

Catechesis and Confirmation at St. John's

We look forward to having you in Lutheran catechesis this year! Lutheran catechesis is designed to give the very best Christian education possible for youth and parents who are motivated to grow in their knowledge of the Faith and to acquire the tools to make use of that Faith throughout life. It is our sincerest prayer that through our class, assignments, and activities you will grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, who redeemed you from sin, death, and the power of the devil. To that end, we maintain high expectations so that catechumens and families can make the most of the time they invest in catechesis. We are committed to working with and helping our catechumens meet these expectations at every step of the way. *But it is also critical to have the full support of parents in this process.*

Sometimes while parents are motivated, their child is not (chalk it up to adolescence!). With this in mind, we'd like to stress that confirmation at the end of 3 years is not automatic just because a catechumen attended on most Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. Only those who have satisfactorily met the expectations will be confirmed. It is very important that catechumens and parents, therefore, take seriously the expectations established by St. John's staff, board of parish education, and elders.

All catechumens are expected to complete 3 years of catechesis. Normally, catechumens begin their study in the 6th grade, but exceptions can be made at the discretion of parents and the pastors and deaconess. The requirements of the first year (Catechesis I) must be completed before taking the last 2 years of catechesis.

The second 2 years (Catechesis II) cover the same material from the catechism a second time, but in far greater detail. Now that you have the language and basic knowledge of the Faith, you get to delve into it and begin to understand—this is “faith seeking understanding.” Faith seeking understanding is a life-long process, and catechesis aims to set you on that path.

To accomplish these goals, we have the following expectations of all catechumens:

- (1) Be present for all catechesis classes (Wednesday evenings during Sound Words Academy beginning the first Wednesday after Labor Day through the Wednesday after the last Sunday in April).
- (2) Be present for all Sunday School classes *throughout the year, even in summer* (these classes are designed to cover material from catechesis—a great help to you!). Catechumens who miss more than 30% of Sunday School classes may be required to commit additional time to catechesis.
- (3) Be present for the divine service every Sunday *throughout the year, even in summer*. Again, catechumens who miss more than 30% may be required to commit additional time to catechesis.
- (4) Complete all assigned readings (from *Bible History*, Scripture, the *Explanation of the Small Catechism*, etc.).
- (5) Complete all assignments to learn Scripture verses and the *Small Catechism* by heart.
- (6) Satisfactorily complete 2 sermon summaries per month (a total of 12 for the year).

- (7) Parents of all catechumens are encouraged to join their children in the respective catechesis course. This will: help the parents help their children, help to maintain discipline in the classroom, set an example to the catechumens of the importance of catechesis, and reinforce for parents the cardinal teachings of Scripture. (If parents prefer, they may join one of the adult Bible studies offered through Sound Words Academy).

Throughout the year, catechumens are expected to recite the chief parts of Luther's *Small Catechism*, each in its entirety, at the times designated on the catechesis schedule. Catechumens will also be responsible to recite the several Bible passages assigned for each unit when they recite the *Small Catechism*.

Looking down the road, in the last year of catechesis, each catechumen will satisfactorily complete two private interviews with one of the pastors, one in January and one in April. And at the end of the last year of catechesis, catechumens will participate in a public questioning just prior to Confirmation Sunday, scheduled for the last Sunday in April.

Parents can expect to receive a written progress report on a regular, planned basis. The pastors, deaconess, and elders will visit about the progress of catechumens during the regular monthly elder meetings. Elders will also seek to maintain an encouraging relationship with catechumens. If a catechumen is falling behind on any of these expectations, an instructor will visit with the catechumen and/or parents. At the February elders meeting, the elders will discuss the pastors' recommendation regarding the confirmation of each individual student. Persistent negligence in meeting expectations for catechesis may result in a catechumen not being confirmed with the rest of the class.

It is our sincere hope and prayer that instructors, catechumens, and parents will work together in a joyful spirit to grow in the marvelous faith first given in Holy Baptism! God bless your studies!

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