

CROSS + CHOSEN TOGETHER

cross + gen confirmation



Sample Lesson

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Dear Confirmation Leader:

Have you been trying to shoehorn your confirmation program into a “one-size-fits-all” curriculum? Do you have specific needs to address, or a unique format that you want to use, in your confirmation ministry, but are not sure how available curricula can address them? Do you want to move your confirmation ministry from the “right” answers to one focused on building relationships within confirmands’ families and connecting them with the whole congregation?

Here is a sample lesson from our new cross+generational confirmation product called *Chosen Together: A Cross+Gen Confirmation Experience*. In partnership with the Rev. Natalie Gessert Hall, we are publishing *Chosen Together* as a new approach to confirmation instruction. *Chosen Together* is more than a standard confirmation curriculum, it is a personalized approach to transform your confirmation program into an inclusive, flexible, relationship-building experience that will engage the confirmands, families, and entire congregation in the conversation.

One of the things you will see in this sample are portions of **red text** in the midst of standard black text. These signify parts that will be changed to specifically fit *your* congregation in *your* context. One of the several aspects of this product that are unique in the industry is that bundled with the *Chosen Together* curriculum are two (2) hours of personal consultation with the creator and writer of these material, Pastor Natalie. This consultation can take place via the phone, video conference, or possibly in person (in the Greater Pittsburgh area, contact the writer for more details about her coming to your congregation in person). During this consultation, Pastor Natalie will have a personal discussion with your leadership team to discuss your context and priorities, and to determine the format that would fit best your confirmands, their family members, and the congregation (Online focus? Weekly gatherings? Something else?). This conversation will also address your congregation’s needs, preferences, and culture to provide recommendations and encouragement to introduce *Chosen Together* successfully to your parish. After these conversations, Pastor Natalie will customize the printed material with appropriate details about your congregation, so that in addition to your congregation’s name throughout the materials, they will include congregation-specific contact information and community-based contacts in the written materials themselves. Purchasing additional hours of consultation can be discussed with the writer.

Order *Chosen Together* today at www.SpiritAndTruthPublishing.com!

With *Chosen Together*, everyone is a teacher, everyone is a learner, everyone is valued, and everyone is chosen in Christ together.

Blessings,

Gregory Rawn
Publisher

CONFIRMATION MINISTRY OVERVIEW

You are a full and complete member of Christ's church. That happened the moment you were baptized. Yet, being a full member does not rule out opportunities to learn, grow, and explore the ways you are part of the community. Confirmation is a time to consider with the help of others what it might mean for *you* to be a member of Christ's Church.

CONTENT

During confirmation, you will learn about topics covered in the Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments. Each lesson will connect with Scripture, explore faith practices, and offer quality time with family, friends, trusted mentors and other leaders, and people in your congregation.

While there are activities included in each lesson, the major purpose of **CHOSEN TOGETHER** is to integrate what you learn about faith into daily life. The goal is that you, along with family, friends, and fellow members of faith, will join together for a well-formed, *informed*, and maybe even *reformed* Christian life!

CHOSEN TOGETHER is designed to help you build patterns of faith and living by placing the primary center of faith in your home. We will meet with each other *[schedule here with encouragement to bring family members/mentor]* yet much of our work will be at home or in other places where we spend most of our time.

PEOPLE

To highlight relationships, every lesson includes components that connect you with a parent/guardian or other mentor, peers, and the people and leaders of your church. You will also have a trusted adult with you throughout confirmation. The single greatest task of your accompanying adult is to participate: sharing their faith questions and experience, checking in with you regularly, and being with you throughout confirmation. They will strive to support you and to help you learn about God. Listen to them and show them respect. They will do the same for you.

The Eighth Commandment tells us to honor our neighbors. *Neighbor* means more than the people who live next door. A neighbor is anyone you are in contact with: friends, family, classmates, teachers, and others. When we care about God, we also care not to gossip about our neighbors, especially, in this context, people in our class.

You are to speak well of one another always and if you are having difficulty with a student, parent, mentor, teacher, pastor, or person in your congregation please speak up about the problem privately so the issue may be resolved with care. For more information about how to resolve conflicts effectively, please see Matthew 18:15-20 in the New Testament part of your Bible.



SERVICE

You will have service projects to accomplish, which are specific to your church community. These are opportunities for exploring leadership and participatory roles in the life of your congregation to consider what you might be called to do during and after confirmation.

QUESTIONS

You may have lots of questions about the things talked about in confirmation. We hope you do. **Ask!** There are no questions too big, scary, or unimportant. God can handle them, and so can your parents/guardians, pastors, and others in your church.

Sometimes the answer you receive may be “I’ll have to get back to you on that.” Other times you might hear, “I don’t know.” No matter what, always expect a thoughtful and considerate response.

PROJECTS

- *The year will begin with a weekend confirmation retreat at [name of location]*
- *The year will include a Lenten Adventure be held on a weekday for a special experience focused on growing together in faith.*
- *At the end of your time in confirmation you will have an opportunity to prepare and lead a worship service together with others in confirmation. You will also have an opportunity to declare your faith publicly by preparing a sermon.*

GIFT AND TOOLS

Everyone needs the right tools to begin a task, and confirmation is no different! You will receive:



These gifts and tools are meant for you to read, explore, and enjoy! You may have no hesitation about marking your questions, thoughts, and other notes in the margins. Every lesson will ask you to do that specifically in your Bible.

NOTE

While youth often participate in confirmation during the 7th and 8th grade years, concluding in confirmation at the end of the 8th grade year, this is not a “rule.”

If a student participant would prefer to defer confirmation and/or continue learning in the classroom after their 8th grade year, the participant has that option in conversation with parents/guardians, pastors and other church leaders. If a participant or adult of any age has not yet been confirmed and would like to be, confirmation can occur or even be reaffirmed at any age. Please see the pastor for more details.





**YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE
WITNESS AGAINST YOUR
NEIGHBOR.**

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN

We are to fear and love God, so that we do not betray, slander, or lie about our neighbors, but speak well of them, defend them, and always explain their actions in the kindest way.

READ:

Mark 14:10-72

Read these verses from Mark in your Bible. Write directly in your Bible using the Västerås Method. You will share your responses during group discussion. Feel free to read your Bible alongside with *The Message* idiomatic version if you could use another perspective on the Scripture passage.

REFLECT:

When children in the early 20th century wanted to spend time with a friend, they usually had to get on a bicycle or walk to their friends' house to knock on the door. Meeting someone new meant offering a handshake. Nearly every exchange happened in face-to-face conversations, which meant that their words matched their actions and the expressions on their face.

Now we live with technology that helps us organize relationships differently. If we want to get together with a friend we don't have to move from our seats. Instead, we can take out a cell phone and send a text. If you want to express excitement about going to a movie with friend, you might add punctuation (!) or an emoticon (J). If you want to meet someone for the first time, you might look that person up on social media and read about where he lives, where she goes to school, about his hobbies, and her favorite sports teams. Often, no face-to-face conversation is needed to gather that kind of information.

Unlike face-to-face conversation, electronic devices can record and save our words. With so much access to information about ourselves and others, the care of our reputations and the reputations of others goes beyond speaking kindly in face-to-face conversations. Whether we enjoy relationships in person or online, God's Eighth Commandment tells us that we must restrain ourselves from speaking negatively about anyone in order to protect everyone's good name. When we speak poorly about others we not only tear them down, but we prove ourselves to be unkind and untrustworthy with the reputations and feelings of others.

Looking at magazine stands, headlines scream about famous people’s fashion choices, romantic involvements, political leanings, and personal interests. Some headlines tell the truth, and some don’t. Moreover, even when some headlines tell the truth, the person highlighted may not have wanted to share the information publicly. Famous people often talk about how hard it is to have photographers and publicists constantly swarming around them, making their every choice, every word, and every mistake an object for public scrutiny.

In many ways, social media creates the same kinds of difficulties for you. Others may take a photograph or video of or about you, share opinions about your fashion choices, or publicize information about your friendships, feelings, and choices when you wanted to keep some of those things private. You may even be tempted to share information or talk about others, too.

God’s Eighth Commandment calls us to a different way. We are to speak well of and defend others, explaining their actions with generosity. Perhaps you have heard the adage, “if you don’t have something nice to say, don’t say anything at all.” The explanation of this commandment turns that statement inside out to encourage you toward saying the kindest things about others whenever it occurs to you!

Yet, the positive spirit of the commandment cannot simply be summed up or even left at, “be nice to people.” Of course it is nice to be nice! God is instead encouraging us toward even more. The Eighth Commandment calls us to be witnesses to the great value and goodness of others. The explanation of the commandment communicates that all people are worthy of kind words, notice, and support. You are called to be a living letter of recommendation for all people. Even when others offend, confuse, or frustrate you, God’s call is for you to investigate closely and find the grains of goodness that are certainly there. This is the kind of unique behavior that identifies you as God’s own. As God’s people we live out the belief that all people are of great value in God’s sight, meaning that we view others as profoundly more than objects for our evaluation and criticism (even, admittedly, when it is difficult).

This call can be lived out in a great many ways. For example, when you see someone stepping up to a challenge, share that you noticed. When someone looks joyful, determined, or encouraged, then say something. If you notice disappointment and struggle, find a way to offer help and be sure to let the person know that their value is not located in fault or failure.

Among the best ways to live in the world with others is to work to protect everyone else’s reputation and to expect the same for ourselves. When you believe the best about others, even when it’s really hard, you demonstrate unusual generosity and become a means of communicating God’s love in the world.

RESPOND:

Choose either Group Activity –or– Online Activity

Now that you understand more about the Eighth Commandment and what it means for how God’s people speak about themselves and others, explore how the surrounding culture speaks about others. Do you see many examples of speaking well of others, defending them, and always explaining their actions in the kindest possible way?

GROUP ACTIVITY

This activity is formatted for groups that meet in person together.

Find three examples of Eighth Commandment violations. You might find your examples:

- Online at entertainment or popular culture sites
- At the magazine rack of a store
- In the comments section of articles
- In social media forums

An Eighth Commandment violation may be:

- A critique that assumes the worst of a person's intentions
- Criticism of a person's hair, makeup, clothing, or other style choice
- An anecdote that might otherwise be known as gossip, because the content could be embarrassing or shameful to one or more people in the story
- A story that begins "don't tell anyone else, but..." or similar

Once you have your three examples, take a moment to correct them. How could the headline, conversation, or story be communicated differently so that it speaks well of and defends others' reputations, explaining their actions in the kindest possible way?

EXAMPLE

Before Correction

Headline from online entertainment and celebrity fashion news:

"Elizabeth Paschal is trying way too hard at the premiere of her new film Victorian in this over-embellished dress. The frenetic combination of frills, lace and floral is headache-inducing."

After Correction

"Elizabeth Paschal showed a high level of esteem for the premier of her new film by wearing a creative and unique dress. Some may take notes on her style for future fashion designs."

Share your findings with your group, both examples you found and the ways you might correct the issues you noticed. Once everyone has finished sharing, discuss:

- When it is appropriate to share negative information about another person?
- Is criticism of others always something to avoid? Are there times when it is reasonable to criticize another person's decisions or preferences? Give examples.
- Where are the temptations in your life to participate in violations of the Eighth Commandment? How will you discipline yourself to protect the reputation of yourself and others, even when it's difficult?

ONLINE ACTIVITY

This activity is formatted for groups that meet online.

Find three examples of Eighth Commandment violations. You might find your examples:

You might find your examples:

- Online at entertainment or popular culture sites
- At the magazine rack of a store
- In the comments section of articles
- In social media forums
-

You may look these up online or use the camera feature on your phone to photograph headlines you see while you are out, or to capture other examples you notice of Eight Commandment violations.

An Eighth Commandment violation may be:

- A critique that assumes the worst of a person's intentions
- Criticism of a person's hair, makeup, clothing, or other style choice
- An anecdote that might otherwise be known as gossip, because the content could be embarrassing or shameful to one or more people in the story
- A story that begins "don't tell anyone else, but..." or similar

Once you have your three examples, post them on our class [\[page\]](#). Then in the comments section beneath, offer a correction. How could the headline, conversation, or story be communicated differently so that it speaks well of and defends others reputations, explaining their actions in the kindest possible way? Share your ideas.

Example

Before Correction

Headline from online entertainment and celebrity fashion news:

"Elizabeth Paschal is trying way too hard at the premiere of her new film Victorian in this over-embellished dress. The frenetic combination of frills, lace and floral is headache-inducing."

After Correction

"Elizabeth Paschal showed a high level of esteem for the premier of her new film by wearing a creative and unique dress. Some may take notes on her style for future fashion designs."

ONLINE ACTIVITY

Then, below the post about your correction, post your thoughts on the following:

- Is criticism of others always something to avoid? Are there times when it is reasonable and permissible to criticize another person's decisions or preferences? Give an example.

Look at other people's posts. Do you have alternative suggestions for the headlines they've highlighted? There can be more than one helpful answer for this activity. Part of living faithfully into God's Eighth Commandment is gathering as a community to determine better and best practices of speaking well of and supporting one another.

RELATE AT HOME :

FAITH5™: a devotion to share at home with people in your family.



SHARE:

Share your day's highs and lows with your family.

READ:

[Peter] began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know this man you are talking about." At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept (Mark 14:71-71).

TALK:

How does this reading relate to your own and your family members' highs and lows?

PRAY:

Tell God about each other's highs and lows.

BLESS:

Give one another a physical sign of God's love and care.

RELATE AT CHURCH:

Connecting at church with people in your congregation.



Participant's Name: _____

Turn in this written sheet to **[Pastor/Leader]** the next time you meet for worship

Ask a member of your congregation's leadership team (some call this group a Church Council, Vestry, Session, or something else) to describe a time of conflict in the congregation. Record their reflections on this sheet.

MEMBERS OF THE 2017-2018 **[CHURCH NAME]** **[CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL]:**

[PRESIDENT/WARDEN/ELDER]:

[VICE PRESIDENT]:

[SECRETARY]:

[TREASURER]:

[Additional leaders named here]

Description of conflict:

What are ways the conflict was resolved?

Are there ways the conflict could have been resolved differently?

How do you feel the people at [CHURCH NAME] handle conflict and disagreements?