

There's an old joke about a big old church building that has bats in the bell tower. For weeks, the custodian had been trying to clear the bats out with no success. Every night, the bats would leave the bell tower to hunt, but return every morning—no matter what the custodian did. Finally, exasperated, the custodian went to the pastor to explain the problem. After much thought, the pastor convinced the custodian to leave it up to him, which the custodian did. When he returned to the church building the following day, he found the bell tower completely clear of bats! He ran to the pastor's office to see what had happened...

"It was easy," said the pastor. "Last night I confirmed all the bats. We shouldn't see much more of them."

This joke is born out of truth. As students enter their teen years, they are pulled in many different directions: Sports and school activities demand a lot of time. Friends are increasingly important. They naturally rebel against authority as a form of asserting independence. All this means that, as students are given ownership over their faith through Confirmation, they tend to leave the church behind. Sadly, without a faith community, many leave their faith behind, too. To many, Confirmation becomes a form of graduation from church.

Part of the issue at hand is how we view confirmation: we look at it as a rite of passage instead of a serious invitation to discipleship. This year we're going to move more towards the latter. We're seeking to make it less about a task students *have* to do to be members of the church, and more about something students *can* do to inspire them towards an active faith journey.

How are we going to do that? First, we're going to make confirmation about active involvement. Students won't just go through confirmation class. Students will be involved in the mission and ministry of the church and attend a supplemental confirmation class (see class schedule attached). Second, we'll take a look at faith application through our classes as we try to live out John Wesley's three rules for Christian living (do no harm, do good, stay in love with God). Third, we'll seek to involve parents. Even as we seek to have students take ownership of their faith walk through confirmation, we need to recognize that you are the single largest influencer in your student's life. Their faith walk started with you, and will continue with you for many years.

On the following pages is a snapshot of schedule and requirements. Please call me with any questions and concerns. Looking forward to working with you!

Ryan Dunn

Schedule

January 31—Students attend “Grill the Pastors” 10am in CLMC

February 7—Parents or faith sponsors and Students attend Session 1, 10am in youth room

(Orientation)

February 21—Session 2, 10am in youth game room

(Students only, workbook pages 6-12)

March 7—Session 3, 10 am in youth game room

(Students only, workbook pages 13-15)

March 21—Session 4 at 10am in youth game room, supper with parents at 4pm

(Students only, workbook pages 16-20)

April 18—Session 5, 10am in youth game room

(Students only, workbook pages 21-24)

May 2—Session 6, 10 am in youth game room

(Students only, workbook pages 25-30)

May 16—Session 7, 10 am in youth game room

(Students only, workbook pages 31-32)

May 23—Confirmation ceremony, 3pm, Faith Lake

We'll be using the book “Three Simple Rules 24/7” as our guide through Confirmation. Each lesson comes with a challenge we'll ask our students to complete with their parent(s) or faith sponsor.

The Three Requirements of Confirmation

1) Do no harm:

→ **Students will be asked to enter into a behavioral covenant for the time they are enrolled in Confirmation**

2) Do good:

→ **Students are asked to complete 5 hours of church or community service. Some opportunities will be made available through class.**

3) Stay in love with God:

→ **While enrolled in Confirmation, students are expected to attend worship and participate in a weekly, ongoing ministry such as eLEVATE, Living Waters/Sunday School (on non-Confirmation mornings), youth choir, small group, or another approved ministry.**

Questions or comments? Please Contact Ryan Dunn, Director of Youth Ministries: 252-752-6154, ext. 211.

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