



Messiah Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Youth & Family Ministry Plan

Purpose

This purpose of this document is to provide a clear system and timeline for supporting our young people at Messiah Lutheran Church in growing in their faith from birth to high school graduation.

As new families join Messiah, they can work individually with the Pastor to make sure children do not “miss” out on any of the life passages as described below.

Baptism & Cradle Roll

Baptism takes place at any age a child’s parent or guardian feels is appropriate. New parents or guardians or the baptismal candidate generally meet with the Pastor at least twice: once to discuss the meaning of baptism using the ELCA’s Daniel Erlander resource, to pick a date and get initial ideas about how they would like the baptism to be conducted and a second time to finalize the liturgy. The Pastor will notify the appropriate WELCA contact at this time to prepare for a reception.

Once someone is baptized, they and their immediate family can choose to join Messiah Lutheran Church as members if they wish, although attending the next biannual New Member Class is still strongly recommended.

At baptism, all individuals receive a Baptism Certificate, a Baptism Candle, a prayer shawl and an age appropriate Bible (generally a Frolic First Bible). A young child’s parents are also signed up for the Frolic monthly email service to help support faith formation in the home.

All children under the age of three are automatically enrolled to receive hard copies of the monthly Frolic program for parent/ guardians of young children.

Children’s Sunday School & Nursery

Sunday School generally begins once a child is enrolled in a pre-k program (age 3 or 4 as decided by the parent/ guardian) and generally through sixth grade. Upon entering Sunday School, children are formally welcomed in worship, generally on the Sunday after God’s Work Our Hands Sunday, and receive an age appropriate Bible if they have not already done so (generally a Whirl Story Bible).

During the school year, Children’s Sunday School generally begins with a brief group opening with the Pastor, followed by a song, yoga or meditation. Children then break into individual classes for a video and other age appropriate lessons using the Whirl curriculum. On most vacation weekends the Sunday School conducts a special project as a group.

Nursery is a great place to nurture the faith of our children during Sunday morning worship (oftentimes with the support of a Frolic lesson) from pre-k to age 6 at the latest. Thereafter the child should attend the entire worship service with their families.

First Communion

First Communion classes generally take place when a child is in third grade and consists of three classes using the ELCA's Daniel Erlander resources, generally later in the season of Lent or early in the season of Easter. In cases where a parent/ guardian strongly feels a child should partake in communion at a younger age or in cases where a visiting child or a transferred member child has already had her/his/their First Communion, a more age appropriate class using the ELCA's Daniel Erlander resources can also be offered. Parent/ guardians are strongly encouraged to attend classes with their children to encourage at home faith formation.

At first communion, the child receives a First Communion Certificate and an age appropriate Bible (generally a Whirl Study Bible). The child is also eligible to serve as an acolyte, crucifer, greeter or on altar guild at this time.

Generally, around this time (age 8), a child is eligible to attend a week of overnight summer camp at Calumet Lutheran Ministries in New Hampshire.

Confirmation Class

Confirmation class generally begins once a youth enters seventh grade and continues until the fall of her/his/their freshman year of high school. Confirmation class consists of four components: 1) attending Sunday evening classes or other scheduled activities using the Colaborate curriculum; 2) regularly serving as a Sunday morning worship assistant; 3) attending a group during the Sunday School hour for more topical discussion; 4) attending an annual confirmation retreat.

At the beginning of confirmation, generally on the Sunday after God's Work Our Hands Sunday, the youth receives a colaborate Youth Study Bible, usually purchased by the youth's Congregation Mentor (who is assigned at this time as well). The youth is now eligible to serve as a crucifer, usher or lector.

At confirmation, the youth receives a Confirmation Certificate and an engraved Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal. The youth is now eligible to serve as assisting minister or nursery assistant.

High School

Faith formation for high school students currently takes place through monthly youth group activities (often in conjunction with area Lutheran congregations), participation in the ELCA National Youth Gathering every three years and participation in a regular faith formation experience during the regular Sunday School hour.

At graduation, the youth receives a cross reminding them of the congregation's love and prayers as they enter early adulthood.