

Confirmation

A course for those
interested in growing
in their faith

This course is presented to ninth graders
before they are received into the church.

Developed by Martha Daniel

Introduction

In 2017 I was given the opportunity to create a comprehensive confirmation class for our ninth-grade students at Memorial Park Church. In creating this outline, I was concerned with communicating the essential creeds, sacraments, and the historical underpinnings of the faith. I wanted to recognize the distinctives of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church so that our confirmands would understand and appreciate those beliefs and practices which set us apart from other denominations. But the most important conviction which drove me every week was the desire to introduce the students to a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to encourage each person to grow in their knowledge, devotion, and service to Him.

Instead of simply preparing students to provide the “right” answers to our board of elders or to insure the salient points are covered in their personal statements of faith, the goal of confirmation is to lead students to Christ and provide them compelling reasons for living out this life of faith within a community of like-minded and like-dedicated Christ-followers.

We begin the Confirmation class with an introductory meeting for students and parents. We discussed the class requirements, emphasizing the value of the class regardless of one’s decision to unite with the church upon its conclusion. We encouraged our participants to attend all classes and to memorize a few key passages from Scripture as well as the Apostle’s Creed. We provided outlines for each class and notes from each topic so that students could avail themselves of the information even if they were absent on a given week. We also encouraged participation in youth activities and required them to engage in one area of service during the course of the year. We wanted them to understand that they needed to be active members rather than “in name only” members.

Our first unit dealt with the Bible; trusting in its reliability is foundational to all else. We discovered that most of our students did not regularly read the Bible, nor did they have a guide for doing so. They prayed during times of need, but did not have a daily prayer life in which they were hearing from God. We decided to introduce another lesson in which we provided a daily reading plan for the students so that we could create another level of spiritual accountability with them as we nudged them toward a consistent connection with Jesus Christ on a daily basis.

After establishing the veracity of the Bible, we spent three weeks recounting redemptive history. Our purpose was to communicate the steadfast

nature of God in dealing with His rebellious people throughout real time and real historical circumstances.

Our next unit focused on the important creeds of the church. We purchased the Westminster Shorter Catechism for everyone and referenced it as we taught the content of the Ten Commandments and the Apostle's Creed.

The mission of Memorial Park Church is to invite people into life-changing and ever-growing relationships with Jesus Christ. This next unit provided an apologetic for the faith as well as an opportunity to share and to respond to the gospel. This series of lessons were designed to elicit the students' response to the gospel. Beginning with the premise that they had invited Jesus to be their Lord and Savior, what were they to do right now as a response to that step of faith? Prayer is key in an ever-growing relationship with Christ and so we spent two weeks discussing the nature of prayer, using the Lord's Prayer as our guide.

In the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, two sacraments are practiced. We wanted our students to experience both of those sacraments during worship. Every believer is given a spiritual gift(s) by the Holy Spirit. We provided teaching on discovering your S.H.A.P.E. and your spiritual gifts and distributed a spiritual gifts survey for all students to complete and score. We then discussed how the Lord was using that spiritual gift(s) in their own lives. We also encouraged them to use their gifts for the good of the body.

A highlight of the Confirmation class was the overnight retreat we held at a retreat center, a short distance from our church. Once again, many familiar themes were presented as we prepared the students to compose their own statements of faith. Fellowship, food, and fun bonded the group with our leaders and with each other.

Our last unit dealt with the distinctives of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. We shared the elements that distinguish us as a local body of believers as well as the convictions that set us apart globally. A special time in which parents shared their faith with their son or daughter served as a prelude for the students writing their own statements of faith to be shared with our board of elders. An open-binder Confirmation exam concluded the class.

In May, all the students choosing to unite with the church presented their statements of faith to the elders. Later that month, students were confirmed during Sunday worship, followed by a reception in our "café." Some elders stepped forward to mentor those students who chose not to unite with the church or those who were very "young" in the faith and needed some additional guidance and encouragement.

Note to Users

Please feel free to adapt this curriculum to your church. We have developed this class as a school-year curriculum for ninth graders. This gives us time to “dig deeper” in each of these categories with our students.

Many churches are not interested in conducting a confirmation class as comprehensive as this. As you can envision, many of these topics could be condensed into a singular session and still convey the essence of the topic.

I have left some personalized communications in the material. You can delete our names and insert your own or use our letters as a format for creating your own.

Ministry Engagement

We want all our students to be involved in the life of the church so that they can feel a sense of belonging within the body. For that reason, we ask everyone to involve themselves in a ministry during the course of the year.

The students could serve in Children's Ministries, the Grounds Crew, the Deacons, or in the Worship and Arts department. They could play an instrument or be a vocalist during worship. Whatever they choose is acceptable with us; we want them to become active, contributing members and utilize their gifts and abilities for the good of all which will hopefully extend beyond the course of this class.

Confirmation Class

Why Join the Church? Lesson 1

Unit 1

The Bible

A plan for Bible reading and prayer and why do it Lesson 2

The Word of God Is Foundational to Our Faith Lesson 3
Tim Keller: Why Is the Bible Reliable?

Redemptive History: Genesis through Chronicles Lesson 4

Redemptive History: Poetry, Prophets, Post-Exile Lesson 5

Redemptive History: New Testament Lesson 6

Unit 2

Important Creeds

Ten Commandments Lessons 7-8

Westminster Confession Lesson 9

Apostle's Creed

God the Father Lesson 10

God the Son Lesson 11

God the Holy Spirit Lesson 12

Remainder of the Apostle's Creed Lesson 13

Unit 3

The Problem of Sin	Lesson 14
Salvation: A Life Changing Relationship With Jesus Christ (calling, justification; a gospel presentation)	Lesson 15
Salvation: An Ever-Growing Relationship with Jesus Christ (adoption and sanctification)	Lesson 16
The Lord's Prayer (Jesus' model prayer for believers)	Lesson 17-18

Unit 4

Sacraments	
Baptism	Lesson 19
Attend Worship on a Baptism Sunday	Lesson 20
Communion	Lesson 21
Attend Worship on a Communion Sunday	Lesson 22
S.H.A.P.E. (Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experience)	Lesson 23
Spiritual Gifts Survey	Lessons 24-25

Unit 5

History of the EPC; Distinctives of the EPC	Lesson 26
Church Membership: Worship, Grow, Serve, Belong, Give Church Membership Covenant	Lesson 27
Parents Share Their Faith; Question and Answer Session	Lesson 28
Students Write Statements of Faith	Lesson 29
Confirmation Exam	Lesson 30
Service Projects: (Deacons, Children's Ministries, Sacred Arts, Grounds Crew, Outside Group)	

Confirmation Class Requirements

Confirmation Class is an excellent means by which teens can solidify their understanding of redemptive history and explore the important creeds of the church. It is a venue that can encourage each participant to grow deeper in their faith and their part in the body of Christ. Each student also gains a fuller understanding of the distinctives of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

We want every person who joins the church family of Memorial Park to make a clear declaration of faith in Jesus Christ. Church membership is an individual choice, upon completion of this course. Students may defer that decision until a later date, if they so choose.

1. Every-week attendance. Grace will be extended.
2. Memorize the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer.
3. Memorize a few key verses that could be used in sharing your faith and growing as a Christian. (Verses will be selected by the leader.)
4. Take the Spiritual Gifts survey.
5. Write a Statement of Faith.
6. Participate in a service project at the church sometime during the school year. The student is responsible to arrange this with one of the ministry leaders. Contact information will be given.
7. Youth Group Attendance
8. Confirmation Retreat- first weekend in March
9. Parent Attendance in the class in which they are to share their faith stories with their son or daughter.

Introductory Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

As we develop and refine our curriculum for Student Impact, we are maintaining the ninth-grade year as the time for our Confirmation Class. This class is designed to be a “short course” in Christianity, looking at redemptive history, creeds, sacraments, and what it means to experience a life-changing and ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ. The class also covers a little bit of information about the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. This material is fundamental to our faith and is important for everyone to understand.

The decision to join the church upon completion of this course is an individual matter between the student and the Session of Memorial Park Church. Students may elect to join the church any time following this class; not everyone is ready to make that commitment at the same time.

Confirmation Class begins Sunday, _____ with a Parent and Student meeting at the Clayton Center at 9:15 a.m. Confirmation will be taught by Ryan Pietryga, Director of Student Impact, and Martha Daniel, Minister to Families. At that time, we will discuss expectations and requirements for the class.

We are anticipating a great year and are looking forward to the time we will get to spend together! If you have any questions about Confirmation, please contact Martha Daniel at mdaniel@memorialparkchurch.org or Ryan Pietryga at rpietryga@memorialparkchurch.org.

In His service,

Martha Daniel

Ryan Pietryga

Mid-Year Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

Ryan and I have been enjoying the time we get to spend with your sons and daughters each week at Confirmation. We hope that they are learning a lot and growing in their faith as a result.

This fall, we spent 4 weeks discussing redemptive history and why the Word of God is foundational to our faith. We then reviewed the Ten Commandments and the Westminster Shorter Catechism. After that, we spent 4 weeks studying the Apostle's Creed.

This winter, we are discussing what it means to have a life-changing and ever-growing relationship with Christ. We will spend some time focusing on the Lord's Prayer, the sacraments of baptism and communion, and Spiritual Gifts. Our final lessons will focus on the distinctives of the EPC and what it means to be a member of Memorial Park.

At mid-term, we want to update you on your child's progress with the class.

Attend: Confirmation class consists of 30 Sundays. Weekly attendance is recommended, with grace extended. Your son or daughter has attended this number of classes: _____.

Memorize: the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

Complete: the Spiritual Gifts survey in class on March ____.

Participate: in a service project.*

Write: a statement of faith. (to be worked on at the Confirmation retreat.)

Attend: the Confirmation Retreat: March_____.

Attend: Youth Group with some regularity.

Join: 1 Confirmation classes with your son or daughter.

*A paper describing various acts of service in various ministries was distributed on January __. Be sure to ask for one if you weren't present yesterday. It is your responsibility to choose and connect with the contact person listed on the sheet.

Martha Daniel and Ryan Pietryga

Is the Bible Reliable?

For this lesson, we accessed Tim Keller's message entitled "Why Is the Bible Reliable?" Its length is 5:38 minutes.

Another You Tube resource video is entitled "Why Should I Trust the Bible?" It is an Impact Whiteboard video, running 15:37 minutes.

Here are a few quick facts:

There are 24,000 handwritten copies of the Bible.

The oldest fragment of the New Testament is within decades of the original manuscript.

The oldest complete copy of the New Testament is less than 300 years from the original.

By contrast, the Iliad has only 643 copies, dating 500 years from the original manuscript.

In the New Testament, there are 40 lines of textual corruption. It is 95% accurate.

The Iliad has 764 lines of textual corruption; it is 95% accurate.

Less than 1% of the corruption involves actual text, and of those, only a small percentage are unresolved by textual criticism. There is not one Christian teaching or belief that is dependent on or changed by any variant.

The Canon: 2 Peter 3:15-16; 1 Timothy 5:18

The apostles collected books that were

1. From trusted sources
2. Consistent with apostolic teaching. See Galatians 1:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 3:17; 2 Peter 2:1

The first original canon is dated at 170 A.D.

Redemptive History

For these three lessons, we used the pictures from *Walk Thru the Bible* to explain the history of the Bible. The goals of these lessons were to demonstrate the historicity of the Bible, how it coincided with other historical events and to accentuate the consistent, immutable nature of God.

At the end of these three lessons, we gave the students a “quiz” we also give to fifth graders to evaluate how well we are teaching our children the Bible. We call it, “Are You as Smart as A Fifth Grader?”

Genesis:	Beginnings	Nahum:	Flood
Exodus:	Exit	Habakkuk:	Watchtower
Leviticus:	Offerings and Feasts	Zephaniah:	Day of the Lord
Numbers:	Wanders	Haggai:	Temple
Deuteronomy:	Second Law	Zechariah:	Messiah
Joshua:	Conquers	Malachi:	Hearts of Stone
Judges:	Cycles	Matthew:	King
Ruth:	Love Story	Mark:	Servant
1 Samuel:	Saul	Luke:	Perfect Man
2 Samuel:	David	John:	Son of God
1 Kings:	Solomon	Acts:	Church
2 Kings:	Exile	Romans:	Paid in Full
1 Chronicles	Editorial on David	1 Corinthians:	Spanking the Saints
2 Chronicles	Editorial on Judah	2 Corinthians:	Apostle's Anatomy
Ezra:	Temple/People	Galatians:	Unshackled
Nehemiah:	Walls	Ephesians:	Body-Building
Esther:	Queen of Persia	Philippians:	Happily Humble
Job:	Sovereignty	Colossians:	Commander-in-Chief
Psalms:	Worship	1 Thessalonians:	Stay on Target
Proverbs:	Wisdom	2 Thessalonians:	Work While You Wait
Ecclesiastes:	Vanity (Emptiness)	1 Timothy:	Leadership Manual
Song of Solomon:	Love in Marriage	2 Timothy:	Combat Manual
Isaiah:	Groan/Glory	Titus:	Conduct Manual
Jeremiah:	Rotten Sash	Philemon:	Bondage to Brotherhood
Lamentations:	Tears	Hebrews:	Milk to Meat
Ezekiel:	Dry Bones	James:	Faith Gauge
Daniel:	Dreams	1 Peter:	Pain with a Purpose
Hosea:	Harlot	2 Peter:	Poison in the Pew
Joel:	Locusts	1 John:	Fellowship Barometer
Amos:	Plumb Line	2 John:	Bolt the Door
Obadiah:	Brother's Keeper	3 John:	Open the Door
Jonah:	Fish	Jude:	Fight for the Faith
Micah:	Day in Court	Revelation:	Coming Events

Are You as Smart as a Fifth Grader?

1. The book of Genesis is the book of "big N ings." The first stories tell us about _____, _____, _____.
2. Besides these 3 stories, the book of Genesis tells us about the lives of these 4 main men: _____, _____, _____, and _____.
3. The second book of the Bible tells us about the Israelites leaving _____.
4. The name of this book is _____.
5. The main man in this book is _____.
6. The book of Leviticus has to do with 2 things: _____ and _____.
7. In Numbers, the Israelites wandered around in the desert for ____ years.
8. What is the book in which the Ten Commandments were given a second time? _____
9. What is the name of the general who led the Israelites into the Promised Land? _____
10. What is the name of the first town they conquered? _____
11. How many cycles are in the book of Judges? ____
12. Name all 4 parts of one cycle: _____, _____, _____, _____.
13. Judges ruled in Israel for about how many years? _____
14. Ruth was the great grandmother to whom? _____
15. Who was the first king of Israel? _____
16. What kind of heart did he have for God? _____

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17. Who was the second king of Israel? _____
 18. What kind of heart did he have for God? _____
 19. Who was the third king and how was he related to the second king?

 20. After the third king, what happened to the kingdom? _____
 21. What are the names of the northern and southern kingdoms?
_____ and _____
 22. Who invaded the northern kingdom and took people captive?

 23. Who invaded the southern kingdom and took people captive?

 24. How many years were the Israelites captive? _____
 25. Who led the first group of people back to Jerusalem and what was their job? _____
 26. Who led the second group of people back to Jerusalem and what was his job? _____
 27. Who led the third group of people back to Jerusalem and what was their job? _____
 28. How many days did it take the people to rebuild the walls? _____
 29. Who was the brave queen who saved her people from slaughter?

 30. How many years was God silent before Jesus was born? _____

The Ten Commandments

How do the following people illustrate each particular commandment?

Commandments 1-4: Our relationship with God

#1 “You shall have no other gods before me.”

The Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-32

What or who are the most important things/people in your life?

#2 “You shall not make for yourself an idol.”

Jesus

Philippians 2:3-16

What makes somebody popular/a celebrity?

#3 “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.”

Job

Job 1:20-22

What is your reaction when other swear or make obscene gestures?

#4 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”

A Disabled Woman

Luke 13:10-17

How does your family spend their time on Sundays?

Commandments 5-10: Our Relationships with Others

#5 “Honor your father and your mother.”

Timothy

1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:2-5; 2 Tim. 3:14-15

What are some things you most appreciate about your parents? _____

#6 “You shall not murder.”

Saul/Paul

Acts 7:55-60, Acts 8:3; 9:1-2, Phil. 3:5-11

How does Paul describe his life before and after he put his trust in Christ?
(what did he admit about himself; what did he believe about Jesus; what did he
choose to do?)

#7 “You shall not commit adultery.”

David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 12:1-14

Why does God require consequences for sin? _____

#8 “You shall not steal.”

Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

Why do you think Zacchaeus was so generous in giving back all that he had stolen as a tax collector?

#9 “You shall not give false testimony.”

Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 5:1-11

How does lying affect your relationships with the person you lied to?

#10 “You shall not covet.”

Joseph

Genesis 37:3-34; Gen. 45:4-8

What is the secret to fighting off jealousy? (See Phil. 4:11-13; Rom. 12:3, 15-16)

The Westminster Shorter Catechism

The Westminster Shorter Catechism was written in the 1600s in a Question/Answer format to teach children the essentials of Reformed Theology.

When you were a child, what did you imagine yourself becoming as an adult?

What do you believe is a human being's purpose, specifically you?

When you think of God, how do you picture Him? What is He like?

Video: YouTube Rick Warren: "What On Earth Am I Here For?" 25 min.

Discussion Questions:

How does somebody glorify God?

How does somebody enjoy God?

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day, He rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

We teach The Apostle's Creed over the course of four lessons. Lessons 1-3 focus on each member of the Godhead; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In the fourth lesson, we discuss the remainder of the creed.

Attributes of God

God is an Invisible, Personal, Living, and Active Spirit.

Doctrine of the Trinity

The threefold manifestation of the one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is one in being or essence who exists eternally in three distinct co-equal "persons."

Metaphysically, God Is Self-existent, Eternal, and Unchanging.

Metaphysics- the branch of philosophy that treats first principles includes ontology and cosmology and is intimately connected with epistemology.

Intellectually, God is Omniscient, Faithful, and Wise.

1 John 3:20, Psalm 139 (Omnipresence), Hebrews 4:13, Isaiah 44:7-8, 25-28

Ethically, God is Holy, Righteous, and Loving.

Emotionally, God Detests Evil, Is Long-suffering, Compassionate.

Existentially, God is Free, Authentic, and Omnipotent.

He cannot do anything against His nature.

Relationally, God Is Transcendent in Being, Immanent Universally in Providential Activity, and Immanent with His People in Redemptive Activity.

Isaiah 57:15

God the Father

Genesis 1:1	“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”
Genesis 1:27	“So God created man in his own likeness. . .”
Leviticus 19:2	“Be holy, because I am holy.”
Deuteronomy 4:24	“He is a jealous God.”
Deuteronomy 4:31	“The LORD your God is tender and loving.”
Deuteronomy 6:4	“The LORD is the one and only God.”
Deuteronomy 32:4	“He is the Rock. His works are perfect. All of his ways are right. He is faithful. He doesn't do anything wrong. He is honest and fair.
2 Samuel 22:31	“God's way is perfect. The word of the LORD doesn't have any flaws.”
2 Chronicles 13:12	“God is with us. He's our leader.”
Ezra 9:15	“You are holy. You always do what is right.”
Nehemiah 1:5	“You are a great and wonderful God. You keep the covenant you made with those who love you and obey your commands. You show them your love.”
Nehemiah 9:17	“You are a God who forgives. You are gracious. You are tender and kind. . . slow to get angry. . . full of love.”
Nehemiah 9:32	“Our God, you are great, mighty and wonderful.”
Job 12:13	“Wisdom and power belong to God. Advice and understanding belong to him.”
Job 36:26	“How great God is! We'll never completely understand him.”
Psalms 7:11	“God judges fairly.”
Psalms 18:30	“God's way is perfect. The word of the LORD doesn't have any flaws.”
Psalms 46:1	“God is our place of safety. He gives us strength. He is always there to help us in times of trouble.”
Psalms 68:20	“Our God is a God who saves. He is the King and the LORD. He saves us from death.”
Proverbs 30:5	“Every word of God is perfect. He is like a shield to those who trust in Him”
1 Corinthians 14:33	“God is not a God of disorder. He is a God of peace.”
Hebrews 6:10	“God is fair. He will not forget what you have done.”
James 1:13	“God can't be tempted by evil. He doesn't tempt anyone.”
1 John 1:5	“God is light. There is no darkness in him at all.”
Revelation 19:6	“Our Lord God is the King who rules over all.”

God the Father

Look up the verse and write the characteristic or act describing God the Father.

Genesis 1:1,27 _____

Leviticus 19:2 _____

Deuteronomy 4:31 _____

Deuteronomy 32:4 _____

2 Samuel 22:31 _____

Nehemiah 9:1,31 _____

Job 12:13 _____

Psalms 18:30 _____

Psalms 46:1 _____

Psalms 68:20 _____

Isaiah 12:2 _____

Acts 3:15 _____

Hebrews 3:4 _____

Hebrews 6:10 _____

1 John 1:5 _____

1 John 4:16 _____

Revelation 19:6 _____

God the Son

“I AM” Statements of Jesus

John 1:1-3 _____

Revelation 21:6 _____

1 Peter 1:19-20 _____

John 10:11 _____

Matthew 16:16 _____

John 11:25 _____

John 15:5 _____

John 8:12 _____

John 14:6 _____

John 3:16 _____

How Well Do You Know Him?

1. Where was Jesus born? _____
2. Who were Jesus' earthly parents? _____
3. Jesus was related to what famous king? _____
4. To what country did baby Jesus and his parents flee? _____
5. In what town did Jesus grow up? _____
6. Was Jesus an only child? _____
7. What trade did Jesus learn as he was growing up? _____
8. When Jesus was 12 years old, his parents lost him. Where was he?

9. Who was Jesus' cousin? _____
10. Where was Jesus baptized? _____
11. For how many days was Jesus tempted in the desert? _____
12. How many years was Jesus' public ministry? _____
13. In what town was Jesus crucified? _____
14. Who betrayed Jesus with a kiss? _____
15. Who denied that he even knew Jesus? _____
16. On what day did Jesus rise from the dead? _____
17. Who was the first person to discover that Jesus had risen? _____
18. Who was the disciple who doubted Jesus rose from the dead? _____
19. How many days are there between the resurrection and ascension? _____
20. What makes Jesus different from anyone else? _____

Quick Facts about the Holy Spirit

- Genesis 1:2 The Holy Spirit was involved in _____.
- 2 Timothy 3:16 The Holy Spirit helped men write _____.
- John 16:8 The Holy Spirit _____ the world of sin.
- Galatians 5:25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us _____
with the Spirit.
- Ephesians 4:30 The Holy Spirit can be made _____.
- Romans 8:6 If your thinking is controlled by the Holy Spirit, there will
be _____ and _____.
- Romans 8:9-10 The Holy Spirit _____ all believers.
- Romans 8:14 The Holy Spirit _____ us.
- Romans 8:26 The Holy Spirit _____ us.
- John 14:26 The Holy Spirit is our _____.
- 1 Cor. 6:19-20 Your body is the _____ of the Holy Spirit.
- Ephesians 1:13-14 We have been _____ with the Holy Spirit.
- 1 Thes. 5:19 Do not _____ the Holy Spirit.
- 1 Cor. 12:1 He gives _____ to all believers.
- Galatians 5:22-23 The fruit of the Spirit is _____

The Remainder of the Apostle's Creed

The holy catholic church

This term indicates universality and emphasizes the unity of the church in spite of its wide diffusion. In the second century, when heresy arose, catholic became equivalent with orthodoxy. "In Reformation times the word became a badge of those churches which adhered to the papacy in contrast to those groups which identified themselves with the Protestant cause. The designation Roman Catholic emerged in connection with the controversy between Rome and the Anglican Church, which insisted on its right to use the term catholic as linking it with the ancient apostolic church." Evangelical Dictionary of Theology

The communion of saints

"The traditional, and probably the best, interpretation refers the phrase to the union of all believers, living or dead, in Christ, stressing their common life in Christ and their sharing of all the blessings of God." "Believing in the communion of saints is more than affirming an existing unity, since it calls the church to fellowship, to mutuality, and to the sharing of 'all good gifts' received from God." Evangelical Dictionary of Theology

The forgiveness of sins

The most common NT word for forgiveness is *aphesis*. It conveys the idea of "sending away" or "letting go." "No book of religion except the Bible teaches that God completely forgives sin." "For us to receive forgiveness, repentance is necessary. For the holy God to extend forgiveness the shedding of blood until no life is left is prerequisite—ultimately, the once-for-all spilling of Christ's blood and his rising again." Evangelical Dictionary of Theology

The resurrection of the body

This is the central claim of Christianity. "With it the Christian message of eternal life is secure, resting on the reality of Jesus' victory over death. Without it the Christian message is reduced to that of one of man's philosophies." "Man being

embodied spirit, redemption would remain incomplete without resurrection.”
”‘We Shall All Be Changed.’ These words imply continuity and difference.
Human bodies disintegrate that the enduring life may organize new
embodiment while retaining identity.” Evangelical Dictionary of Theology

The life everlasting

“Eternal life is described in its experiential aspect of knowing God and having fellowship with God through his Son, Jesus Christ. (John 17:3) “Even in the case of the elect, eternal life is not possessed until faith in Christ is exercised (Eph. 2:1,5). “Eternal life is given by the work of the Holy Spirit at the moment of faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit is declared to be the one who regenerates (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5).” Evangelical Dictionary of Theology

The Problem of Sin

Sin is not only an act of wrongdoing but a state of alienation from God. It is the breaking of a covenantal relationship. It signifies the rupture of a personal relationship with God, a betrayal of the trust he places in us. We become most aware of our sinfulness in the presence of the holy God. For Paul, sin is not just a conscious transgression of the law but a debilitating ongoing state of enmity with God.

Romans 1:18-32 Sin is pervasive.

Romans 3:23 All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

In Reformed theology, the core of sin is unbelief. Genesis 3.

Romans 2:5 Hardness of heart belongs to the essence of sin. The chief manifestations of sin are pride, sensuality, fear, self-pity, selfishness, jealousy, and greed.

Sin is both personal and social, individual and collective. (Racism, nationalism, imperialism, ageism, and sexism.)

The effects of sin are moral and spiritual bondage, guilt, death, and hell.

Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is death.

Romans 3:21-26; 5:6-10 Christian faith teaches that sin cannot be overcome through human ingenuity or effort. The solution to the problem lies in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. The penalty for sin is death, judgement, and hell, but the gospel is that God has chosen to pay this penalty himself in the sacrificial life and death of Jesus Christ.

Through his atoning sacrifice on Calvary, Christ set humankind free by taking the retribution of sin upon himself. He suffered the agony and shame that we deserve to suffer because of our sin. He thereby satisfied the just requirement of the law of God and at the same time turned away the wrath of God from fallen human kind. His sacrifice was both an *expiation* of our guilt and a *propitiation* of the wrath of God. It also signifies the *justification* of the sinner in the sight of God in that Christ's righteousness is imputed to those who have faith. Likewise, it represents the *sanctification* of the sinner by virtue of his being engrafted into the body of Christ through faith. The cross and resurrection of Christ also accomplish the *redemption* of the sinner, because he has been brought back out of the slavery of sin into the new life of freedom.

Romans 7:7-25 The law was to deter sin, but instead aroused sinful desire.

Romans 8:1-11 The Holy Spirit awakens us to faith. It is through regeneration by the Spirit, the imparting of faith and love, that the sinner is set free from bondage to sin and enabled to achieve victory over sin in everyday life.

On the following page, have the students look up the following verses and note what each passage says about sin.

The Problem of Sin

Romans 1:18-32

Romans 3:23

Romans 2:5

Romans 6:23

Romans 3:21-26

Romans 5:6-10

Romans 7:7-25

Romans 8:11

Salvation:

A Life-changing Relationship with Jesus

Foreknowledge Romans 8:29

God's prescience or foresight concerning future events. Foreknowledge is an aspect of God's omniscience. All things, past, present, and future, external and internal, material, intellectual, and spiritual, are open to God. God is no mere spectator. What he foreknows he ordains. He wills it.

Divine foreknowledge must not be confused with determinism or fatalism, difficult though the reconciling of prescience and human choice might be.

Predestination Romans 8:29-30

The narrower aspect or use of the term is that God from all eternity has chosen a body of people for himself, that they should be brought into eternal fellowship with him, while at the same time he has ordained that the rest of humanity should be allowed to go their own way, which is the way of sin, to ultimate eternal punishment. These are known as the doctrines of election and reprobation.

God's wisdom and grace are beyond every creature's comprehension or understanding. One can but bow in worship and praise.

Calling Romans 8:30

God summons people by his word and lays hold of them by his power; the called are those who have been the subjects of this work, i.e., elect believers.

Justification Romans 8:30

God pardons and accepts believing sinners. The doctrine of justification determines the whole character of Christianity as a religion of grace and faith. It defines the saving significance of Christ's life and death by relating both to God's law. It displays God's justice in condemning and punishing sin, his mercy in pardoning and accepting sinners, and his wisdom in exercising both attributes harmoniously together through Christ. It makes clear what faith is—belief in Christ's atoning death and justifying resurrection, and trust in him alone for righteousness. It makes clear what Christian morality is—law-keeping out of

gratitude to the Savior whose gift of righteousness made law-keeping needless for acceptance.

Justification is a forensic term, denoting a judicial act of administering the law—in this case, by declaring a verdict of acquittal, and so excluding all possibility of condemnation.

Justification has two sides. On the one hand, it means the pardon, remission, and non-imputation of all sins, reconciliation to God, and the end of his enmity and wrath. On the other hand, it means the bestowal of a righteous man's status and a title to all the blessings promised to the just; a thought which Paul amplifies by linking justification with the adoption of believers as God's sons and heirs.

The law has not been altered, or suspended, or flouted for their justification, but fulfilled by Jesus Christ, acting in their name.

Jesus made propitiation for our sin. The righteousness is bestowed on us as a free gift. We are treated no longer as sinners, but as righteous, by the divine Judge. This is the thought expressed in classical Protestant theology by the phrase "the imputation of Christ's righteousness," namely, that believers are righteous and have righteousness before God for no other reason than that Christ was righteous before God, and they are one with him, sharers of his status and acceptance. God justifies them by passing on them, for Christ's sake, the verdict which Christ's obedience merited. God declares them to be righteous, because he reckons them to be righteous; and he reckons righteousness to them, not because he accounts them to have kept his law personally, but because he accounts them to be united to the one who kept it representatively.

On the following page, have the students look up and make note of these passages.

Salvation: A Life-Changing Relationship with Jesus

Foreknowledge Romans 8:29

Predestination Romans 8:29-30

Calling Romans 8:30

Justification Romans 8:30

Salvation:

An Ever-Growing Relationship with Jesus

Adoption Romans 8:12-17

The reason for adoption is God's love. It was not due to his nature or merit that the Christian was adopted, but to God's will acting through Christ. Adoption is a free grant to underserving people solely from God's grace. The consummation of the adoption awaits the future, for the adoption of sons includes "the redemption of our bodies." Adoption, then, is deliverance from the past (regeneration and justification), a status and way of life in the present (sanctification), and a hope for the future (salvation, resurrection). It describes the process of becoming a son of God and receiving an inheritance from God.

Redemption Romans 8:18-27

Redemption denotes the means by which salvation is achieved, namely, by the payment of a ransom.

Mark 10:45 Christ's life would terminate in an act of self-sacrifice which would serve as a ransom for the many who needed it. Our salvation has been purchased at a great and personal cost. Romans 3:24

Sanctification Romans 8:28-36

To make holy. Growth in holiness should follow conversion. Sanctification is justifying faith at work. The place of the Spirit in sanctification is central. It is the outflow of an overflowing life within the soul, the "fruit" of the Spirit in all manner of Christian graces. See Galatians 5:22-23.

Glorification Romans 8:37-39

It is a synonym of immortality. Glorification is only for believers, and it consists of the redemption of the body. Paul also seems to teach that after the believers are glorified, the whole created world will undergo a fundamental renewal. Romans 8:19-21.

Information taken from the Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, Walter Elwell, Editor

Salvation: An Ever-Growing Relationship with Jesus

Adoption

Romans 8:12-17

Redemption

Romans 8:18-27

Sanctification

Romans 8:28-36

Glorification

Romans 8:37-39

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:4-13

This passage from The Sermon on the Mount teaches us about prayer.

There are three basic types of prayer. They can be described in this acrostic.

ACTS

A sk	(prayers for ourselves and others)
C onfess	(admit our sin)
T hanks	(for who God is and for what He has done)

The first section of the Lord's Prayer reads as follows:

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Discuss these three main points:

Our Father: our relation as adopted sons and daughters; John 1:12

Hallowed: holy; set apart

Kingdom: His reign

The Lord's Prayer

"Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

In this next section of the prayer we find "asking" prayers and a prayer of confession.

Our daily bread: our daily needs

Definitions of Sin:

Hamartia = missing the mark

Parabasis = stepping across the line drawn between right and wrong; a transgression

Paraptoma = slipping across the line; can be unintentional

Anomia = lawlessness

Opheilema = a debt

Temptation

External sources

Internal sources

Deliverance: from troubles and afflictions so that one is free to serve God.

"For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen."

The Lord's Prayer begins and ends with "thanking" prayers; praising God for who He is and thanking Him for what He has done and will do.

Baptism

Theological Questions addressed during Baptism:

1. What do you (the couple) believe about baptism? Allow discussion first.
Catholic upbringing – baptism is NOT for salvation.

2. What do we Presbyterians believe about baptism (EPC)?
 - 1 of 2 sacraments that Jesus ordained...the other is the Lord's Supper.
 - Infant baptism is a non-essential in the EPC.
 - We baptize because Jesus tells us to.
 - Baptism is a celebration of the initiation into the family of God (household of faith). We don't wait. Ex. Cornelius Acts 10:1-48...particularly 23-48.
 - Symbolic pledge of new life...going under the water ...represents cleansing and death...coming out of the water represents new life in Christ.
 - Infant baptism is based on the faith of at least one of the parents.
 - Parents are responsible for the development of their child's faith. Church's calling is to come alongside the family...not to replace it.
 - Parents are to be members because they are making a promise to raise their child in the church.

3. Why we don't dedicate.
Some denominations do not believe in infant baptisms and prefer to dedicate a child when young and then baptize as an adult with their own profession of faith. Some parents want their children dedicated because they want them to make a public profession for themselves at baptism at a later age. We believe we are called to baptize children into the household of God and to not delay that, preferring to celebrate their adoption into the family while young with the ability to profess faith later without baptism.

4. What will we ask you...vows:

- 1) Who is your Lord and Savior?
- 2) Do you trust him with all your heart? Do you?
- 3) Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world? Do you?
- 4) Do you promise to raise your child in the love and admonition of the Lord?

Congregation vow:

Here in the Presbyterian Church we believe that *the entire congregation shares responsibility for the baptized*; to pray for _____ and his/her family. As his/her Tru Kids leaders, youth leaders or mentors we are to bring him/her encouragement as he/she grows up in this place.

- 1) Will you as the people of MPC promise to guide and nurture _____ by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging him/her to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of his/her church? Will you?

As part of this lesson, the Confirmation class attended an actual baptism service in the church.

Communion

Communion: a sacrament in which bread and wine are given and received as Christ directed to proclaim His death and resurrection.

Also known as The Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, Holy Communion, Breaking of Bread.

Its History

Jesus instituted it. (Matthew 26:26-30)

It has its roots in the Old Testament Passover, Exodus 12. Jesus is the ultimate Passover Lamb who saves us from death.

Its Significance

Body and Blood: Bread and wine/grape juice are the elements of communion. Bread represents Christ's body broken for us. Wine/grape juice represents Jesus' blood that was shed for us. He died for us, that we may be forgiven for our sin.

Spiritual Nourishment

We come to the table in need. It is by faith that we receive the nourishment that Christ offers us. Use the example of volunteers standing along the road during a marathon, distributing water and snacks to nourish runners along the course.

Unity of the Church

Communion is something we do with others in the body of Christ. It is not an individual act.

The Seal of Communion

1. Belonging: Christ has redeemed us with His body and blood. We belong to Him, destined for paradise. Communion is meant for God's people exclusively.
2. Ongoing Love and Grace: Communion is a sign of God's promise to be with us, love us, and demonstrate grace and mercy continually.

Christ's Presence in Communion (3 views)

1. Physical Presence: this is the Catholic view; the bread and wine actually become Christ's body and blood.
2. Memorial/Symbolic View: The bread and wine are merely symbolic; "Do this in remembrance of me."
3. Spiritual Presence: EPC view. Christ is not physically present, but he is spiritually present. The bread remains the bread, and the grape juice remains the grape juice. But it is through faith that Christ dwells with His people. "This is my body" is a figurative statement. It is a mystery, received by faith.

Foretaste of What Is to Come

It is a foretaste of our eternal communion with Jesus in heaven.

When you take communion:

Remember what the Lord Jesus did for you.

You are nourished by the "Bread of Life", admitting you can't do life on your own.

You commune with God, enjoying fellowship with Him, expanding your faith as you comprehend Him more clearly.

S.H.A.P.E Outline Confirmation Class

"Instead of trying to reshape yourself to be like someone else, you should celebrate the shape God has given you." Rick Warren

You are God's masterpiece.

Psalm 139:14-16: *"Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous-- how well I know it. ¹⁵ You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. ¹⁶ You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed." (NLT)*

Ephesians 2:10: *"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."*

You are one of a kind:

"Can you be anything you want to be? I don't think so. But you can be everything God wants you to be...by discovering your uniqueness." Max Lucado

You have a unique purpose.

1 Cor. 12:7: *"Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits." (MSG)*

II. S.H.A.P.E. - Five Characteristics that make up your shape:

Spiritual gifts...Heart... Abilities...Personalities...Experiences.

Quiz – Where are you?

Spiritual Gifts

Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Peter 4:9-10.

1 Cor 12:1: *"Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed." Our gifts are not hidden*

"Your Spiritual gifts were not given for your own benefit but for the benefit of others." Rick Warren

Three Questions About Spiritual Gifts:

1. What are Spiritual gifts? *"A God given special ability, given to every believer at conversion by the Holy Spirit, to share his love and strengthen the body of Christ."*

2. Why does God give Spiritual Gifts?

1 Cor. 12:7 says, *"A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church."*(NLT)

3. Does Everyone Get a Gift? Yes

1 Cor. 7:7b: *"Each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that."*

"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker." Helen Keller

Hearts and Passions - Discovering your True Passion

"Passion is the fuel of life. It is the great source of energy and drive. It's what makes us explore new vistas, develop new relationships, and seek solutions to perplexing problems."

Passion can come in many ways...things you love to do...or it may be something that breaks your heart!

Discussion Question: Do you know of something that grabs your heart like this?

Col 3:23-24: *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."*

Abilities - Discovering What You Are Naturally Good At

I. Scripture tells us that God has given us incredible strengths and abilities.

Exodus 36:1: *“So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the LORD has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work just as the LORD has commanded.”*

Matthew 25:15: *“To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability.”*

Romans 12:6a: *“God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well.”*
(NLT)

“The abilities you do have are a strong indication of what God wants you to do with your life. They are clues to knowing God’s will for you...God doesn’t waste abilities; he matches our calling and our capabilities.” Rick Warren

Discussion Question:

What do you love doing?

Don't spend too much time thinking about it...what comes to your mind.

What are the tasks you feel confident performing? Where do you naturally excel?

Practical Application: Think of some small things you can do for others every day that use your natural abilities.

Personality - Discovering Who God Made You to Be

I. Embrace the person God made you to be.

“Like stained glass, our different personalities reflect God’s light in many colors and patterns.”

The world places value on external things like prestige, position, and wealth, but God places the highest value on less visible aspects of our lives.

Experience

I. There is purpose in your past

Romans 8:28: *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

Positive Portraits from the past

“Write down those things that we have achieved that give us satisfaction...regardless of what other people think. This is important because there are many things that we and God may be pleased about... that doesn't measure up to the worlds standards yet are true accomplishments to celebrate.”

Painful Portraits

“God sees our life from beginning to end. He may lead us through a storm at age 30 so we can endure a hurricane at age 60.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4: *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”*

Practical Application: Look back over the painful portraits of your life and think about the good that could come from your suffering. Then I want you to think about how you might use this event to help someone else.

Spiritual Gifts

We used the Teen Spiritual Gifts survey from the Church Growth Institute and the Spiritual Gifts Survey from LifeWay Christian Resources

On week one, we discussed the following:

Spiritual gifts:

The source:

The purpose:

1 Peter 4:10-11 (John Piper teaching)

What are the spiritual gifts?

Romans 12:6-8:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

1 Corinthians 12:28

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Ephesians 4:11

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1 Peter 4:11

- 1.
- 2.

How do you know you have a spiritual gift?

On week two, we asked the students to complete and score the survey.

On week three, we asked them to reflect upon their own survey and how they have experienced this gift in their own lives.

Rough outline of Retreat:

Saturday, March 3, 2018

Depart 9:45 – 10:00 Leave CYC...lunch on the way

1:00pm Arrival at White Hall – get settled

2:00pm First Session
Small Groups (Jacob/Ryan make up groups ahead of time)
Free time

5:00 Dinner Prep

6ish Dinner

7:30 Second Session -
20 Minutes then Small Groups (here or in morning)
Free Time/ Group Time

11:59pm Lights out

Sunday, March 4, 2018

8:00 am Get up & Breakfast prep

9:00 am Breakfast

10:00 Worship and communion
Last Session

11:30 Clean-up & pack up your stuff & free time

12:00 Lunch prep & lunch / cleanup

1:00pm Load up and depart

Pick up from church is 3:00pm

Confirmation Class Retreat Worksheet 2018

Session #1

Questions: Who were you made to be? Where were you headed?

- Creation/Fall//Redemption///Restoration (diagram and explain)
- The Imago Dei (Image of God) – Genesis 1:26-28

Beliefs: Doctrine

- ❖ Creation – good & “Good Good ” – Colossians 1:15-16; John 1:1-3
- ❖ Sin – depravity (fallen distorted) – Romans 3:23; 8:18-22
- ❖ Redemption – Salvation (to buy back what was lost) – Eph. 2:1-10; Hebrews 10:8-10
- ❖ Doctrine of God
 - Father/Son/Holy Spirit = Trinity (Three in One) – Gen. 1:1-2; 26//Matt 28:19// 2Cor 13:14
 - God is good, holy, just, merciful, righteous, perfect, all knowing, all powerful, all present, eternal, infinite...love! (to name a few attributes)
- ❖ Covenant - “Bond in blood sovereignly administered” - relationship between God and Humanity

Session #2

Questions: What has God done for you? Why/How did you call on God?

- Read John 18-20 (Passion Week) – Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection & Ascension of Jesus...FOR YOU!
- Read/Teach from Romans 5:1-11
- Romans 10:9-13
 - Matt 4:18-20//Luke 23:39-43 (2 thieves)//Luke 24:13-35//Acts 8:26-40//Acts 9:1-18
- Romans 8:1-17//Ephesians 1:3-14

Beliefs:

- ❖ Salvation – John 3:16
- ❖ Justification – Romans 4/5
- ❖ Grace – Ephesians 2//James 4:6

Session #3

Questions: What is God presently doing in your life? In your world?

Where are you headed now?

- Philippians 1:3-6
- Philippians 2:1-5
- Romans 8:18-39 (Read the whole passage)

Beliefs:

- ❖ Sanctification – the work of the Holy Spirit to make us like Christ
- ❖ Restoration – joining God in the reclamation of that which was lost (people, creation, work, art, economics, relationships (family), recreation etc... "ta Pantas" (everything) Colossians 1:15-16)
 - Justice – restoring God's intended order for human relationships
 - Righteousness – restoring God's intended order for the human/divine relationship
- ❖ Eschatology – the historic return of Messiah Jesus to complete (consummate) the restoration of "all things" (Second Coming)
- ❖

Your (His) Story:

Introduction

- 1.
- 2.

Body:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Conclusion:

- 1.
- 2.

The History and Distinctives of the EPC

Rooted in the Reformation under John Calvin (Switzerland), and John Knox (Scotland) in the 1500s

Began in the fall of 1980 and spring of 1981 in St. Louis, Missouri

Leaders were distressed by liberalism within the Presbyterian denomination.

Wanted to form a church that took seriously the Scripture, the theology of the historic confessions of the faith, and the evangelical fervor of Presbyterian founders. Hence the name, Evangelical Presbyterian.

The first General Assembly met at Ward Presbyterian Church near Detroit, Michigan. Drafted ***The Essentials of Our Faith***.

1. We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory, and praise forever.
2. Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now sits as our High Priest and Mediator.
3. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling in our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth and seals us for the day of redemption.
4. Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, thereby justified in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.
5. The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet

- imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity, where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting she awaits the return of her Lord.
6. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth- personally, visibly, and bodily- to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.
 7. The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to “Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.” He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).”

In Non-essentials, Liberty

Less essential matters were left to the conscience of individual churches and believers. This includes the election of church officers, the exercise of spiritual gifts, to own and keep property, ordination of women, and worship style.

In All Things, Charity: Truth in Love
We speak the truth in love.

A Present and Future Hope

In 1981 the first General Assembly convened with 75 delegates representing 12 churches.

The second General Assembly met with 120 elders and ministers.

By the mid-90's, 56 missionaries represented the EPC throughout the world.

Today the EPC has over 70,000 active members in some 190 congregations.

The 5 Pillars of Church Membership at MPC

Why is this “pillar” important in your ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ?

What opportunities are available for you to participate in this aspect of the Christian life here at MPC?

What opportunities have you participated in?

During which of these activities (pathways) do you feel closest to God?

What could you begin doing that would strengthen your relationship with God?

Worship

Grow

Belong

Serve

Give

Church Membership Covenant Questions

1. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God and without hope for your salvation except in His sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of sinners, and do you receive and depend upon Him alone for your salvation as He is offered in the gospel?
3. Do you now promise and resolve, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?
4. Do you promise to serve Christ in His Church by supporting and participating with this congregation in its service of God and its ministry to others to the best of your ability?
5. Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and to the spiritual oversight of this Church Session, and do you promise to promote the unity, purity and peace of the Church?

These questions are from the EPC Book of Order.

Questions for Parents

These questions are meant to guide the parents in sharing their faith stories with their son or daughter during the class dedicated to this experience.

Who led you to faith in Jesus Christ?

When do you remember first believing in Jesus Christ?

What were the specific circumstances surrounding you coming to faith?

How was your faith received by your family/friends? Was it positive or negative?

What were some key factors in helping your faith to grow as a child or as a teen?

Who were some key people in helping your faith to grow as a child or as a teen?

Describe your faith journey from the time you first believed up until now; what are some high points or low points in your experience?

Did you ever face any crisis of faith or another kind of crisis that brought you closer to Christ?

What are some key practices that help you grow in your faith today?

Who are some key influencers in growing your faith today?

Writing Your Personal Faith Statement

Using class notes and/or the outline you constructed on the Confirmation Retreat, write your own faith statement.

You may choose to write your statement in longhand, or you may list bullet points to share with the elders during your interview with them.

Here are some questions to consider as you write:

- How did you come to faith?
- Describe your experience before and/or after your conversion.
- What are your favorite Bible verses and why?
- Who is the biggest influence in your life?
- What do you believe about God? Include core beliefs such as the Trinity, salvation, and so forth.
- How are you growing in your faith currently?
- Why do you want to join Memorial Park Church?

Confirmation Exam

1. Why can we trust the reliability of the Bible?
2. Name the key people and events in the book of Genesis?
3. What are the four gospels?
4. Who wrote most of the letters in the New Testament? How many did he write?
5. What do the first four commandments address?
6. What do the last six commandments address?
7. According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, what is the chief end of man?
8. God is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. What do these words mean?
9. Name 5 significant facts about Jesus.
10. Name 5 significant facts about the Holy Spirit.
11. What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?
12. What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit? (You don't need to list individual gifts.)

13. Briefly summarize the following verses:

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

Romans 5:8

John 3:16

Romans 10:9-10

John 1:12

Romans 12:1-2

14. What is justification?

15. What is sanctification?

16. What are the 3 main types of prayer?

17. Why do we baptize babies? What are we promising God?

18. Why do we take communion? What do the elements represent?

19. There are 3 main distinctions of the EPC. What are they?

20. What are the 5 "pillars" of church membership at MPC?

Please evaluate this confirmation class. What were some highlights? What would you change or include in next year's class?