



Zion Lutheran Church

Confirmation Parent Handbook 2007-2008

“Here We Stand”

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“By Grace Alone—Not By Works”

Here We Stand

Confirmation 2007-2008



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Find Calendar and Youth News Online at: www.zionbuffalo.org

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The Meaning of the Symbol

Alone, the cross is a widely recognized, eye-catching symbol of the Christian faith. Set within the context of the world, the cross points to Jesus, who calls upon the Church to go into all the world to preach the Gospel (Matthew 28:19- 20). For this task, the Church is assured of the power and ongoing presence of the crucified and risen Christ.

Within the emblem, the cross is seen in relation to an orb, symbolizing the world. The cross in the context of the globe reflects both the glad news of Christ's incarnation and the continuing manifestation of the Church as the body of Christ in the world.

The visual motion within the cross and the surrounding orb reminds us of the spreading Light of the Gospel of Christ. Within the spheres of the orb can be seen smaller crosses (a design

sometimes known as the "Jerusalem Cross"), a traditional symbol for the commission to spread the Gospel to the whole world.

The proclamation of the Word shapes our whole life as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in all of its expressions. Indeed, all members are summoned to move toward the cross in repentance and from the cross in witness and service. The cross also provides a reminder of rebirth in Baptism ("...marked with the cross of Christ forever") and the meal of forgiveness that Christ gives to the Church ("... given for you; ... shed for you").



--Taken from ELCA web site

Confirmation Class Calendar 2007-2008

September

- September 5:** Parent meeting 6:00pm
Present program/handbook, mentoring,
FAH, questions
- September 12:** 1 Student Introduction—
Creed Overview—Large Group Only
- September 19:** Creed: Article 1—Large and
Small Groups
- September 26:** Creed: Article 2

October

- October 3:** Creed: Article 3
- October 10:** The Greatest Prayer
- October 17:** *No Class—Fall Break*
- October 24:** Our Father in Heaven
- October 31:** A Holy Name (*no class—
download and read lesson at home*)

November

- November 7:** The Kingdom is Coming
- November 14:** God's Divine Will
- November 21:** *Thanksgiving Worship*
- November 28:** Daily Bread

December

- December 5:** Forgiveness
- December 12:** Temptation & Trial
- December 19:** Deliverance / Conclusion
- December 26:** *No Class - Christmas Break*

*(Note that during Advent season, students
and their mentors will meet on their own to
perform a servant event.)*

January

- January 2:** I Am Who I Am
- January 9:** The Lord's Name
- January 16:** *Confirmation Fun Night—
TUBING!*
- January 23:** Sabbath Day
- January 30:** Father & Mother

February

- February 6:** *Ash Wednesday Worship*
- February 13:** *Lent—No Class—Worship*
- February 20:** *Lent—No Class—Worship*
- February 27:** *Lent—No Class—Worship*

*(Note that during Lent, students and their mentors
will meet a minimum of 3 times and complete 3
lessons.)*

March

- March 5:** *Lent—No Class—Worship*
- March 12:** *Lent—No Class—Worship*
- March 19:** *Holy Week—Worship*
- March 26:** *No Class—Spring Break*

April

- April 2:** Safeguard Life
- April 9:** Remain Faithful
- April 16:** Protect Property
- April 23:** Defend Truth
- April 30:** Do Not Covet

May

- May 7:** 10 Commandments Conclusion
- May 14:** Year—End Wrap Up
Confirmation Year End Party

A 2 Year Cycle

The “Here We Stand” confirmation program offers all of the traditional, catechetical subjects. Zion bases its confirmation instruction on a two year cycle of lessons. This cycle of lessons may be seen below. One year is composed of doctrine, one year is made up of scripture study. As Zion has licensed this material from Augsburg/Fortress Publishers to be copied for the students, all students in each confirmation grade will study the same material during that year. At the end of the two year cycle, every student will have been exposed to each of the following subjects, though not in the same order. For this 2007-2008 school year, we will be studying ‘Year 1’.

We work with the school calendar to build each schedule year around 20-30 group sessions (note calendar on p.5) to include lessons and periodic fun events that we will do as a group. Supplemental lessons are currently listed as options that students will use with their mentors. The goal is to use our faith along with fellowship and worship to create a strong community of young people who have the tools necessary to live a life of faith. Parent input and comments to the confirmation staff regarding this program are always welcome! Each yearly course and the current list of supplements can be seen below:

Year 1	Year 2	Supplements
10 Commandments	Old Testament	How to Forgive Someone
Apostle’s Creed	New Testament	How to Pray
Lord’s Prayer		How to Identify and Avoid Evil
Holy Baptism		How to Cope with Loss and Grief
Holy Communion		

A Detailed Time Schedule

Each Wednesday, the students will have a confirmation class that is structured as follows:

- ✠ **6:00-6:30pm** Everyone meets in the Trinity Hall for announcements and the evening lesson presented in 'large group' format (see topics on calendar, p.5).
- ✠ **6:30-7:00pm** Students move into small group time with adult guides.
- ✠ **7:00-7:25pm** Students gather once again in Trinity Hall for a closing worship service.
- ✠ **Small Group Time Breakdown: 20-25 Minutes** Adult guides conduct a time of personal check in, discussion on the topic of the day, calendar reminders, and accountability for required work (sermon notes, memory work, etc.).

Closing Worship— this is a time for students to gather as a group for an up-beat, camp-style worship/devotion before going home for the evening. This will be done in conjunction with Sr Hi students who will be arriving in the building for their own evening activity.

Please Note— Students meet according to class. We do not mix the grade levels or gender. Each student within the class is assigned to a 'Guide Group' which is led by an adult. The Guide Groups are from 4-10 students in size, plus the adult leader. Each student is given the opportunity to be assigned to his/her group with a friend also in the group. The adult Guide is tasked with building a sense of closeness and community within the group.

Cancellation & Change Policy: *the fine print*

Please note that if school is cancelled due to weather OR if school dismisses early due to weather, confirmation will automatically cancel for that evening!

HOWEVER—If school begins late due to weather conditions, confirmation will continue as scheduled.

Weather will not change the confirmation calendar. If students are absent, they may download and read lesson material from the church website: www.zionbuffalo.org
—Lessons will post to the web *following* each class period.

Acolyting & Communion Service

Confirmation students will be invited to acolyte for worship on Sundays. They may also choose to help with Holy Communion (*the first and third and fifth Sundays of each month*) and also for special services throughout the year. Each 7th and 8th grade confirmation student is *asked to help with our worship life in this way*— this is not a requirement, but students may receive credit toward their service hour total as this is part of service to one's church. The church office/ Sherilyn Burgdorf will keep a calendar of dates available. At any time during the confirmation year, students may pair with a friend and sign up to acolyte or to help set up and serve Communion. *Please note: if a student is unable to acolyte/serve on the scheduled date. Please do call the church office and let them know! (763-682-1245)*

Sermon Notes

Each student in confirmation is expected to complete 25 sermon notes during that year. Sermon notes may be taken in other churches in town, on vacation, during mid-week services, on holidays, from television or radio services, weddings, funerals, camps. **Anywhere a preacher is preaching, sermon notes may be taken!** Students who find themselves in other churches (while visiting relatives, on vacation, at a friend's for the weekend, etc.) may receive sermon note credit by simply returning a bulletin from the service which they attended **that is signed and dated by the student**. If using the media, students will be expected to keep notes and turn in a properly documented sermon note sheet. Suggestion: keep some handy at home!

Some students have parents who are divorced and accordingly spend some time 'here' and some time 'there' with each parent. If attending church while with one parent is not possible, under the circumstances, it is the student's responsibility to speak with their guide or one of the pastors to work out an acceptable, alternative number of sermon notes for them. This is then the contract number between that student and the pastor.

Acolytes, choir members, or others who serve are not exempt from taking sermon notes. If the student would like credit for a sermon note, they are expected **to take sermon notes**. *Sermon note sheets are located in the church narthex, in a box marked 'sermon notes'. Completed sheets should be returned following the service to the 'done' box, located next to the stack of blank sheets.*

Completed sermon note sheets are collected by the pastor and read (yes, we really do read them!) and recorded on the student's tracking sheet. Unless the student provides positive proof to the contrary, the number of recorded notes on the student's tracking sheet will settle all questions as to number of sermon notes completed.

*Behavior & Participation Covenant
For the confirmation class year 2007-2008*

I _____ do agree to participate in all confirmation related classes and activities in a healthy and appropriate manner; and that my behavior will at all times be respectful of myself and others around me.

If my behavior is less than acceptable I understand:

- 1. That I will be asked by an adult to leave my class or group*
- 2. That I am then responsible for immediately telephoning a parent for a ride home*
- 3. That I may not return to confirmation activities or class until I have met with my parents and a pastor about my behavior and formed a plan for changing my behavior*

Discipline

Studying for the rite of Affirmation of Baptism is a choice. Students who choose to be present are expected to act and speak in a way that does not undermine either their own upbringing or another's right and ability to learn. The vast majority of students choose wisely to adhere to this standard.

Good behavior is expected from each person involved in this program. In the rare case where behavior becomes a problem, a word about discipline is in order. Students who are disruptive in class will be asked to leave by an adult in charge. If asked to leave, the student will immediately leave the class, go to a church telephone and call home to be picked up (they may not 'hang out' until the end of the night!). Parents will be formally notified of the student's misbehavior. The student may not return to class until a conference has been held and a reasonable solution has been reached. This agreement will be enforced throughout the year.

Group Service Opportunities

There will be periodic opportunities for students to participate in service opportunities with their peers as a group. Please note:

- These events will not cover the entire 20 hour requirement.
- Students will be required to sign up in advance for these opportunities.
- In some cases there are limits imposed on the number of students we can bring. Under these circumstances, students will attend on a first-come-first-served basis.
- In case of limited numbers, the event will be repeated, if possible, to allow all students a fair opportunity to participate.

We will make opportunities available as they become available to Zion. Please understand that due to the nature of volunteers / service organizations, some of these opportunities may be “short-notice” while others will be able to provide plenty of lead time.

We will make as many opportunities available as possible. They are offered only as a way to help students build community through service and to help fulfill their “service hour” requirement.

Community Service

Martin Luther insisted that we are saved by faith alone. This is true. But Luther also understood that faith will be accompanied by evidence (WORKS!) of that faith in your life, hence Community Service.

Community Service is a work that *reflects your faith*. Each student will be responsible for 20 hours of community service. For many students, service is a way of life. For others, service to others will be a way that we each can become more like the person of Jesus Christ.

What each student does is up to him or her. There are, however 2 rules about community service which may not be broken, bent, or abridged in any way. They are:

- 1) whatever the student chooses to do may not be part of a regular 'chore' requirement. This type of service is to be over and above the work we do every day.
- 2) whatever the student chooses to do may not be compensated. Community service is free.

Community service may be done in small groups or individually. Each student is to keep a log of time spent and things accomplished. Each time a project is completed, the student is to fill out his/her log listing the date, the project, and the time required to complete it. The completed log is turned in to the Guide for recording which then becomes part of the student's file. Without a log, there will be no credit given for community service. *Also, please remember that (1) service hour is equal to (1) clock hour!*

Memory Work

Memory work is part of the confirmation curriculum. Every student is expected to put forth the effort *as they are able*, to learn the required material. Learn to the best of your ability, according to your ability. Memory work will be distributed on a take-home sheet. Students memorize the material. When finished, students shall recite the material to a parent who will ‘pass’ them by adding their signature to the bottom of the page. The student will return the page to his or her guide to be recorded as finished on the student’s tracking sheet.

Parents know their children best and will have the final say as to how the work is memorized: in parts, word for word, etc. *Passing occurs when the parent sees that the student has put forth their best effort!*

Students will choose verses to memorize from a list of Old and New Testament verses. The current schedule for memory work this year is as follows:

First Section	Second Section
Apostle’s Creed Articles 1-3 and Meanings	The Lord’s Prayer
Available September 26	Available November 28
Due By November 28	Due By January 30
Third Section	Fourth Section
Commandments 1-5 and Meanings	Commandments 6-10 and Meanings
Available January 30	Available March 19
Due By March 19	Due By May 14

2007-2008 CONFIRMATION TRACKING SHEET

This is a sheet designed to keep track of the progress each student is making in his / her (total) confirmation requirements. Our Recording Agent will mark when the requirement has been completed! Copies of this sheet will be mailed home periodically to keep parents up to date on progress.

Name _____ Grade ____ Guide Leader _____

Parents' Names _____ Phone No. _____

Parent Meeting (folder rec'd)		Mentor's Name:	
Special Guidelines:		Mentoring Completed	

ATTENDANCE (Record of Absences Only)

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MEMORY WORK

First Section:	Second Section:	Third Section:	Fourth Section:	
Creed Articles and Meanings	Lord's Prayer	Commandments 1-5 and Meanings	Commandments 6-10 and Meanings	

SERVICE HOURS COMPLETED (20 Required)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

SERMON NOTES COMPLETED (25 Required)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	

Family Devotional Times

Nine family home devotional times are required.

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

Special Student Contracts or Notes:

Family Devotional Times

Family Home Time is a home devotional part of the confirmation curriculum. *This is a required part of the confirmation curriculum and is meant to be done at home with the student and a parent.* This is a time when the parent can share their faith with their son or daughter, build faith, and find out what is happening in the confirmation classes at church. During the course of the year, students and parents are expected to choose nine devotional selections to use together. You may choose any devotional resource that you like, to include the free devotional booklets available in the church narthex, or another devotional book of your choice. The idea is to have faith talk together with your son or daughter at home. Please document these times together by citing the date, what you read, and the approximate time spent together. When finished, these documented times should then be returned to the student's Guide for recording. Please note that parents and students have a great deal of freedom to choose when, what, and how these faith talks will occur. Use your imagination, or ask for suggestions. **Please remember that nine are required per year.**

Mentoring

Mentoring is a time-honored way of passing down faith. A mentor is a wise and trusted counselor/teacher. Confirmation at Zion includes this faith tradition. For confirmation students a mentor must be:

- ✠ Chosen by the student with parent approval (if truly at a loss, please contact a pastor for some suggestions)
- ✠ At least 21 years of age.
- ✠ An active Christian; any church
- ✠ Willing to be influential in the life of a young person.

This program will take place primarily in Lent and will follow a prepared curriculum. This will be a new experience for students new to this confirmation program. *Parents are always encouraged to work with their child to choose a mentor.*

Mentor packets will be available online and through the mail in early February. Prior to that students should be actively thinking about who they would like to invite into this program as their mentor. For students who are unable to come up with a suitable adult choice, please speak with a pastor for some suggestions. *It is the student's responsibility to invite an adult into this mentoring relationship with them.*

During the season of Lent, mentors and students will meet for 3 prepared sessions (students are able to choose 3 from a list of 4 topics). These sessions will explore issues of faith and life. Each session may be done in tandem with another mentor/student pair, over dinner or hot chocolate, or in any way that best suits and nurtures this very special relationship.

This program is designed to enhance a young person's faith by having intentional faith discussions with a Christian adult who is typically not a primary caregiver in the student's life. While close relatives are acceptable in this role, students are encouraged to look outside the family for a mentor first!

Please note that Mentor/Student guidelines and suggestions for meeting are available throughout the year to aid students and parents in this selection process.

Final Interviews

At the end of the year, each student will schedule an interview time with Pr Steve or Myron. Schedules will include, Sundays, Saturdays, and certain after school days. The purpose of the interview is as follows:

- ✚ To bring personal closure to the year by reviewing the student's tracking sheet and allowing the student to give any feedback they deem worth mentioning
- ✚ To give the leaders a chance to ask some faith questions of each student, and to personally check in with them about their confirmation experience
- ✚ Help the student to feel good about what they accomplished during a very busy year by giving them feedback from a leader's perspective
- ✚ Help the student to achieve success in making the transformation from a faith they learn to a faith they live.
- ✚ At this time students will also turn in their 'Credo' statement.

Please note that this is not a test!

Pr Steve and Myron are willing to work with students and parents to achieve a comfort level that will allow this to happen. Only in the most extreme case will students be exempt from this. The only way to fail is to fail to show up.

By meeting semi-privately, we are able to make connections with students that can't be made during class, or might not be made if students choose not to be actively involved in our fellowship. Our meeting face to face will help to facilitate the passing on of our faith tradition. We do not want students to become lost when they come through our church doors, and subsequently become lost in our program. This is an intentional way for us to meet them one-on-one.

Pr Steve and Myron will share the responsibility for meeting the students, and will randomly

divide, between the two of them, the scheduled meeting times with each student by lottery. Parents are always welcome to accompany their son/daughter to this semi-private meeting, and are welcome to wait for their student until the meeting concludes.

Different Learning Styles

Any student who wishes to be confirmed is welcome in this program. Confirmation at Zion is open to any person who, through a programmed study of church doctrine and scripture, would like to say 'yes' to a new and life-giving relationship with Christ through the affirmation of baptism. We recognize that students are gifted in many different ways and will learn in just as many different ways. This variety makes for a rich life for us all.

Please do not assume that we know your child's most effective learning style! Parents are encouraged to be in frequent and early contact with Pr Steve or Myron if they have any concerns about their child's learning style. Our curriculum has great flexibility and adaptability. In cooperation with parents we can develop a plan that works for each student. *Please do not wait until mid-year or year end to voice your concerns!*

According to the Baptismal covenant, final authority is given to parents in determining how to prepare their son or daughter for success in this program. Zion chooses to honor this authority

Affirmation of Baptism

At Zion, the rite of confirmation (aka Affirmation of Baptism) is typically held in the fall of the student's ninth grade year. This occurs during a special, afternoon service with the entire grade. In order to participate in this service, ALL required work must be finished and turned in prior to the service. Exceptions to this rule are made almost never. If a student desires to be confirmed, it will serve them best to:

1. Stay abreast of the requirements
2. Notify their small group guide or Pr Steve or Myron or Jim if, due to circumstances in their own lives they are having difficulty meeting the requirements (getting to church for sermon notes for example). This should be done BEFORE the end of the year as TIME allows many and gracious ways of adjusting. The longer students wait, the harder it will be find a solution.
3. Use the summer time to its best advantage (for students who have exceptionally full school year schedules)
4. Decide early to become an active part of our church community through worship and fellowship and programs

If it happens that a student does not meet the requirements in time to be confirmed with their class, once the work has been completed, they may elect to be confirmed on a Sunday of their choosing, in front of the congregation during a regular worship service, or in a private service to be held with family.

All students, even students who fall behind for any number of reasons, do good work. If all coursework is not completed in time to be confirmed with your class, choosing to be confirmed at a later date will ensure that the good work that has been done and the time that has been put in will not be wasted!

All students deserve the opportunity to Affirm their Baptism. To preserve the integrity of the program at Zion, they will receive that opportunity when the stated requirements are met. We will do everything in our power to work with students as they prepare for this important event. Parents with questions or comments are welcome to voice them with Myron or Pr Steve.

RECORD OF SERVICE HOURS **2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR**

Students are encouraged to use this page to record acts of service performed throughout the year. Unless you have a fantastically terrific memory, take a minute to write down the details of any service event you do. It would be wise to record: the date, a brief description of what you did, the time you spent doing this (remember 1 clock-hour worked equals 1 service hour). Doing this will help ensure that you receive credit for all of the good things you do.

SERMON NOTE RECORD **2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR**

Use this page to record the dates you turn in sermon notes. Record simply the date you attended church and turned a sermon note in. In my experience, churches rarely lose student's sermon notes, and students often believe that they have been in church far more than they really have. In case of any discrepancies between the number of notes we have recorded versus the number of notes you think you should have, this record will go a long way toward making your case for altering the number on your tracking sheet in your favor.



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