



Confirmation at the Gathering 2019

Dear Gathering Students Families,

Students Explore is both an exciting and important experience for 8-12th graders at the Gathering. This is no magical experience during which we do something for students, but rather it is a time when we invite students to claim and explore their own faith.

This is also not the final step of faith. As theologian Lauren Winner writes, "What you promise when you are confirmed is not that you will believe this forever. What you promise when you are confirmed is that this is the story you will wrestle with forever." Our prayer for our confirmation students is they would learn to claim God's story as their story and wrestle with it for their lives.

forever unfinished,
martin leathers
gathering students pastor

What is Students Explore? Students Explore is the Gathering confirmation experience. Confirmation is the opportunity for students to confirm the vows made at their baptisms, either by them or their parents. In plain words, confirmation is the opportunity for students to wrestle with and claim the Christian faith for themselves. If students choose to participate in Students Explore and are not baptized, they will be invited to do so as a part of this experience. Participants will learn about basics of the Christian faith, what the Bible is and why it matters, and how we fit into God's story.

Should I Participate? That's entirely up to you! All 8th graders and above are invited to be a part of confirmation, but it is absolutely your choice whether or not to participate. If you are an 8th grader who has previously been confirmed at another church or a high schooler who was confirmed before, you are welcome to participate and explore faith again!

Confirmation Expectations: We expect all students going through confirmation to meet the following expectations to be confirmed. Failure to do so will result in the student's not being allowed to be confirmed this year. If you have any questions about these expectations, please feel free to contact Martin Leathers directly to discuss. It's always easier to talk through the expectations beforehand if you sense a problem on the horizon.

- Student Explore will meet from 5:00-7:00 pm on Sunday nights at the Hub from October 27th-November 10th. Students MUST be able to attend all three weeks to be confirmed;
- Each week, students will be invited to participate. Every participant is different, and not everyone participates in the same way, but students need to be engaged during group time;
- Students need to have completed the pre-work assignments on Student Explore GroupMe group and actively participated in weekly spiritual disciplines for assigned homework.

What If I'm a Parent? You are a BIG part of this experience! Faith isn't done alone, and we know that parents are the biggest influences in the faith lives of their children. Be praying for them. Ask them questions about what they're learning. Attend worship together. Likewise, we'll have parent compliments to what we're doing in Student Explore so that you can be reflecting on and exploring your faith right alongside of your teenagers.

How to Sign-Up: You can register for confirmation at the Gathering Students page of the Gathering UMC website under the Confirmation tab. There is no cost to participate, but you do need to be signed up by Friday, October 25th.

Confirmation Schedule: Student Explore will meet from 5:00-7:00 pm on Sunday nights at the Hub from October 27th-November 10th. Dinner will be provided each week so that we can gather around a table like Jesus would've done with the disciples.

- **Week 1:** Who is God? Who is Jesus? What does it mean to follow Jesus?
- **Week 2:** What is the Bible? How do we read it? Why does it still matter?
- **Week 3:** How does my story fit into God's story? How do I develop a lifelong faith?
- **Confirmation Service:** Clayton Site // 5:00pm service // November 24th

Questions? If you have ANY questions about confirmation, there are a couple of places you can turn:

- Check the website. This will consistently be the best place to find information about what is happening with confirmation;
- E-mail Martin at martin.leathers@gatheringnow.org. He will be able to answer whatever questions you have.