 Mary becomes a mother
25. Luke 2:41-52 Jesus in the temple
26. Luke 15:11-32 The complaint of a responsible child
27. Mark 10:1-31 Family ties
28. John 19:17-27 New family
29. 1 Corinthians 7:1-17 Single and married
30. Ephesians 5:21—6:9 The household

BIBLE 2: FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM OVERVIEW Freedom (independence) is a common concern among young people. It is important to belong, but it is also important to follow individual callings. The passages in *Bible 2* explore biblical themes of bondage and freedom.

BIBLE BASICS

- ◆ How does the church view the Bible?
- ◆ Which books belong in the Bible?
- ◆ How do I find my way around the Bible?
- ◆ How should I interpret the Bible?

BIBLE SESSIONS

1. Exodus 2:1-16 The birth of Moses
2. Exodus 3:1-17 The call of Moses

3. Exodus 7:8—11:10 The plagues in Egypt
4. Exodus 12 (12:21-32) Passover
5. Exodus 14:10-29 Deliverance at the sea
6. Joshua 2:1-21 Rahab and the spies
7. Joshua 6:1-21 The fall of Jericho
8. Judges 4:1-22 Deborah
9. Judges 7:1-23 Gideon
10. Judges 16:4-31 Samson
11. 1 Samuel 17:1-49 David and Goliath
12. Psalm 23 The good shepherd
13. 1 Kings 17:1-24 Elijah and the widow
14. 1 Kings 18:17-40 Elijah and the prophets of Baal
15. 2 Kings 5:1-19 Elisha and Naaman
16. Isaiah 11:1-10 The promise of deliverance
17. Daniel 3:1-30 The three young men in the fiery furnace
18. Daniel 6:1-28 Daniel and the lions
19. Jeremiah 1:1-19 The call of a prophet
20. Jeremiah 31:27-34 A new covenant
21. Mark 5:1-20 The Gerasene demoniac
22. Mark 5:21-43 The bleeding woman and Jairus's daughter
23. Matthew 15:21-28 A woman with faith
24. John 9:1-41 The man born blind
25. John 11:1-53 Jesus raises Lazarus
26. Mark 15:1-41 Jesus' death
27. Matthew 28:1-10 The empty tomb
28. Romans 3:19-30 Justified by faith
29. Romans 5:1-11 Peace with God
30. Romans 8 Free at last

BIBLE 3: INTO THE WORLD OVERVIEW The passages in *Bible 3* focus on being sent into the world. The stories in *Bible 3: Into the World* help youth and their leaders explore individual gifts, vocation, peace, justice, witness, and worship.

BIBLE BASICS

- ◆ The world of the Old Testament
- ◆ The world of the New Testament
- ◆ Which parts of the Bible are most important?
- ◆ Reading in the Bible today

BIBLE SESSIONS

1. Genesis 1 God's world
2. Genesis 11:1-9 Confusion
3. Genesis 12:1-9 Called to be a blessing
4. Exodus 20:1-20 The Commandments
5. Deuteronomy 8 Remembering God's gifts
6. Isaiah 2:1-4 Swords into plowshares
7. Isaiah 40:1-11 The messenger of good news
8. Amos 5:14-24 Justice
9. Jonah 1:1—4:11 God's love for sinners
10. Psalm 103 Giving thanks
11. Matthew 5:1-12 The Beatitudes
12. Matthew 6:1-15 The Lord's Prayer
13. Matthew 10 Sent out
14. Matthew 18:1-22 Living together

15. Matthew 28:16-20 The Great Commission
16. Luke 22:7-27 The Lord's Supper
17. Luke 24:13-35 Known in the breaking of the bread
18. Luke 24:36-52 Proclaiming repentance and forgiveness
19. Acts 2 (2:1-21) Pentecost
20. Acts 7 Stephen: The cost of discipleship
21. Acts 8:26-39 The importance of a teacher: Philip and the Ethiopian
22. Acts 9:1-31 The conversion of Saul
23. Galatians 2 The gospel for the Gentiles
24. Galatians 3:23-29 No distinction
25. Galatians 5:1-14 Freedom for the neighbor
26. Romans 12:1-13 Gifts for service
27. Ephesians 4:1-16 The body of Christ
28. Hebrews 11:1-16, 12:1-2 A cloud of witnesses
29. 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 A reason to hope
30. Revelation 21:1-5 A new heaven and a new earth

Which parts of the Bible are most important?

Small Catechism Overview

This resource—*Small Catechism*—and *Bible 1: Family Matters*, *Bible 2: From Bondage to Freedom*, and *Bible 3: Into the World* form the core of this confirmation ministry series. Luther's *Small Catechism* provides basic instruction in the Christian faith. It connects every generation with the fundamental questions and the traditional responses that have shaped our identity as Lutheran Christians. This resource book

provides engaging activities that challenge youth and their leaders to explore these traditional teachings of the faith community in light of their own life experiences. The activities respect the tradition and the questions of the youth and their leaders.

Small Catechism contains 30 sessions on the catechism. Each session lasts 20 minutes. As you plan each meeting period, group more than one catechism

session or combine one catechism session with activities and ideas from the other resource books.

Small Catechism also includes four sessions that provide a basic introduction to Martin Luther, the Reformation, and the Small Catechism. Each session will be 20 minutes.

GOALS OF SMALL CATECHISM

This resource will help youth and their leaders:

- ◆ gain a basic understanding of Luther's Small Catechism;
- ◆ relate the parts of the catechism with contemporary issues of faith and life;
- ◆ explore their role in shaping the future of the faith community through

their interpretation of the traditional teachings.

CONTENTS AND NUMBER OF SESSIONS

Catechism basics (4 sessions)

- ◆ A need for reform
- ◆ God's forgiveness
- ◆ Teaching the truth
- ◆ The basics of faith

Ten Commandments (10 sessions)

Apostles' Creed (6 sessions)

Lord's Prayer (7 sessions)

Sacraments: Baptism and Holy

Communion (6 sessions)

Office of the Keys (1 session)

Worship Overview

Worship, together with Bible and catechism learning, is central to a strong confirmation ministry. Worship expresses who we are as a people of God. It is woven in many ways throughout the church year. Lutheran worship is liturgical. Liturgy is the work of the people that is accomplished within a community of believers. Worship is central to our lives as Christians. Like breathing, liturgy is central to our lives as human beings.

Worship is common ground for all people. It is holy ground where we remember our scriptural roots and prepare for service in our world. Worship offers order for living. It is life in community. *Worship* offers ways for youth and their leaders to contemplate and enter the experience of worship meaningfully and in community.

GOALS OF WORSHIP The goals of this resource are to help youth and their leaders:

- ◆ better understand Lutheran worship;
- ◆ experience worship by active involvement in the activities and opening and closing exercises;
- ◆ participate more fully in congregational worship.

CONTENTS AND NUMBER OF SESSIONS

Youth in worship (article)

Lutheran worship (6 sessions)

Church seasons (6 sessions)

Deeper involvement in worship ritual (6 sessions)

Story sharing from the home (29 sessions)

Activities for openings and closings (16 activities)

Community-Building Activities and Games Overview

Community-Building Activities and Games provides directions for games and other activities that build community and support the learning in this confirmation program. The activities in this resource affirm the individuality of each participant and promote relationship building and group building.

These activities also build connections between youth and the congregation, the community, and the world.

GOALS OF COMMUNITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

The goals of this resource

are to help youth and their leaders:

- ◆ get acquainted and feel comfortable with others in the group;
- ◆ experience community by active involvement in games and activities;
- ◆ appreciate their identity as valued members of the body of Christ.

CONTENTS AND NUMBER OF SESSIONS

Community-building activities (17 activities)

Community-building games (22 games)

Mentoring article and ideas (29 ideas)

Mission/Service Projects Overview

Mission/Service Projects offers activities that connect faith with a life of caring. Caring for ourselves and all of creation is central to stewardship in the life of the church. Actively caring through mission and service projects is not automatically embraced by people. It takes some effort to understand one's individual significance in the world, and then to take action. This resource provides some building blocks to begin this process. It will inspire continued activity beyond the regularly scheduled meeting time. Youth and

their leaders actively explore the connections between their gifts and the needs of the world, followed by active participation in mission/service projects.

GOALS OF MISSION/SERVICE PROJECTS

This resource will help youth and their leaders:

- ◆ visualize themselves as significant world citizens and members of the body of Christ;

- ◆ understand stewardship as it relates to themselves, the earth, and other people;
- ◆ participate in mission/service projects both locally and globally.

CONTENTS AND NUMBER OF SESSIONS

Identify, plan, participate (article)
 Stewardship (8 sessions)
 Global projects (8 sessions)
 Hunger/justice (8 sessions)
 Local projects (8 sessions)

Sharing the Language of Faith Overview

Language and community are closely tied together. Community does not exist without a shared language. Language is not necessary outside of community. The language of the community of faith includes words, stories, rituals, movement, symbols, music, liturgies, and prayers. Language expresses who we are and shapes who we will become. Language describes the way things are and provides us a glimpse of what God intends for us.

Sharing the Language of Faith provides activities that help youth and their leaders explore the connection between language and community. Special emphasis is placed on the language of the community of faith. Youth and their leaders are challenged to learn the traditional language and encouraged to translate the language so that it speaks to contemporary issues and situations.

GOALS OF SHARING THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

This resource will help youth and their leaders:

- ◆ explore the connection between language and community;
- ◆ gain a basic understanding of the language that shapes the community of faith;
- ◆ share their personal faith stories in language that invites others to participate in the community of faith.

CONTENTS AND NUMBER OF SESSIONS

Language and community (4 sessions)
 Memory article and sessions (3 sessions)
 Sharing faith stories (6 sessions)
 Theological and liturgical terms (5 sessions)
 Christian symbols (5 sessions)
 Devotional reading of the Bible (6 sessions)

Parent Conversations Overview

The first part of *Parent Conversations* provides ideas and discussion formats that encourage dialogue between parents/guardians and youth. These suggestions can be adapted for a variety of programmatic needs, such as: 1) inviting parents to attend a portion of session time for discussion or an activity with a small group of confirmation youth; and 2) incorporating several of the ideas presented in this resource into a special day or evening workshop for parents and youth together.

The second part of *Parent Conversations* provides ideas and formats that encourage discussions among groups of parents. This resource encourages conversation. The suggestions may be adapted for a variety of programmatic needs, such as: 1) informal discussions between parents while youth are in the confirmation program; and

2) grouping several discussion activities together for a parenting meeting.

GOALS OF PARENT CONVERSATIONS

The goals of this resource are to help youth and parents/guardians:

- ◆ discuss experiences and topics of interest;
- ◆ share personal faith stories and build supportive relationships;
- ◆ develop relationships that encourage personal growth for the strengthening of families and the community of faith.

CONTENTS AND NUMBER OF SESSIONS

Parent-youth interchanges (article)
 Parent-youth boundary breakers (19 sessions)
 Parent-to-parent discussion guide (24 sessions)

Family Book Overview

The *Family Book* is a resource for the parents or guardians of youth in the confirmation program. It emphasizes the importance of confirmation ministry and their part in it. This resource is sensitive to the wide variety of household units in existence today.

GOALS OF FAMILY BOOK

The goals of this resource are to help youth and their families:

- ◆ learn about confirmation ministry and its importance;

- ◆ find time for meaningful celebrations and worship times as a family;
- ◆ appreciate their role in confirmation ministry.

CONTENTS

What is confirmation ministry and why is it so important? (article)
 Table talk (a variety of activities and discussion ideas for around the table and other places)

Youth Resources

YOUTH JOURNAL The *Youth Journal* is a resource for youth to use to respond to the Bible and catechism sessions through guided reflection and critical thinking exercises. It also provides a place to keep confirmation records and memories.

A CONTEMPORARY TRANSLATION OF LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM: STUDY EDITION This volume is a new translation from the German of Luther's explanations in the Small Catechism. Other catechetical study helps—an introduction to Luther and the Small Catechism, prayers, and worship rites—are also included. NRSV and *LBW* texts are used for the wording of the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, and the worship rites. This catechism is available from Augsburg Fortress. Code: 15-5305.

STUDY BIBLE: THE NEW STUDENT BIBLE NRSV This New Revised Standard Version study Bible has been developed with easy-to-use features for youth.

- This Bible features the following:
- ◆ an Augsburg Fortress "Understanding the Bible" section that outlines key information;
 - ◆ introductions to each book plus special "Insight" and "Highlight" notes that encourage reflection;
 - ◆ an exclusive subject guide that points the reader to the Bible's message on today's topics of interest.

This youth study version of the NRSV works especially well in this series, with specific references to its pages made in the series resource books. This Bible is available from Augsburg Fortress. Code: 30-10-999.

Planning Helps

Creative Confirmation resources allow you to customize a confirmation program that meets the needs of your youth and your congregation. These flexible resources work together through active and experiential learning activities to emphasize basic Bible literacy, the Small Catechism, worship, and daily life in the Christian community. The examples provided in this *Planning Guide* outline just a few of the possible ways to organize the material. Be creative and innovative as you decide how to use this resource in your confirmation program.

STEP ONE: PLANNING THE CONFIRMATION PROGRAM

Basic decisions about a congregation's confirmation ministry program are made by a planning team or in some situations by one individual (often the pastor). This planning team is responsible for providing direction and vision for the confirmation program. They set the priorities and make administrative decisions. They also help identify and recruit leaders for the program.

This step in the planning process establishes overall direction and vision for the program by considering broadly based issues, such as:

- ◆ the congregation's traditions;
- ◆ the number of youth in the program;
- ◆ assumptions about which grade levels of youth will participate in confirmation ministry;
- ◆ expectations about the number of years of instruction;
- ◆ unique situations or opportunities in the community;
- ◆ the interests of parents/guardians and youth;

- ◆ how confirmation fits with lifelong learning in the congregation;
- ◆ other programmatic priorities of the congregation (for example, worship or mission);
- ◆ persons available to provide leadership;
- ◆ direction from the synod or church-wide organizations.

Consideration of these issues will help define the congregation's priorities for confirmation ministry. In some settings it will be necessary to design a survey or other method to gather this information. It is the responsibility of the planning team to consider this information as they set the priorities for the confirmation ministry program.

Use this form to record your decisions.

Age level: Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8
 Other _____

Number of meetings per year: _____

Length of each meeting: _____

Core content: List content areas that must be included. _____

Other content: List areas of involvement that we want to include. _____

STEP TWO: WORKING OUT THE DETAILS

The poster insert in the center of this *Planning Guide* will help with this step of the planning. Side 1 shows three basic ways to organize the Creative Confirmation resources. Side 2 is a chart that allows you to design your own plan for

The examples provided in this *Planning Guide* outline just a few of the possible ways to organize the material.

Remember
that groups
can be
structured
according to
grade level
or all grade
levels can
take the
same courses
each year.

confirmation ministry in your congregation. Display this chart after you complete it as a reference for all who are involved in your program.

ORGANIZING STRUCTURE ♦ As you develop your plan for using Creative Confirmation, it will be helpful to select a way to organize your approach to the resources and the priorities of your congregation. Side 1 of the poster insert in the center of this guide offers three possibilities for organizing your program. You will notice that the number of sessions to use from each resource is suggested for you. These suggestions assume that one year of your confirmation program includes 30 sessions, each one lasting 60 minutes.

♦ Plan 1 The Bible and the Small Catechism: This plan is for confirmation programs that emphasize a year of Bible study and a year of Small Catechism study. If your program lasts three years, add learning activities from one or more of the other resource books. Teach the Bible stories in the order presented or arrange them to provide a survey of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. See the poster insert in the center of this *Planning Guide* for examples of this plan.

♦ Plan 2 Biblical themes: The biblical themes—family matters, from bondage to freedom, and into the world—provide the basis for the program. Include material from the Small Catechism when it fits with the biblical text for the session. This approach fits nicely with a three-year program, but also works in two years. See the poster insert in the center of this *Planning Guide* for examples of this plan.

♦ Plan 3 Church year: In this plan, the seasons of the church year provide

the organizational principle. Use the symbols that appear on all of the biblical and catechetical sessions to select material for the season of the church year. Select activities from the other resource books by matching the symbols. See the poster insert in the center of this *Planning Guide* for an example of this plan.

Church year themes:

S (Seeking) = Pentecost (September through Christ the King Sunday)

H (Hoping) = Advent, Christmas, Epiphany

W (Wandering) = Lent

R (Remembering) = Easter

See page 16 of this *Planning Guide* for a detailed description of the symbols.

Study side 1 of the poster insert. Does one of these approaches fit the priorities of your program? If not, what will work better for you?

OUR CONFIRMATION MINISTRY PROGRAM

♦ Side 2 of the poster insert found in this guide is a chart that will help you plan your own program. The rows marked Year 1, 2, or 3 denote the years of study in your confirmation program. Remember that groups can be structured according to grade level or all grade levels can take the same courses each year.

Indicate on the chart the number of sessions you plan to use from each resource book. Each session is 20 minutes long. In a 60-minute meeting time, you will be able to do three sessions. If you meet 30 times per year, you can plan to use 90 sessions.

As you recruit the leaders for the program, add their names. Use the completed chart during the leader orientation, the parent orientation, and as a poster in the church.

WHAT IF . . .

The Creative Confirmation resources can be used in many types of confirmation programs. Each variation poses some issues for the planning group to consider. Some of the many options are examined below.

♦ What if . . . we have 20 meetings a year for two years instead of 30 meetings a year for three years?

Suggestion: Reduce the number of meeting periods from 90 to 40 and the number of sessions in the program from 270 to 120. Are you still able to meet the priorities established in the first step of the planning process?

♦ What if . . . we use a combination of retreats and classes?

Suggestion: Schedule retreats to cover a larger number of sessions in a concentrated amount of time; reduce the number of weekly meeting periods; focus on community-building; cover additional topics; give youth the option of attending weekly meetings or attending the retreat; or all of the above. (See the "Sample Schedules" section for a retreat schedule.)

♦ What if . . . we have only 45 minutes on Sunday morning?

Suggestion: Decide what content is

most important given this shorter meeting time. Use the "Our Confirmation Ministry Program" chart (side 2 of the poster insert) and plan to cover two sessions from the resources each meeting period. Do you need more time to explore mission/service projects or to work on community-building activities?

♦ What if . . . I teach this all by myself?

Suggestion: Creative Confirmation resources make it possible for one person to teach a small group. The activities will work best when there are no more than 12 youth with one leader. Mix and match activities from various resource books to develop your lesson plan. The sections in this *Planning Guide* on organizing principles (page 14) and symbols (page 16) will help you organize the material. What could you gain by involving more leaders in the program?

What if we
use a
combination
of retreats
and
classes?

RETREAT



YEAR 3



YEAR 2



2. WANDERING



THEMES:

Lent
Wandering
Wilderness
Sin

Confession

CATECHISM:

Lord's Prayer
Confession
Office of the Keys

3. REMEMBERING



THEMES:

Easter
New life
Promises
Covenants

Rebirth

CATECHISM:

Third Article of the Apostles' Creed
Communion

4. SEEKING



THEMES:

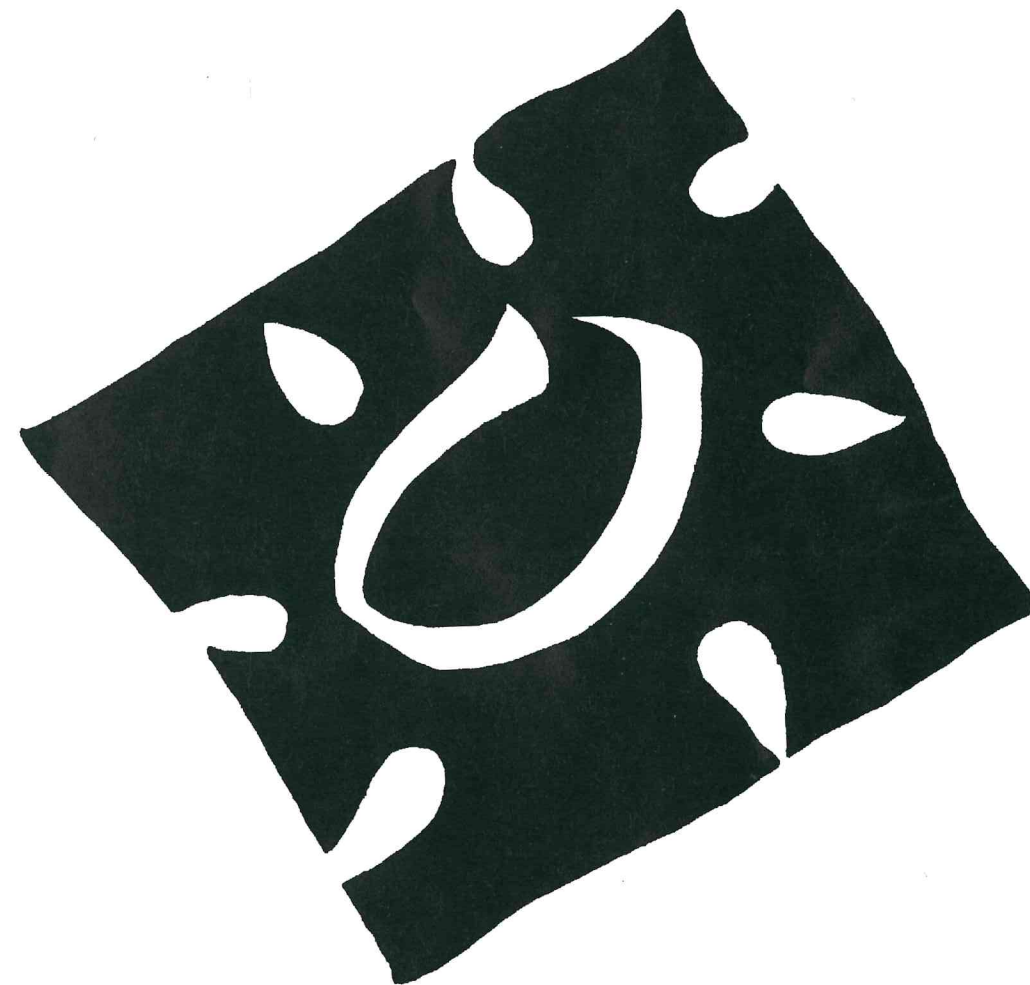
Pentecost
Living (Ministry in daily life)
Life in the spirit

Life in the church
Community (body of Christ)
Creation

CATECHISM:

First Article of the Apostles' Creed
Ten Commandments

Although the symbols make it easier to group related activities, you may customize Creative Confirmation by grouping sessions and activities to meet the needs of your program.



Sample Schedules

There are many ways to schedule your meeting time using Creative Confirmation. Individual sessions in the Bible resource books and in the *Small Catechism* resource book require 20 minutes to complete. Activities in the other resource books will vary, but most also require 20 minutes. Activities in *Mission/Service Projects* require 20 minutes, but actual involvement in a project may require time outside of the meeting period. Parent-to-parent discussions from *Parent Conversations* will easily fill a 60-minute meeting time.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE A (PLAN 1 [THREE-YEAR])

TIME SLOT	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
7:00-7:20	Use 30 openings from <i>Worship</i> and 30 games/activities from <i>Community-Building Activities and Games</i> .	Use 30 openings from <i>Worship</i> and 30 games/activities from <i>Community-Building Activities and Games</i> .	Use 30 openings from <i>Worship</i> and 30 games/activities from <i>Community-Building Activities and Games</i> .
7:20-7:40	Use 6 parent-youth boundary breakers from <i>Parent Conversations</i> and 24 sessions from <i>Worship</i> .	Use 30 Bible stories from <i>Bible 1</i> , <i>Bible 2</i> , and <i>Bible 3</i> .	Use 30 sessions from <i>Small Catechism</i> .
7:40-8:00	Use 12 Bible basics from the Bible resource books, 4 catechism basics from <i>Small Catechism</i> , 6 devotional reading of the Bible sessions from <i>Worship</i> , and 8 Bible stories from the Bible resource books.	Use 30 sessions from <i>Mission/Service Projects</i> .	Use 23 sessions from <i>Sharing the Language of Faith</i> and 7 mentoring sessions from <i>Community-Building Activities and Games</i> .

SAMPLE SCHEDULE A

Organizing theme: The Bible and the Small Catechism (see plan 1 on page 14 of the *Planning Guide* and the corresponding chart from the poster insert in the center of the *Planning Guide*)

Years of instruction: 3
Meeting periods per year: 30
Length of meeting period: 60 minutes

SAMPLE SCHEDULE B

Organizing theme: The Bible and the Small Catechism (see plan 1 on page 14 of the *Planning Guide* and the corresponding chart from the poster insert in the center of the *Planning Guide*)

Years of instruction: 2
Meeting periods per year: 30
Length of meeting period: 60 minutes

SAMPLE SCHEDULE B (PLAN 1 [TWO-YEAR])

TIME SLOT	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
7:00-7:20	Use 30 openings from <i>Worship</i> and 30 games/activities from <i>Community-Building Activities and Games</i> .	Use 30 openings from <i>Worship</i> and 30 games/activities from <i>Community-Building Activities and Games</i> .
7:20-7:40	Use 12 Bible basics and 18 Bible stories from the Bible resource books.	Use 4 catechism basics and 26 sessions from <i>Small Catechism</i> .
7:40-8:00	Use 6 parent-youth boundary breakers from <i>Parent Conversations</i> and 24 sessions from <i>Worship</i> .	Use 4 catechism sessions from <i>Small Catechism</i> and 26 sessions from <i>Sharing the Language of Faith</i> .

SAMPLE SCHEDULE C

Organizing theme: Bible themes (see plan 2 on page 14 of the *Planning Guide* and the corresponding chart from the poster insert in the center of the *Planning Guide*)

Years of instruction: 3
Meeting periods per year: 30
Length of meeting period: 60 minutes

SAMPLE SCHEDULE C (PLAN 2 [THREE-YEAR])

TIME SLOT	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
7:00-7:20	Use 30 openings from <i>Worship</i> and 30 games/activities from <i>Community-Building Activities and Games</i> .	Use 30 openings from <i>Worship</i> and 30 games/activities from <i>Community-Building Activities and Games</i> .	Use 30 openings from <i>Worship</i> and 30 games/activities from <i>Community-Building Activities and Games</i> .
7:20-7:40	Use 4 Bible basics and 26 Bible stories from <i>Bible 1</i> .	Use 4 Bible basics and 26 Bible stories from <i>Bible 2</i> .	Use 4 Bible basics and 26 Bible stories from <i>Bible 3</i> .
7:40-8:00	Use 2 parent-youth boundary breakers from <i>Parent Conversations</i> , 4 catechism basics and 6 Apostles' Creed sessions from <i>Small Catechism</i> , and 6 Lutheran worship, 6 church seasons, and 6 worship ritual from <i>Worship</i> .	Use 3 Baptism sessions and 1 Office of the Keys from <i>Small Catechism</i> , 10 parent-youth boundary breakers from <i>Parent Conversations</i> , and 16 sessions from <i>Mission/Service Projects</i> .	Use 10 sessions of Ten Commandments, 7 of Lord's Prayer, 3 of Lord's Supper from <i>Small Catechism</i> and 4 sessions on language and community and 6 sessions on faith stories from <i>Sharing the Language of Faith</i> .

SAMPLE SCHEDULE D

RETREAT

◆ Friday evening
7:00 Community-building activities and games
8:00 Session 1
9:30 Worship
10:00 Food and fun

◆ Saturday
8:00 Breakfast
9:00 Worship
Community-building activities and games
9:45 Session 2
11:00 Recreation
Noon Lunch
1:00 Session 3
2:30 Recreation
4:00 Session 4
5:30 Supper

The theme for the retreat and the activities for the session could come from one of the Creative Confirmation resource books. *Worship*, *Mission/Service Projects*, or *Sharing the Language of Faith* are good topics for a retreat setting.

Staffing

This
planning
team should
include a
young person
or two.

Creative Confirmation resources can strengthen your confirmation ministry program by involving more adults in the program. The resource allows leaders to be involved in areas that are comfortable for them. Young people can have the opportunity to meet and share with many adults from the congregation.

ROLES

PLANNERS ♦ A small planning team is most effective for planning the confirmation ministry program. This planning team of six to eight members includes:

- ♦ the pastor(s);
- ♦ lay staff involved in confirmation ministry;
- ♦ a representative from the education committee or board;
- ♦ a representative of the parents;
- ♦ a young person or two.

Representatives from other congregational committees or boards serve as advisory members. If, for example, involving youth in worship is a priority in the confirmation ministry program, a representative from the worship committee should be a part of the planning process.

This planning team is responsible for providing direction and vision for the confirmation program. They set the priorities and make administrative decisions. They also help identify and recruit leaders for the program.

PASTORS ♦ The pastor is usually involved in the planning process and is a leader in the confirmation program.

The Creative Confirmation resources allow pastors to share leadership responsibility. A pastor can lead the sessions on the Bible or the Small Catechism while another member of the congregation leads the community-building games or the sessions on sharing the language of faith. Apart from participation in the planning process and in teaching, the pastor's commitment to and support of the confirmation ministry program is vital. Members of the congregation, youth and adults, look to the pastor as one who sets the tone and attitude of the program.

LEADERS ♦ Lay leaders play an important part in the confirmation ministry program. They provide skills, interests, and energy. The Creative Confirmation resources are designed to nurture relationships between the leaders and the youth. The involvement of open and honest adults provides youths with examples of people who grow as they struggle with the issues of faith and life.

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS ♦ Parents and guardians have several opportunities to be involved in the confirmation ministry program:

- ♦ as members of the planning team;
- ♦ in the home using the *Family Book* to lead family discussions about faith and life;

- ♦ as leaders in the confirmation ministry program;
- ♦ as participants in discussions with the youth during the meeting time (see *Parent Conversations*);
- ♦ as participants in discussions with other parents or guardians about the issues of parenting (see *Parent Conversations*).

YOUTH ♦ The young people are both participants in the confirmation ministry program and members of the congregation. They are present to learn about the community of faith and to contribute to the life of the community of faith.

WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS GOING TO WORK WELL?

Leadership is important to your confirmation program. The planning team has the responsibility of inviting adults to accept leadership roles in the program.

1. The planning chart from the poster insert in the center of this *Planning Guide* will help you determine the number of leaders you need and the topics each will be leading. When people accept the invitation to provide leadership, record their names on the chart.
2. Assign areas of responsibility to the pastor(s) and others who will automatically be a part of the leadership team.
3. Identify potential leaders for the other leadership positions. Consider time and talent sheets, parents, people who have taught before, and any other means you can think of to generate a list of potential leaders. People should have interest and ability in the particular area they are being asked to consider. In general look for people who:

- ♦ enjoy and understand middle school youth;
- ♦ are comfortable with active and open-ended learning activities;
- ♦ share their faith without being prescriptive or authoritarian;
- ♦ are able to work with a team;
- ♦ respect young people and their contribution to the church;
- ♦ respect the traditions of the church and are willing to examine those traditions in light of the challenges of contemporary society;
- ♦ have small-group skills.

4. As you ask people to share their leadership skills, be specific about what you are asking. Provide information in writing about the time of commitment, goals of the confirmation program, kinds of skills you are seeking, topics, size of group, other leaders, and other details.

Let the person know why you are asking her or him to be a part of the confirmation program. Ask someone to lead the worship sessions because she or he "relates well to middle school youth and has interesting insights on worship," not because "we need someone to do it and we can't find anyone else."

Have a copy of the appropriate resource book from the Creative Confirmation Series so the person can see the material he or she will use.

5. Schedule a leader orientation meeting and include the agenda for this meeting with the other written material for the potential leaders.

Look for
people who
respect
young people
and their
contribution
to the
church.

Leader Orientation Workshop

An orientation workshop for the leaders is an important part of your confirmation program. Leaders appreciate being well informed about the confirmation program, the Creative Confirmation resources, what is expected of them, and the logistic details about schedules and meeting spaces.

The objectives of this orientation workshop are to help confirmation ministry leaders:

- ◆ understand the confirmation ministry program of your congregation;
- ◆ become familiar with the Creative Confirmation resources;
- ◆ learn about middle school youth;
- ◆ explore the active and cooperative learning styles used in Creative Confirmation.

PREPARATION The orientation workshop outlined below is designed for two hours. Consider the details of your program, the number and experience of your leaders, and additional agenda items to determine the objectives and length of your own workshop.

MATERIALS NEEDED

___ Creative Confirmation Kit and enough of the individual resource books to distribute to the leaders for use in the confirmation ministry program. If you plan to use the *Youth Journal*, the *Study Bible: The New Student Bible NRSV*, or *A Contemporary Translation of Luther's Small Catechism: Study Edition*, distrib-

ute these resources at the orientation workshop.

___ name tags and pens (the logo clip art on page 32 of this guide may be used in making name tags)

___ the chart "Our Confirmation Ministry Program" from the poster insert in the center of this *Planning Guide*

___ handouts with information like a list of the leaders, a list of substitutes, room assignments, and schedule information

___ teacher training resources (see recommendations in the outline)

___ the materials needed for the opening worship, group-building activity, and other sample sessions from Creative Confirmation

LEADER ORIENTATION SCHEDULE (120 minutes)

Step 1: Worship and introductions (25 minutes)

Step 2: Our confirmation program (15 minutes)

Step 3: Introducing the resources (15 minutes)

Step 4: Bible study (20 minutes)

Step 5: Leadership development (20 minutes)

Step 6: Program details (20 minutes)

Step 7: Closing prayer (5 minutes)

STEP 1: WORSHIP AND INTRODUCTIONS (25 MINUTES)

◆ Preparation: Provide name tags for everyone to wear. Have the Creative Confirmation resources displayed on a table. Prepare to lead one of the opening worship ideas from *Worship* and one of

the community-building games from *Community-Building Activities and Games*.

◆ Invite those who arrive early to look through the Creative Confirmation resource. Give each leader the resource book(s) for the area(s) she or he will be leading.

◆ Begin with one of the opening worship ideas from *Worship*.

◆ Then invite the participants to join in one of the community-building games. "Get Acquainted Drawings" on page 8 of the *Community-Building Activities and Games* is a good choice.

STEP 2: OUR CONFIRMATION PROGRAM (15 MINUTES)

◆ Preparation: Have the planning team prepare handouts of the information they considered as they planned the confirmation ministry program. Complete the "Our Confirmation Ministry Program" chart from side 2 of the poster insert in the center of this *Planning Guide*. Include the leaders' names on this chart.

◆ This step provides the planning team an opportunity to present an overview of your congregation's confirmation ministry program. Have the planning team present relevant information. Encourage them to be creative. Results of surveys (formal or informal) and an overview of the history of confirmation ministry in the congregation can be shared at this time.

◆ The "Our Confirmation Ministry Program" chart is a good visual summary of the program.

STEP 3: INTRODUCING THE RESOURCES (15 MINUTES)

◆ Preparation: List the series objectives (page 3 of the *Planning Guide*) on chart paper, chalkboard, or marker board. Have the resource books available to show as you speak about them. Make sure each participant has the resource book they will be using for their part of the program. Prepare schedules for your meeting times.

◆ Use this time to cover:

1. The series objectives (page 3 of the *Planning Guide*).

2. The series resources. Allow time for participants to explore the resource book(s) that they will use. Have them read the table of contents and introduction. Highlight the objectives for each resource book. If you will use the *Youth Journal*, the *Study Bible: The New Student Bible NRSV*, or *A Contemporary Translation of Luther's Small Catechism: Study Edition*, introduce and distribute these resources at this point.

3. Using the "Our Confirmation Ministry Program" chart and the schedules, explain how your program will fit together—for one meeting period and for the total number of years of the program. Highlight the resources and the age level or year that the resource will be used. (The "Our Confirmation Ministry Program" chart can be used here.)

4. Share your plans for involving parents/guardians and family in your confirmation program. Introduce *Parent Conversations* and the *Family Book* at this time.

STEP 4: BIBLE STUDY (20 MINUTES)

◆ Preparation: Select and prepare a Bible session from one of the Bible resource books. "The Messenger of Good News" (Isaiah 40:1-11) from Session 7 of *Bible 3: Into the World* or "The Importance of a Teacher: Philip and the Ethiopian" (Acts 8:26-39) from

Session 21 of *Bible 3: Into the World* are good possibilities.

◆ Invite the participants to join in the Bible session to get a taste of the *Creative Confirmation* resources.

STEP 5: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (20 MINUTES)

◆ Preparation: Consider the skills and experience of your leaders and select the three topics from the list below that will be most beneficial for your group. Prepare activities to cover the topics from the recommended resources. Be ready to distribute any written policies or guidelines you have.

- ◆ Age-level characteristics
- ◆ Management of meetings
- ◆ Questions and discussion
- ◆ Cooperative/active learning
- ◆ Meeting area environment
- ◆ Youth with special needs
- ◆ Learning styles
- ◆ Faith development

◆ Recommended resources follow:

Age-Level Development. Eugene C. Kreider. Teacher Enrichment Series. (Mpls: Augsburg Fortress, 1989)

Basic Teaching Skills. Joseph D. Glass. Teacher Education Series. (Mpls: Augsburg Fortress, 1992)

More Than Glue and Glitter: A Classroom Guide for Volunteer Teachers. Debbie Trafton O'Neal. (Mpls: Augsburg Fortress, 1992)

Developing Skills for Teaching Junior High Youth. Thomas J. Doyle. Teaching the Faith Series. (Mpls: Augsburg Fortress/Concordia Publishing House, 1993)

Cooperation in the Classroom: Sharing God's Blessings. (Mpls: Augsburg Fortress, 1990). A 17-minute video

Keep these resources on a reference shelf for leaders to use during the year.

STEP 6: PROGRAM DETAILS (20 MINUTES)

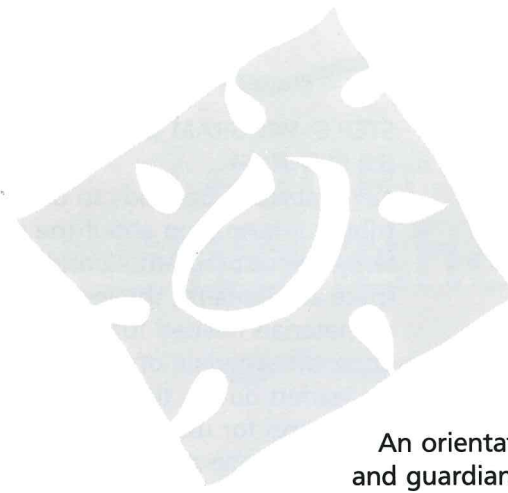
◆ Preparation: Be ready to distribute information about the details of your program. Consider space assignments, the location of materials needed for the sessions, the schedule of meetings for leaders during the year, the procedures for using audio/video equipment, the procedures for taking youth away from the building, other resources available, and other general issues.

◆ This step provides the opportunity to explain the details of your program. Give the participants time to ask questions.

Identify the people who are available to assist the leaders with concerns that develop during the year.

STEP 7: CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

◆ Preparation: Choose a prayer or find an idea from the *Worship* resource book to conclude your orientation.



Parent/Guardian Orientation

Involved and informed parents and guardians contribute to the effectiveness of the confirmation ministry program.

An orientation workshop for parents and guardians is an important part of your confirmation program. Involved and informed parents and guardians contribute to the effectiveness of the confirmation ministry program. They appreciate being well informed about the confirmation program, the Creative Confirmation resources, what is expected of them, and how they can be involved.

The objectives of this orientation workshop are to help parents and guardians:

- ◆ understand the confirmation ministry program of your congregation;
- ◆ become familiar with the Creative Confirmation resources;
- ◆ discover the importance of their involvement in the confirmation ministry program.

PREPARATION This orientation follows the format of the Leader Orientation Workshop for steps 1 through 3. Follow the same preparation suggestions from pages 22-23 of this *Planning Guide*.

Step 4 makes use of the article "What Is Confirmation Ministry and Why Is It So Important?" from the *Family Book*. Either send this book to the parents or guardians and ask them to read the article prior to the meeting or distribute copies of the *Family Book* at the meeting and allow time to read the article.

PARENT ORIENTATION SCHEDULE (80 minutes)

- Step 1: Worship and introductions (25 minutes)
- Step 2: Our confirmation program (15 minutes)

Step 3: Introducing the resources (15 minutes)

Step 4: "What Is Confirmation Ministry and Why Is It So Important?" (20 minutes)

Step 5: Closing prayer (5 minutes)

STEP 1: WORSHIP AND INTRODUCTIONS (25 MINUTES)

◆ Preparation: Provide name tags for everyone to wear. Have the Creative Confirmation resources displayed on a table. Prepare to lead one of the opening worship ideas from *Worship* and one of the community-building games from *Community-Building Activities and Games*.

◆ Invite those who arrive early to look through the Creative Confirmation resources.

◆ Begin with one of the opening worship ideas from *Worship*.

◆ Then invite the participants to join in one of the community-building games. "Get Acquainted Drawings" on page 8 of the *Community-Building Activities and Games* is a good choice.

STEP 2: OUR CONFIRMATION PROGRAM (15 MINUTES)

◆ Preparation: Have the planning team prepare handouts of the information they considered as they planned the confirmation ministry program. Complete the "Our Confirmation Ministry Program" chart from the poster insert (side 2) in the center of this *Planning Guide*. Include the leaders' names on this chart.

◆ This step provides the planning team an opportunity to present an overview of your congregation's confirmation ministry program. Have the planning team present relevant information. Encourage them to be creative. Results of surveys (formal or informal) and an overview of the history of confirmation ministry in the congregation can be shared at this time.

◆ The "Our Confirmation Ministry Program" chart (side 2 of the poster insert) is a good visual summary of the program.

STEP 3: INTRODUCING THE RESOURCES (15 MINUTES)

◆ Preparation: List the series objectives (page 3 of the *Planning Guide*) on chart paper, chalkboard, or marker board. Have the resource books available to show as you speak about them. Prepare schedules for your meeting times.

◆ Use this time to present:

1. Series objectives (page 3 of the *Planning Guide*).
2. The series resources. Introduce the series resources. Share information about the core of the program and the other areas of learning. If you will use the *Youth Journal*, the *Study Bible: The New Student Bible NRSV*, or *A Contemporary Translation of Luther's Small Catechism: Study Edition*, introduce these resources at this point.
3. Using the "Our Confirmation Ministry Program" chart and the schedules, explain how your program will fit together—for one meeting time and for the total number of years of the program. Highlight the resources and the age level or year at which the resource will be used. (The "Our Confirmation Ministry Program" chart can display this information.)
4. Share your plans for involving parents/guardians and family in your confirmation program. Introduce *Parent Conversations* and the *Family Book* at this time.

STEP 4: WHAT IS CONFIRMATION MINISTRY AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT? (20 MINUTES)

◆ Preparation: Make sure each set of parents or guardians has a copy of the *Family Book*. Have a copy of *Parent Conversations* available.

◆ Ask the participants to gather in groups of three or four and discuss what they remember about their experience in confirmation class and the rite of confirmation. If they need direction, suggest that they consider all or some of the following questions: Who taught the class? When and where did you meet? What did you do in class? How was your family involved? What did you enjoy? What resources did you use? How did your family celebrate your confirmation? What was significant to you about being confirmed?

◆ Ask the participants to respond to the article "What Is Confirmation Ministry and Why Is It So Important?" from the *Family Book*. If they have not had a chance to read the article, allow a few minutes to complete the assignment. Have each group record some responses to the two questions posed in the title of the article: What is confirmation ministry? Why is it so important? Share the responses with the whole group.

◆ In concluding this step, highlight the opportunities that families and parents have to be a part of the confirmation ministry program. If you are using *Parent Conversations*, allow an opportunity for the participants to try one of the parent-to-parent discussions.

STEP 5: CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

◆ Preparation: Choose a prayer or find an idea from the *Worship* resource book to conclude your orientation.

If you are using *Parent Conversations*, allow the participants to try one of the parent-to-parent discussions.

Education for Life

Almost all Lutheran congregations face similar challenges when dealing with confirmation ministry. After two or three years of intensive classes, young Lutherans confirm their faith in front of family and friends, have their pictures taken, walk out of the church, and are not active again for many years. Their participation does not taper off; it drops off. Almost all of the confirmands and in many cases the entire families become inactive after confirmation. The problem is that the rite of confirmation is commonly viewed as a graduation. Many families insist upon their child being confirmed and then leave it up to their son or daughter to make his or her own decision about church activity after that.

Congregations explore a variety of ideas in an attempt to address this situation, and to encourage confirmands and parents to think of Christian education as a lifelong process. Traditional confirmation programs are restructured to include classes, activities, fellowship events, and service opportunities with the emphasis on both teaching the basics of Christian faith and developing a relational ministry between young people, their parents, other adults, peers, and pastors. Confirmation must make a qualitative leap from being an education program to becoming a relational ministry. It must not just be a class that teaches about grace, but an opportunity to model

grace and a tangible example of the fellowship of the church.

The most important thing to realize is that confirmation ministry and almost all *Christian education is evangelism*. It can no longer be assumed young people have a basic knowledge of who Jesus Christ is, or what it means to be a Christian. Many parents do not take the words of the baptismal covenant seriously: ". . . Faithfully bring them to the services of God's house, and teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. As they grow in years, you should place in their hands the holy Scriptures and provide for their instruction in the Christian faith" (*LBW*, p. 121). The expectation of many parents is that religious education is the church's responsibility. The church, therefore, cannot view confirmation ministry as the final step in a long process of sharing faith in the home. For many young people it is only the first step of their faith journey. Confirmation ministry must then proclaim in word and deed the good news of Jesus Christ. The brief amount of time spent studying the gospel in confirmation may be the only time these young people have heard the salvation story. It is not a safe assumption to think that confirmation can build upon a previous knowledge and Christian tradition.

A good example of the changing role of religious education is Sunday school. Sunday school as

a program is only a little over 200 years old in the history of the church. This raises an interesting question. How did the church get along for seventeen hundred years without a Sunday school program? The answer is that it did very well. Christian education was based in the home. Sunday school was developed to complement what was happening in the home. Unfortunately, it has become in many cases a substitute for education at home.

The parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-9) is a good model for confirmation ministry. The sower goes out to sow. Some seed falls on the path, in the weeds, on rocky soil, and some falls on good soil. The seed is only productive on the good soil. The point of the parable is that evangelism is an uncertain effort. When the sower is planting the word in different people's lives, there is no guarantee that it will be effective. The key lesson to be learned for confirmation ministry is that the sower is never stingy with the Word. If (as is true for many people) the 30 to 60 minutes of church school each week is the only Christian education many youth will ever receive, then the church must make confirmation the best religious experience possible and look for ways to involve youth and families in lifelong learning.

The sower is an appropriate model for confirmation as evangelism. Despite all the best

efforts in preparing curriculum, involving parents, and working with young people, not all will grow up in faith. Yet, each young person must be seen as being potentially good soil. As confirmation leaders we must be generous with the Word—planting it as deep into their lives as possible, and caring for it as long as is necessary to begin to see it grow. Confirmation ministry can be extremely frustrating for pastors and lay leaders if they look upon it as a time for harvesting a mature faith. The real test of whether this ministry is successful or not is in the long-term effect it has on the lives of the confirmands.

A successful style of confirmation ministry will help address this situation by looking for creative ways to involve young people in the community of faith at an earlier age and to keep them involved longer. This approach recognizes there is no substitute for time spent with each child. It takes seriously the fact that Christian education may not be happening in the home and seeks to immerse young people and their families in the Christian tradition over many years of the child's development. Effective confirmation programming seeks to develop a relationship between pastors, confirmands, and other adults and to build a common Christian tradition for young people.

To be specific, creative confirmation programming may include first communion instruction, the receiving of gift Bibles, home visits, Sunday school, acolyte training, and church camp as a part of the confirmation process. In addition to the two or three years of traditional confirmation classes, congregations may want to look for creative ways to meaningfully touch the lives of young people.

Another important aspect of confirmation is encouraging youth to integrate what they learn with their lives at home. Good confirmation curriculum will invite young people to dialogue with their parents or guardians about faith issues. It will also include parents/guardians in the education process. It is most important to

remember that young people learn more from what they see their parents doing than from what they hear them saying. Families that only pay lip service to the importance of faith, church, and confirmation, but are not actively involved themselves will send the louder, albeit unspoken message that church involvement and faith are not really important.

Confirmation ministry is rapidly changing across the church. For over 400 years and dozens of generations, Lutheran confirmands have reluctantly memorized the Small Catechism. In the last generation, pastors, parents, and confirmands have questioned whether rote learning was effective. Almost all congregations have moved away from the old model, yet, no one is certain about what to put in its place.

It is important for each congregation to tailor-make their own confirmation program, keeping in mind the special concerns of their young people, the traditions of the community of faith, and the expectations of the families of the young people. The most important part of confirmation is the enthusiasm of the pastors, volunteers, and parents for this ministry. Confirmation ministry will be successful if the pastor and congregation are creative about its implementation, and lead it in an environment of Christian fellowship and love.

The most
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Issues Facing This Generation

It is presumptuous for any adult to speak about the issues facing young people. However, it is critical for any successful confirmation ministry to understand the unique concerns confirmands have today. The most important source for understanding youth is to listen to what young people are saying. Two excellent works in this area are 1) *The Troubled Journey* by Peter L. Benson (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1993) and 2) *Five Cries of Youth* by Merton P. Strommen (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988).

The issues facing the generation of confirmands today are as diverse as each individual is different. Some young people have been forced to deal with very adult responsibilities and decisions, while others have been more sheltered, and have had a more traditional childhood. The issue is further complicated by the fact that each young person will respond differently to whatever issues they face. Mature young people will respond maturely, and insecure young people will respond insecurely.

Ecclesiastes says, "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun" (1:9). In some ways, the issues that youth face are the same today as they always have been, such as their relationship with parents and peers. On the other hand, there is something unique about youth today and the special problems of being a teenager at this time.

Confirmands will deal with a variety of different issues in each part of their life. The key issue for middle schoolers is establishing a realistic and positive self-image. This is difficult for many people, but is especially hard for young people who are undergoing so many changes every day.

It is hard to appreciate how fragile a middle schooler's self-image can be. It changes from day to day, but then, so do they. Boys and girls alike will go through rapid and irregular growth spurts, which will change not only the size of their bodies, but their shapes as well. In a group of friends, one or two may unexpectedly mature, leaving them confused, uncertain of how they feel about themselves, and worried about how their friends may feel about them.

Statistics indicate young people may experience a loss of security. The emphasis to raise safe children who are aware of "stranger danger" coupled with the massive amount of publicity around missing children may cause children to feel the world is not a safe place. A recent study showed 15% of boys and 20% of girls have been abused sexually or physically by eighth grade (*The Troubled Journey*, p. 27). Even if a child has not been abused, it is likely they know someone who has or live in fear of being attacked.

In addition to the concern about being victimized, young people are exposed to record levels of violence. The average child

has watched 8,000 televised murders and 100,000 acts of violence before finishing elementary school (American Psychological Association). Violent heroes in film, music videos, and video games are lifted up as role models so often that young people may become insensitive to the pain of others, and begin to think that violence is an acceptable solution for resolving problems.

In the home, young people struggle with the tension between the natural desire to become independent and the necessity of having to rely upon parents or guardians. It is a difficult transition for both children and parents to move from being totally dependent upon parents as small children to becoming independent as adults. Young people who have a desire to be independent, but are unable to provide for themselves may look for unhealthy ways to express their independence from their parents and gain the acceptance of peers. By eighth grade 32% of boys and 17% of girls have been sexually active with only a little more than a third of those using some form of contraception (*The Troubled Journey*, p. 54). Even youth who are not sexually active may experience a loss of innocence. The overexposure of sex in the media, open discussions about sexual orientation, and education about safe sex can be very powerful issues for young people who are maturing sexually.

Embracing Christian values of compassion and servanthood may be difficult for young people who hear conflicting messages of selfishness and hedonism from society. Young people may feel anxious about an uncertain future. High expectations of being financially successful may create feelings of competition and anxiety among peers. In light of all these issues, the Christian message may seem irrelevant to young people. There is something different about being Christian and the call to be righteous or holy. To be holy is to be set apart for a special purpose. Anyone who is attentive about following the Commandments will stand out from secular society. They may even seem odd or unusual if they are the only ones to refrain from immorality. Not conforming to the world is a difficult concept for anyone whose self-image is fragile and who desperately wants to fit in with a peer group. Like adults, young people are sometimes tempted to behave immorally if it will make them more popular. There is a predominant need for acceptance from parents and peers. This need to be accepted may cause young people to work hard to fit into their peer group. This makes the Christian message all the more difficult to proclaim. Traditional theology that moves from sin to grace may need to be expressed as the movement from alienation to unity. It will be important to accentuate the universal love of God in Jesus Christ and the joyous fellowship that unconditional acceptance can bring.

Finally, if confirmation ministry is to be effective, it will need to communicate the gospel in word and deed, through both what is taught and by how it is communicated. If confirmation is to be relational, we as confirmation leaders have to understand who the confirmands are and what issues they are facing.

Remember, Jesus tells the disciples they should have faith like children. He never says children should have faith like adults. As confirmation leaders we have as much to learn from the young people of our congregations as they do from us.

Remember,
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the
disciples
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PARTICIPANT RECORD



PARTICIPANT NAME _____

BIRTH DATE _____ BAPTISM DATE _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ DATE ENTERED PROGRAM _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN _____

DATE OF AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM _____

CREATIVE CONFIRMATION COURSE	INSTRUCTOR	DATE COMPLETED	COMMENTS
<i>Bible 1</i>			
<i>Bible 2</i>			
<i>Bible 3</i>			
<i>Catechism</i>			
<i>Worship</i>			
<i>Activities and Games</i>			
<i>Sharing the Language</i>			
<i>Mission/Service</i>			
<i>Parent Conversations</i>			

OTHER COURSES OF STUDY

DESCRIPTION	DATE COMPLETED
-------------	----------------

OTHER CONFIRMATION PROGRAM COMPONENTS

DESCRIPTION	DATE COMPLETED
-------------	----------------



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS



Evaluation



I am a

___ youth ___ parent ___ leader ___ other (list)

(Check all that apply.)

Grade or group _____

The highlight of this year for me was: _____

The three most important things I learned this year were:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I would like to suggest the following changes in our confirmation program.

I would like to participate in the confirmation program next year. I want to participate as a:

___ youth ___ leader ___ assistant

My name: _____ Phone number: _____



Thank you for sharing your opinions. These comments will help our planning process. Please return this form by _____ to _____.





creat!ve confirmation

