

confirmation:2012

Our Children's and Student Ministry teams have been hard at work designing our 2012 confirmation program. We are really excited about the opportunity to provide a time of spiritual growth and transition from being a child in the church to being a confirmed member at FUMC Mansfield and an active part of our Student Ministry. We thank you for taking the time to review the following information and familiarizing yourself with how our confirmation program will be structured this year.

::Class Sessions::

Our confirmation class sessions will take place on Sunday afternoons from 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. We will provide lunch each week and this time frame will allow our entire team the chance to participate in confirmation. The format of our regular sessions (excluding our opening session on February 12th) will be as follows.

12:00 p.m. Lunch

We will serve lunch to our Mentors and Confirmands prior to our large group gathering. Volunteers will be needed each week to help set up, prepare, and facilitate the lunch service.

12:30 p.m. Large Group Gathering Time

We will gather in the Loft in the Student Ministry area for a time of worship with music and a message that introduces the theme for the weekly session. Our Pastors will be an active part of this time each week.

1:15 p.m. Small Group Time

This portion of our program will be led by our Mentors with provided curriculum. We anticipate needing 12 small groups for our class. To lead these groups we will need 12 lead mentors (those responsible for facilitating this time) and 12 support mentors. Please let us know if you know of someone you think would fill this role well.

2:00 p.m. Session Ends

You can pick up your Confirmand in the atrium below the student center near the parking lot between the Mission Center and the A&E building.

In all, there will be 9 Sunday afternoon class sessions beginning February 12 and extending through April 22, with an overnight retreat the weekend of April 27 & 28, and a final Confirmation Commitment Service on May 6. A full calendar is attached.

::Leadership of Confirmation::

Our confirmation program is directed by Joe Zamboni (Confirmation Coordinator), Dawn Brown (5th & 6th Grade Coordinator) and Mel Strom (Jr. High Director), with the assistance of both the children's and student ministry teams. Our pastoral staff will be doing the majority of the teaching during our Sunday afternoon large group gathering time. Mentors will lead the small group time with 8-10 students. Curriculum is provided.

:: Outside Activities::

Each small group will be encouraged to participate in an outside activity that includes both a mission opportunity as well as a fellowship opportunity. This will be planned by the Mentor team that is leading your student's small group. The activity may range from serving a meal to the homeless as part of our GRACE ministry, helping in our mission center one Saturday morning, and going to dinner as a group. Each Mentor team will communicate with their students and parents about the opportunities for their particular group.

:: Final Retreat and Service::

On April 27 & 28, all of our confirmation students and mentors will be having a final retreat at Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center in Glen Rose. This overnight retreat away is a special time of celebration and bonding we provide for our students each year, and we strongly encourage all students and mentors to participate. We will finish our final teaching sessions and spend some time sharing with our students what we believe their next steps should be as they transition into our Student Ministry area. This is a great opportunity for this group of students to come together as a class, celebrate all they have done together in confirmation, and prepare for the important commitment they will be making in their life. **A medical release form is attached that must be signed and notarized for your student to attend the retreat.*

On Sunday, May 6, we will be having our Confirmation Commitment Service at 3:00 pm in our Sanctuary. That is the moment of commitment and completion of this important milestone in the students' lives. This is the date to share with your families to come and celebrate with your student as they take this step in their faith walk.

:: Volunteer Opportunities::

We have several volunteer opportunities available for parents to help support our program. As you have reviewed this information, you have already heard of some of them. On the student registration form is a section for parents to fill out to let us know how you might be available to serve. We believe that your presence and service is a wonderful testimony to your students of your support for them as they come to this important decision in their faith, and we greatly appreciate your help in making this program a success. It simply is not possible without you!

:: Expectations::

Our Senior Pastor, Rev. Mike Ramsdell, reminds us regularly that confirmation is one of the most important things that we do in the life of our church. We approach the task of training and equipping students to make the decision to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ and full members of our church very seriously. At the same time, we want to make sure that confirmation is a great, fun and memorable experience. But it is important that our students are aware of how important we believe this program is to each of them. Because of this, we do have certain expectations that we want each student to know.

Be purposeful - Decide what you want to achieve during this time before we start.

Be involved - Participate in all activities in the appropriate way! Do not miss more than 2 sessions.

Be respectful - Show respect for your leaders, mentors, and peers at all times!

Confirmation Calendar 2012

(All classes are Noon - 2:00 pm unless otherwise noted)

Mentor Training	Sunday, January 29
Class Session 1 (All students and parents)	Sunday, February 12 (Dismiss at 2:30)
Class Session 2	Sunday, February 19
Class Session 3	Sunday, February 26
Class Session 4	Sunday, March 4
NO CLASS (Spring Break)	Sunday, March 11
Class Session 5	Sunday, March 18
Class Session 6	Sunday, March 25
Class Session 7	Sunday, April 1
NO CLASS (Easter)	Sunday, April 8
Class Session 8	Sunday, April 15
Class Session 9 & Walk-through Service	Sunday, April 22 (Dismiss at 2:30)
Confirmation Retreat & Final Session	Friday - Saturday, April 27-28
Confirmation Service	Sunday, May 6, 3:00pm

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Just in case we didn't cover everything, here are a few frequently asked questions.

What is the registration fee for confirmation and what does it cover?

The registration fee for this year's confirmation class is \$100. This fee covers all the expenses for the materials that we use during confirmation including the student workbook. Further, this fee includes all meals that will be served to the students and mentors on Sunday afternoon, the cost of the final retreat at Glen Lake, and all supplies. So, in short, it covers everything. Please include your fee with your registration form and return it to the church office or the lock box in the A&E building. Registrations received after January 22, 2012, will be charged an additional \$25 late fee.

Are there scholarships available?

Absolutely! For all of our ministries, scholarships are available. We are very grateful to our church family for giving us the ability to provide scholarship funds for our students. To apply for a scholarship or to make a donation to our scholarship fund, please contact Michelle Parks, the Children's Administrative Coordinator at michellep@firstmethodistmansfield.org

What if my child isn't able to attend all of the sessions?

Each session of confirmation is filled with information that we believe is very important for each student to be exposed to as they work through our confirmation program. We are aware that all of the families in our church are busy, but we want to really encourage you to make this a high priority for your family and your child. Our expectation is that students do not miss more than two sessions of the confirmation program. If your child has to miss a session, we appreciate parents taking the time to inform the mentor team that is working with your student.

What about baptisms? Does my child need to be baptized in order to join the church? What if they were baptized as an infant?

In the sacrament of baptism, we celebrate God's grace, which calls us into relationship with God. In the United Methodist tradition, all individuals are baptized before taking the vows of membership. Our church participates in the practice of infant baptism, but we will also baptize at any time in a person's life. We honor baptism that may have occurred under another denomination or in another church. We do not recommend being "re-baptized." If your child has already been baptized, they are ready to confirm their faith and take the vows of membership. If they have not, your child has the option to be baptized anytime between now and the confirmation service, or we will provide a time in the service for students to be baptized and we typically have 15-20 students that are baptized at that time. In the United Methodist church, we also celebrate baptism in several different ways. If you would like to have your child baptized by immersion, we will offer a time for that as part of the retreat at Glen Lake. All baptisms during the service will be by sprinkling.

Additional Questions? If you have additional questions about confirmation, please contact Joe Zamboni at joe.zamboni@me.com or (817) 343-0607.