

## **Is the Confirmation Retreat sufficient preparation for receiving the sacrament of Confirmation as soon as November 2008?**

The short answer is 'no'.

We hope this Confirmation Retreat is a jumping off point for the young adults who attend, particularly for the younger ones who are probably in the early stages of instruction. For older kids, we hope it is a crystallizing experience that brings concepts together or clears questions up if they have already been involved in programming at their home church.

Confirmation programs should be 'formational'—which means that they should shape and change participants over time. This is one of the reasons we are requiring a minister, teacher or sponsor to attend with each parish that registers. We want this retreat to function as a 'conversation starter' for both potential confirmands and the adults who come with them. We want the adults to see how we teach and what we teach. We want everyone to ask questions—but some of the questions won't even come up until the kids and adults go home and process the material we cover.

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Here's what we plan to cover:

Session One: "What Does Confirmation Mean?"

- ❖ Sacramental
- ❖ Personal relationship with God

Session Two: Statements of Faith "What do we believe?"

- ❖ Nicene Creed
- ❖ Ten Commandments
- ❖ Lord's Prayer

Session Three: Personal Testimonies "How Can I Share What I Believe?"

- ❖ Listening to others
- ❖ How to write/give your own

Session Four: Your Role as a Member of the Body of Christ

"What is the Church?"

- ❖ Church
- ❖ God's Blueprint for Your Life
- ❖ What's next for me as a Disciple?

Conclusion: Instructed Eucharist—why do we do what we do?

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And here's what we won't be able to cover:

- ❖ Church history
- ❖ Book of Common Prayer
- ❖ In-depth scripture study
- ❖ Service projects/ mission opportunities
- ❖ Evangelism

We'll touch on all of these, but you can see that there's more work to be done, can't you? These are topics we can't cover in-depth in one weekend and each of them will take time and commitment on the part of the church.

Is this weekend better than nothing at all?

Sure it is (it better be!!). We'll talk with kids about their relationship with God; we'll talk about what being a witness to the Gospel really means, and we'll try to cover some of the Big Picture elements of our faith: love, prayer, belief and worship. Most kids can't absorb all this in one weekend. We are trying to help kids choose a living relationship with Christ, and we know that relationships take time to grow. We'll only get to spend two days with these young people. You'll have far more time to nurture, encourage and talk with them than we will.

So our hope is that this retreat either begins a new relationship, or continues an ongoing relationship, with God. We hope that the conversation we're starting keeps going at your church. The decision to confirm faith, and to have God confirm the decision, is an important one—life-changing, in fact. We pray that the community of your church is active and involved in the confirmand's life before, during and after this time of retreat. And we commit to helping you continue to grow your kids in faith, whether they decide to confirm their faith publicly and take part in the sacramental life of the church or not.

We pray this helps answer some of your questions, but contact us if you have additional concerns or questions.

Peace and grace of the Risen Christ,

*Mother Laurie and Tina*