LETTER TO PARENTS

What do you believe and why? Confirmation is about finding one’s own voice of faith to express doubts and fears as well as affirmations and certainties. It is an opportunity to explore faith and learn why we do what we do as Christians and believe what we believe as Lutherans. To make this possible it will require commitment and participation. But the effort is more than worth it as these formative years will be life impacting. After putting in the effort to articulate what they believe and why, students will be better equipped make good choices about their next step in faith and to make good decisions in life.

No program can have such an impact on any person’s life without the support of their parents. We are convinced that *parents can make the largest impact in their children’s faith formation*. Basically, we have your children for about 2 hours a week, you have them the other 168 hours of the week. When parents are involved with the life of the church and talk about faith at home, their children will tend to be more involved and continue to be engaged after they are confirmed. That is the entire point of Confirmation! These two years are about intentional faith formation. They are about learning what it means to be an active member of a faith community. And these two years are about claiming the faith which your children were raised in as their own. This will only be successful with your help and support. For this reason, we want to encourage parents to be engaged in the Confirmation program along with their students. We want to encourage you to pray with your children. Participate in Confirmation events and discuss them afterwards with your children. Encourage your children be involved in the life of our church outside of Confirmation events. Let them learn their priorities from the way that you prioritize Christ in your life.

There are 4 specific needs we have from parents to make Confirmation possible.

1. The first is to attend all Family Bible Study events on the first Wednesday of the month 6:30-7:30pm. Parents are encouraged to attend these events because you are so important to the faith life of your child. Here you will grow closer to God and closer as a family as you share your faith with your child and hear them express theirs as well.
2. Second, we need parents to drive and/or assist with EPIC events to make them possible.
3. Third, we need at least one parent to sit in on each classroom event on the 2nd and 3rd Wednesdays.
4. Fourth, we need you to pray for your children. Or better yet, pray *with* your children!

LETTER TO STUDENTS

Confirmation is about claiming faith and owning what you believe. It is about affirming your baptism and the promises of Christ Jesus in your life. At the end of these two years, you will stand before the congregation and make these baptismal promises:

1) to live among God’s faithful people,

2) to hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s Supper,

3) to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

4) to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,

5) to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

We believe that these things are what Christians do as a joyful response to the Good News that Jesus died and rose again for our salvation.

These two years known as “Confirmation” are about spending intentional time learning the basic, core, and fundamental beliefs of the Church, asking a lot of questions, and seeing how we live out our baptismal promises. Confirmation is not the end of religious instruction but the beginning of an adult life of faith in the Church. Therefore, we approach Confirmation with seriousness. Experience has proven that little challenge results in little growth, this is why Confirmation is a program of spiritual discipline (prayer, reading, worship, etc.). Below are the expectations, the challenges, of Confirmation which will help keep us on track and challenged to grow. They are designed to assist you in growing as a disciple so that by the end of the program you are able to confidently claim this faith as your own.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Family Bible Study: 1st Wednesday 6:30 – 7:30pm

Classroom: 2nd and 3rd Wednesdays 6:30 – 8:00pm

EPIC: Participate in 9 events and turn in EPIC Forms

Worship: Attend 18 regular worship services and turn in Worship Notes

Acolyte: Regularly assist with Sunday morning ministries

ABSENCES

Confirmation is a program that requires a high level of commitment that is also run with a high degree of grace. It is expected that all students attend AND participate in every event. But also understanding that life circumstances happen, if a student needs to miss a classroom event please contact me to see what will be missed and if makeup work is needed. We are reminded in the grace of this approach that what is “fair” is not always what is “equal.” Our goal is not for perfect attendance and busy work. Our goal is to form disciples and grow in faith. Just as each student is beginning their journey on different levels and advance at different paces, so too are the challenges different for each student to grow in their relationship and love for the Lord.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

1st Wednesday of the month

Bible study 6:30-7:30pm.

A key part of this event is FAITH5, where Confirmands will have the opportunity to connect their life experiences to the teaching for that night. They will also hear their parents and others reflect on their faith. As we model this act of faith reflection, Confirmands will learn how to connect faith with everyday life beyond worship and Bible study and at the same time deepen the relationships they have with their friends and family around them. This event is for the entire family, but geared towards those in the 4th grade and higher.

CLASSROOM EVENTS

2nd and 3rd Wednesdays of the month

6:30 – 8:00PM

The first hour of our meeting will be large group conversation with Pastor Ron.

The last thirty minutes will be with FAITH5 Mentors.

**PARENTS**:

* We need at least one parent at every classroom event.
	+ As Christians who seek to be faithful and responsible people living in a fallen world, it is imperative to do all we can to ensure a safe environment for all people. For this reason St. Peter Lutheran Church has adopted a “Safeguarding God’s Children” policy which states that no one adult be alone with children at church events. It also holds that a reasonable worker/child ratio be maintained.
* I hope you will be more than just present though. When you attend I want to encourage you to be engaged with the students during our discussions. Remember, you have a lot to offer to our kids!
	+ Please arrive 5 minutes before class begins.
	+ Stay until all other children have left. This is typically within 5 minutes of class ending.

**STUDENTS**:

* It is expected that you not only attend, but that you are engaged in the conversations.
* This is a time to ask your questions, which means we need to listen to what others have to say as well!
* There is no memory work required. However, it is essential for students to be familiar with the material we are discussing.
* Each Confirmand will be provided a Small Catechism and Lutheran Study Bible. Please bring both to all class events.

EPIC

Experiential, Participatory, Image-driven, Conversational (E.P.I.C.)

**E**xperience is where our faith is put into practice.

**P**articipating is how a person’s faith identity is formed.

**I**nteraction helps shift information from short-term to long-term memory.

**C**onversation helps students apply what they have learned to their lives by listening to others as well as sharing their story.

Students are expected to attend 9 EPIC events.

For the most part, any ministry event of the congregation that involves another person can be considered an EPIC event. I will also coordinate events in addition to our congregation’s mission calendar. Please see the Confirmation Calendar for those events. Each month will be a different event. Some events we will leave the property of St. Peter, some we will travel to nearby towns, and other events we will stay here. All events will be dependent upon the group dynamics, parent involvement, and weather. What we plan to do is subject to change based on those conditions.

While students are invited to do what I offer or join another ministry of St. Peter, there will be 2 EPIC events that all students are highly encouraged to attend together.

1. UNI lock-in on October 14th-15th
2. Dirty Feet Retreat at EWALU in April

Details for these events will be passed out closer to their dates.

Possible EPIC Event ideas:

* Serve one month as a Sunday Morning minister (usher, greeter, media, sound)
* Assist with set-up and teardown for festival services (Christmas, Easter, etc.)
* Serve at the Northeast Iowa Food Bank
* Help distribute Meals-on-Wheels in Denver
* Volunteer at nursing home / extended care facility (Sunset Home, Bartels, etc.)
* Assist with projects at EWALU
* Serve at Catholic Workers House
* Serve one quarter as an assistant teacher for Sunday School
* Go with Eucharistic Ministers to visit our homebound members

**PARENTS**:

* All events will require parent involvement to help with the program, drive to locations, etc. We cannot do these events without your help!

**STUDENTS:**

* It is expected that you will participate in 9 events throughout the program year (the UNI lock-in, EWALU retreat, and 7 others).
* Participation will be recorded by turning in an EPIC Worksheet.

WORSHIP

Worship is our weekly gathering to celebrate all that our Lord has done for us, receive needed encouragement for the week, and be inspired by His Holy Word. It is expected that all members of St. Peter attend worship on a regular basis, therefore it is also expected that Confirmands attend worship regularly as well. In addition to gathering for worship, Confirmands are also asked to help serve God’s Church primarily as Acolytes. They are also encouraged to serve in one of the many different roles of our Worship Ministries (usher/greeter, communion assistant, reader, multi-media, sound, video, etc.)

**PARENTS:**

* As current members of St. Peter it is expected that parents attend regular worship services with their children. Remember, your children are watching and learning from you! They are watching you model for them what worship is about, why it is important, and how to worship. If you don’t worship, you are teaching your children that worship is not important. Teach them by simply doing.
* After the worship service, on the way home or at the dinner table is a great time to engage your children about what was said or experienced during that worship service. Children do what you do, but when you talk with them about why you do it, the impact and lesson learned just grew exponentially.

**STUDENTS:**

* Attend 18 regular weekly worship services between Sept – May.
	+ If you attend worship at another congregation, bring in a bulletin from that worship service signed with your name and date on it and attach it to your Worship Note.
* Complete 18 worship notes by the end of May.
	+ Worship Notes are the way we also keep record of your attendance!

ACOLYTE

Signup is available on our website one week prior to the list being published. At that time the list will be closed and students will be assigned. Notices will be sent to notify and remind students when it is their week to serve.

Due to the number of students and the number of Sundays available students have the option to serve as a multi-media volunteer for a Sunday instead of acolyting. If you prefer this option please talk to me.

If your child has NOT received their first communion yet, please talk to me.

YOUTH GROUP

Attend fellowship events.

* In addition to the Confirmation schedule, we will also schedule a couple extra fellowship events throughout the year.
* Why? Because they are fun. ☺ Also, fellowship events are a huge catalyst to growth in relationship with people at church – Bible studies, worship, etc. are more enjoyable with people you know and love.

8th GRADE CAPSTONE:

During the season of Lent the 8th Grade class will meet with Pastor Ron following Wednesday evening worship services. The details of these meetings will be sent in the spring. Mark your calendar, Affirmation Sunday will be May 21st!