

COVENANT
for DISCIPLESHIP and AFFIRMATION of FAITH
at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 2007-2008
Bloomfield, Nebraska

RATIONALE: Catechism in the church is the extension of the baptismal promises we as parents and the church made to you, our children when we baptized you into Christ's body as babies. It is where we get serious about your life of discipleship and begin a process of equipping you for life-long following and growing in Jesus, and active participation in his body, the church.

Catechism is NOT primarily informational, though you will learn a ton over the next two years. It's primarily relational...it's about you and God, you and other disciples, and you and the world that you live in. Because of this, catechism takes contact time and requires your showing up. Just like you can't make up practices on the basketball or football team where you learn plays as a team and their execution, discipleship is not an individual sport. It's always done in conjunction with others. In the process of your catechetical instruction, your team will be your fellow faith journeyers in catechism, your adult mentors (Pastor Nathan and Leann Kersten), your HOFs Bible teachers (Leann Kersten, Brad Lovejoy, Carol Nelson, and Barb Schroeder), your parents, and all the other Saints of the church at St. Mark's.

OBJECTIVES: Our objectives with catechism are simple...

1. That you become passionate lovers and followers of Jesus
2. That you become passionate about his Church and active in its worship
3. That you become passionate about the world he loves
4. That you become active pray-ers
5. That you become confident and clear enough in your faith that you can stand before the congregational council and the congregation and clearly state your faith in Jesus Christ, and the ways you intend to live this faith out actively in your lives going forward

EXPECTATIONS: You will note that there are no longer tests in catechism at St. Mark's. Instead, what our council leadership and I want to see is active participation. We believe that 90% of life is showing up, and this especially in the life of faith—that it is critical to your formation as disciples. Because of this our expectations are participation oriented.

1. **Participation in Wednesday catechism from 4:00pm—5:00pm.** There are 15 contact hours for the first year students, and 19 for the second year students. We expect 80% attendance or more. This means that if you are a first year student you can miss *three* times without penalty. For those of you who are second year, you can miss *four* times without penalty.
2. **26 worship/sermon reports.** These are not tests, but worksheets that facilitate participation in worship and comprehension of the church's symbols, proclamation, and activities as God's gathered and worshipping people. They are easy to do and require that you **A.** show up for worship, and **B.** stay awake! ☺ These may be done over an entire calendar year with special opportunities to get ahead during the seasons of Advent and Lent when there are Wednesday evening worship opportunities.
3. **FGC Sundays—Biblical Competency.** One of our objectives is that confirmands grow in their knowledge and understanding of the stories of

faith. Sunday mornings will be devoted this year to the Old Testament. Contrary to Wednesday afternoons where participation can't be made up, we will not be as hard and fast about attendance. However, missed FGC Sundays will require a makeup of the material covered turned into Pastor Nathan BEFORE May 11th, 2008.

4. **Participation in the annual YOUTH QUAKE.** The dates for this event are February 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. YOUTH QUAKE is an annual youth event that occurs in Sioux Falls over a weekend—Friday after school through Sunday afternoon. It is perhaps the most celebrated part of confirmation at St. Mark's. Historically, our kids have been more excited about this than anything else.
5. **Participation in a quarterly SERVANT EVENT.** Because Jesus calls his disciples to engage, encourage, and build up this world, we will have intentional opportunities to serve others built into our catechetical journey...once each in the Fall, Winter, and Spring.
6. **Participation as an Acolyte in worship.** It's customary for our confirmands at St. Mark's to participate as acolytes in our worship. A schedule will be produced and distributed at the first Wednesday Confirmation gathering. If you cannot acolyte on a particular Sunday, it is your responsibility to find someone else to replace you for that Sunday. Contact numbers for the other confirmands and acolytes will be distributed at the same time.
7. **Church Council interviews.** Because we aren't disciples in a vacuum, but are accountable to both Jesus and his church for our beliefs, those second year students wishing to be confirmed will be interviewed by the church council at a specified time in May of next year.

I understand that I am responsible for this journey of faith leading up to the Rite of Confirmation and choose to actively engage in and participate in catechism at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. I understand that I do not HAVE to do this, but it is a privilege to do so at this time. I promise to be accountable to my parents, my church's leadership, and my adult sponsors for my participation in Confirmation and the meeting of the expectations above, and understand that my non-participation will mean that I won't be confirmed.

CONFIRMAND SIGNATURE:

_____ **Date:** _____

I understand as a parent that it is my responsibility to encourage my child through this catechetical process, and that this encouragement is an extension of the promises I made to my child at the time of their baptism. I understand the objectives and expectations of the Confirmation journey at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, and commit to making this journey not only a priority for my child, but for our family. I realize that in doing so my child will get infinitely more out of this journey than they would otherwise. I also understand that my child's failure to meet the expectations of this congregation with regards to Confirmation will mean that the church council will not approve my child for the Rite of Confirmation.

PARENT SIGNATURE:

_____ **Date:** _____