

Confirmation

at Fellowship of Faith

We're excited you're thinking about Confirmation! This packet is designed to help you understand what we believe about Confirmation at FOF and how to take this step.

What is Confirmation?

At Fellowship of Faith, Confirmation is a public promise to commit your life to Jesus. It's a promise to God, but also a promise to other believers in the Church.

This Promise

This promise is that you'll live for Jesus. It's a promise to trust him. It's a promise to live your life for him every single day. It's a promise to put him first in everything. It's even a promise to die for him.

Confirmation is not a program. It is a promise that defines a journey. It's like marriage, not like graduation. It's the beginning of something, not the end of something. Like marriage, confirmation is to be lived out every day.

Promises are important. They show loyalty, strengthen commitment, fuel us on when we waiver, and bind us to the one we love.

Where does Confirmation stem from?

Confirmation stems from an idea in the Bible that God wants us to make our faith known before others and publicly commit to him. For example:

Romans 10:8-10: "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: ⁹That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Matthew 10:32: Whoever acknowledges me [Jesus] before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.

It stems from the realization of just how much God has freely given us through his Son, Jesus, and a heart of gratitude that wants to give our lives back to him.

What does the Confirmation promise look like?

When a person confirms their faith at FOF, they'll stand in front of the church and answer two initial questions:

1. Why is Jesus important to me?
2. Why do I want to commit my life to him?

After that, we'll ask a few yes & no questions drawn from the Apostles' Creed. It's a practice that goes back to the early Church. The Apostles' Creed gives a great summary of God and Christian teachings:

3. Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?
4. Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?
5. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, as your Savior and Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. Who descended into hell. And on the third day rose again from the dead. Who ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead?
6. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, [little "c" "catholic" is a term that means "universal," not Roman Catholic] the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?
7. Do you believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and do you seek to conform your life by it?
8. Will you seek to give your life to Christ and suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from him?

Finally, if you also want to become a confirmed member of FOF, we'll ask you:

9. Do you want to be a member of Fellowship of Faith, and will you actively support its vision and mission?

Are there any requirements?

A personal faith in Jesus as your Savior and Lord along with a willingness to commit your life to him. That's it!

Wait, that's it?

Yes. That's it.

How old do I have to be?

There is no minimum or expected age. Promise your life to Jesus when you're ready. If you've come to know Jesus, trust Jesus, want to commit your life to Jesus, and have the wherewithal to live that commitment, you're the right age.

This is different than what I've experienced elsewhere. How come?

It's not uncommon for churches to set up Confirmation programs that require two years of special classes, homework, memory work, and service projects. While we understand the unique challenges other churches are trying to address, we approach it differently. Our focus is on a public declaration of faith and commitment to Christ. Period.

For this reason, when a person is ready, they can confirm their faith right away. We believe this reflects a Biblical pattern that is in better sync with people's faith journeys.

The Christian faith is about a free gift of salvation given by God through Jesus' death on a cross and resurrection. Because this gift can never be earned, but is simply received through faith, it doesn't make sense for us to require people to work like a dog in order to stand up and acknowledge that they believe it.

Jesus invites each of us to follow him from wherever we are. When someone comes face-to-face with him and wants to follow him, responding in faith and commitment are important steps. God wants bold witness right away. The operative word is *immediately*. We don't see the benefit of an extended wait.

Learning theology, studying catechisms, and memorizing portions of the Bible are good things – and our ministries are immersed in these activities. However, requiring them as prerequisite steps can unintentionally communicate that a relationship with Christ must be earned and subvert the very love of Christ they mean to instill. For this reason we position Confirmation as the start of a new chapter of discipleship; it is not graduation from spiritual boot camp.

Please contact us if you'd like to learn more about our philosophy.

What if I want more instruction?

Occasionally people want more intentional preparation first. While we don't require this, we can provide details about individualized or structured class work in the Bible and theology and other discipleship opportunities. Contact one of our staff for details.

How do I begin the process?

Two things before publicly confirming your faith:

1. **Contact one of our pastors and schedule a 30 minute one-on-one.** We'll talk about your faith, how you're growing, sins you're struggling with, where you're connecting, and questions you have. It's up to you to arrange this meeting.

Do this as soon as you're interested in confirming your faith, but no later than two weeks before the Sunday you wish to be confirmed. On occasion we'll encourage you to wait a bit longer before making this promise, and ask to meet with you again.

2. **Regularly participate in the life of FOF for 4+ months.** This gives us a chance to get to know you and see how your faith is taking root. (If you've been active this long to-date, you do not have to wait another four months before confirming your faith.) If you want to simultaneously become a member of FOF at the time of your confirmation, we also ask that you attend Neo, our new member workshop. (Dates and details on the FOF website.)

When can I confirm my faith?

We schedule Baptism & New Member Sundays several times per year. These are mass celebrations where people are baptized, confirm their faith, (re)commit their lives to Jesus Christ, and become members of Fellowship of Faith.

There are no special clothes, rituals, or elaborate ceremonies you need to concern yourself with. It's just a time of celebration focused on the God who called you and the huge step you're about to take.

See the FOF website or contact the church office for specific dates.

Do I need to be baptized?

Yes, but don't let that slow you down. If you've never been baptized, we'll simply baptize you at the same time you confirm your faith. (See the Baptism Roadmap on the FOF website for more details.)

If you've been baptized elsewhere, you don't need to be baptized again. We see a baptism performed in any Christian context as valid, regardless of age or denomination.

Can I Confirm my faith more than once?

Absolutely! Renewing your commitment is a great thing to do again and again. Just follow the protocol above.

When can I take communion?

Some people wait until after Confirmation to start taking communion. Others start beforehand. It's really up to you.

We can talk about this at your one-on-one or at one of our Communion meetings held throughout the year. See our Communion Roadmap (available on the FOF website) for details.

What happens after Confirmation?

Confirmation is all about being a disciple who makes disciples. As someone who is radically pursuing a life with Christ, immerse yourself into him and his community.

Come to church. If you're younger, get involved in children's or student ministry. If you're an adult, join a Discipleship Group. Come to Bible classes. Participate in faith-step challenges. Read the Bible. Serve. Pray. Talk to one of our staff about being mentored. Obey God. Trust radically. We know it can be messy and hard, which is why God gives you the church to help you on this path.

Following Christ is a life-long, daily journey. Confirmation is a beginning. Which means in many ways what follows confirmation is more important than what precedes it. Welcome to an exciting and new intentional way of living!