CONFIRMATION & DISCIPLESHIP · AGES 13–18

FREE SAMPLE



THE WAY.

Sample Pack: try a full session before you buy

Inside this sample

1 · Read Me First: everything in the full kit

2 · Director's Guide preview: the course, Track Picker, and Track Map

3 · Complete Session 1a Leader Guide, with Student Notebook, Family Page, and Self-Paced page

4 · Session 1a slide preview (the full kit includes all 24 PowerPoint decks)

Get the complete kit ngm-together-preview.vercel.app/youth

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NEXT GENERATION MINISTRY TOGETHER

CONFIRMATION & DISCIPLESHIP · AGES 13–18

THE WAY · Read Me First

Everything in this kit, and where to find it. Every document comes as a **PDF** (ready to print) and a **Word** file (ready to edit), side by side in the same folder.

START IN FOUR STEPS

1
Read the Director's Guide
Choose a track (12, 16, 24, or 32 weeks) and an edition.

2
Recruit Trusted Mentors
Use the Mentor Guide: one adult for every 2–3 students.

3
Send letters and covenants
Admin Kit folders 1–2: fill in the yellow [brackets].

4
Teach Session 1a
Print the Leader Guide for you and the Student Pages for each student.

WHAT'S IN EACH FOLDER

01
Start Here: Director's Guide and Mentor Guide — PDF + Word
01 Start Here - Director's Guide and Mentor Guide

Director's Guide: Track Picker, Track Map, a card for each track, UMC confirmation, and a color map for other traditions.
Mentor Guide: safety, four Mentor Lunch guides, and director forms.

02
Leader Guides: 24 sessions, sorted by unit — PDF + Word
02 Leader Guides - 24 Sessions, by Unit → Unit 01 … Unit 12

Each unit folder holds two sessions: **"a" = Core** (taught in every track) and **"b" = Deeper** (24- and 32-week tracks). Each guide has a 60-minute plan, opening games, video links, a word-for-word script, discussion, practice, and the Big Question.

03
Student Pages: print and hand out, sorted by unit — PDF + Word
03 Student Pages - Print and Hand Out, by Unit → Unit 01 … Unit 12

Four pages per session: the two-page Student Notebook, a Family Page to send home, and a Self-Paced page for anyone who misses class. (The same pages also appear at the end of each Leader Guide.)

04
Admin Kit: letters, covenants, forms, Confirmation Sunday — Word + PDF
04 Admin Kit - Letters, Covenants, Forms, Confirmation Sunday

- **1 Invitation Letters** · **2 Covenants** (12/16/24/32 weeks) · **3 Class Schedules**
- **4 Student Forms** (registration, worship report, service log) · **5 Director Tracker**
- **6 Faith Statement and Pastor Interview** · **7 Confirmation Sunday** (planner, certificate) · **8 Parent Information**

Edit the Word files: replace anything highlighted in yellow [like this] with your church's details.

05
Slides: 24 PowerPoint decks, sorted by unit — PowerPoint
05 Slides - 24 Sessions (PowerPoint), by Unit → Unit 01 … Unit 12

One deck per session, built to match every [SLIDE] cue in the Leader Guide script: title, Big Question, video link, teaching slides, Scripture (World English Bible), discussion, and Pray & Send. The full script is in each slide's speaker notes.

06
Experience Guide: E1–E8 and Student Workbook — PDF + Word
06 Experience Guide

Two-page leader guides for E1–E8 (planner, run of show, debrief, safety) and a student workbook page for each.

07
Leader Pack: Parent Updates and Game Cards — Word + PDF
07 Leader Pack

A ready-to-email parent update for every session, cut-apart game cards, and 24 Big Question cards.

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CONFIRMATION & DISCIPLESHIP · AGES 13–18

DIRECTOR'S GUIDE



DIRECTOR'S GUIDE · FOR PASTORS AND CONFIRMATION DIRECTORS

Tracks, Mentors & Editions

How to run THE WAY in 12, 16, 24, or 32 weeks, in a United Methodist church or another tradition

THE WAY.

A confirmation & discipleship journey for youth

Inside: the course in one picture · Track Picker · Track Map · four Track Cards · Trusted Mentors · the 8 experiences · United Methodist confirmation · a color map for other traditions · printable planning pages

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NEXT GENERATION MINISTRY TOGETHER

Director's Guide

THE WAY is one course you can run four ways (12, 16, 24, or 32 weeks), with Trusted Mentors in every track, in a United Methodist church or in another tradition. This guide shows you, in pictures first and words second, exactly what to teach and when.

THE ONE RULE BEHIND EVERYTHING

Every track teaches the same core faith and every United Methodist essential. Longer tracks add time to go deeper, to practice, and to live it. Every track includes Trusted Mentors.

START HERE IN THREE STEPS

1

Choose your track

Use the Track Picker (page 4) and the Track Map (page 5). Then open your Track Card for a week-by-week plan.

2

Recruit Trusted Mentors

One adult for every 2–3 students, meeting over a meal about every two months. Details are in the separate **Mentor Guide**.

3

Choose your edition

United Methodist confirmation (Part 2) or discipleship in another tradition (Part 3, with a color map of what to keep, adapt, or replace).

WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE

Part 1	**Tracks at a glance.** The course in one picture, why Core + Deeper, the Track Picker, the Track Map, and a one-page Track Card for 12, 16, 24, and 32 weeks.
Part 2	**Mentors, experiences, and requirements.** Trusted Mentors in every track, the 8 experience sessions, covenant numbers, class length, and special situations.
Part 3	**United Methodist confirmation.** Where every UMC essential is taught, baptism and membership details, and Confirmation Sunday.
Part 4	**Using THE WAY in another tradition.** A four-step plan, tradition-family cards, a color map for all 24 sessions, and replacement Big Questions.
Part 5	**Printable planning pages.** Track Planner, "How My Church Came to Be," "How My Church Works," and "Our Church's Answers."

Also in your kit: the **Mentor Guide** (for Trusted Mentors and the adult who coordinates them), 24 **Leader Guides** (one per session), and 24 **Student Pages** packs (Notebook, Family Page, Self-Paced page) ready to print.

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Part 1 · The Course in One Picture

12 units · 24 sessions

UNIT 1
Welcome to Confirmation
- **1a · CORE** Remember Your Baptism
- **1b · DEEPER** Disciples, Not Just Members

UNIT 2
The Bible
- **2a · CORE** What Is the Bible?
- **2b · DEEPER** How to Read the Bible

UNIT 3
The Big Story
- **3a · CORE** The Masterpiece and the First Promise
- **3b · DEEPER** Law, Sacrifice, and the Coming King

UNIT 4
Who Is God?
- **4a · CORE** God the Creator
- **4b · DEEPER** One God, Three Persons

UNIT 5
Jesus
- **5a · CORE** Who Is Jesus?
- **5b · DEEPER** The Cross and the Empty Tomb

UNIT 6
The Holy Spirit
- **6a · CORE** Who Is the Holy Spirit?
- **6b · DEEPER** Gifts and Fruit

UNIT 7
Grace
- **7a · CORE** Sin and the Grace That Goes Before
- **7b · DEEPER** Made Right and Made New

UNIT 8
Sacraments
- **8a · CORE** Baptism: God's Gift
- **8b · DEEPER** Holy Communion: The Open Table

UNIT 9
Prayer & Means of Grace
- **9a · CORE** What Is Prayer?
- **9b · DEEPER** Means of Grace and the Christian Year

UNIT 10
The Methodist Story
- **10a · CORE** John Wesley and a Warmed Heart
- **10b · DEEPER** Circuit Riders to a Worldwide Church

UNIT 11
The Connection
- **11a · CORE** How the UMC Is Connected
- **11b · DEEPER** General Conference, the Discipline, and My Vows

UNIT 12
Living It and Saying It
- **12a · CORE** Faith in Action
- **12b · DEEPER** My Faith Statement and Confirmation Day

Core session ("a"): taught in every track Deeper session ("b"): taught in the 24- and 32-week tracks

Why Core + Deeper?

Each unit is one big topic taught in two steps. The **Core** session gives the essential truth and every United Methodist essential. The **Deeper** session adds Scripture study, discussion, and practice on the same topic. Because the pairs stay together, a church can run a short class or a full year from the same 24 sessions, and no one has to rewrite anything.

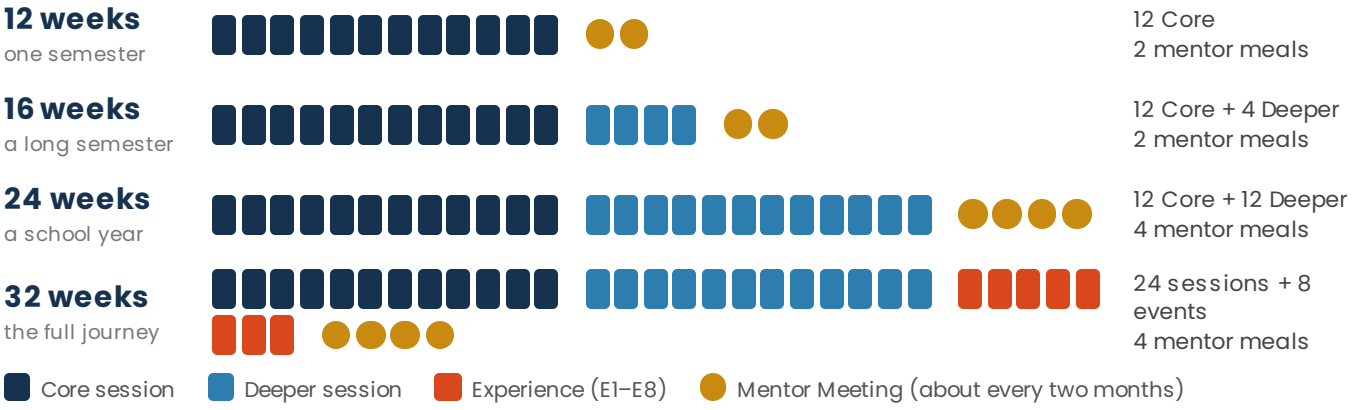
How to read session codes

7a means Unit 7, Core. **7b** means Unit 7, Deeper. **E4** is an experience session. **M2** is the second Mentor Meeting. File names follow the same pattern: *Session 07a Core · Sin and the Grace That Goes Before (Leader Guide)*.

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Four Tracks, One Course

same content, different depth



TRACK PICKER

Count the Sundays you can really meet before Confirmation Sunday (skip holidays and breaks).

▼

Fewer than 14
12 weeks
Short class, joint (cluster) class, late joiners, adults

14 to 19
16 weeks
A long semester; keeps four key Deeper sessions

20 to 26
24 weeks
A Sunday class through the school year

20+ and you can plan events
32 weeks
24 Sundays plus 8 events, most on other days

▼

Every track: recruit Trusted Mentors (one adult for every 2–3 students)

	12 WEEKS	16 WEEKS	24 WEEKS	32 WEEKS
Class sessions	12 Core	12 Core + 7b, 8b, 11b, 12b	All 24	All 24
Deeper sessions not taught	Folded in + sent home	8 folded in + sent home	none	none
Experiences	3 recommended	3 recommended	1–2 recommended	All 8
Mentor Meetings	2 (M1, M4)	2 (M1, M4)	4 (M1–M4)	4 (M1–M4)
Typical calendar	Jan–Apr or Sept–Dec	Jan–May or Sept–Jan	Mid-Sept to April	Late Sept to late April

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The Track Map

what happens in each track

UNIT	#	SESSION, EXPERIENCE, OR MEETING	12 WK	16 WK	24 WK	32 WK
1 · Welcome to Confirmation	1a	Remember Your Baptism	●	●	●	●
	1b	Disciples, Not Just Members	○	○	●	●
2 · The Bible	2a	What Is the Bible?	●	●	●	●
	2b	How to Read the Bible	○	○	●	●
3 · The Big Story	3a	The Masterpiece and the First Promise	●	●	●	●
	3b	Law, Sacrifice, and the Coming King	○	○	●	●
4 · Who Is God?	4a	God the Creator	●	●	●	●
	4b	One God, Three Persons ★	○	○	●	●
5 · Jesus	5a	Who Is Jesus?	●	●	●	●
	5b	The Cross and the Empty Tomb ★	○	○	●	●
6 · The Holy Spirit	6a	Who Is the Holy Spirit?	●	●	●	●
	6b	Gifts and Fruit	○	○	●	●
7 · Grace	7a	Sin and the Grace That Goes Before	●	●	●	●
	7b	Made Right and Made New ★	○	●	●	●
8 · Sacraments	8a	Baptism: God's Gift	●	●	●	●
	8b	Holy Communion: The Open Table ★	○	●	●	●
9 · Prayer & Means of Grace	9a	What Is Prayer?	●	●	●	●
	9b	Means of Grace and the Christian Year	○	○	●	●
10 · The Methodist Story	10a	John Wesley and a Warmed Heart	●	●	●	●
	10b	Circuit Riders to a Worldwide Church	○	○	●	●
11 · The Connection	11a	How the UMC Is Connected	●	●	●	●
	11b	General Conference, the Discipline, and My Vows ★	○	●	●	●
12 · Living It and Saying It	12a	Faith in Action	●	●	●	●
	12b	My Faith Statement and Confirmation Day ★	○	●	●	●
EXPERIENCES						
	E1	Launch Night with Parents	◌	◌	◌	■
	E2	Service Project #1 (inside the church)	–	–	–	■
	E3	The Christian Year / Ash Wednesday	–	–	–	■
	E4	Serve in Worship	–	–	–	■
	E5	Church Conference or DS Visit	–	–	–	■
	E6	Service Project #2 (outside the church)	◌	◌	◌	■
	E7	Retreat or Faith Statement Workshop	–	–	–	■
	E8	Interview and Rehearsal	◌	◌	◌	■
TRUSTED MENTOR MEETINGS (SEE THE MENTOR GUIDE)						
	M1	Get to Know You	●	●	●	●
	M2	Who God Is	–	–	●	●
	M3	Grace You Can Practice	–	–	●	●
	M4	Owning My Faith	●	●	●	●

● Core, taught in class ● Deeper, taught in class ○ Folded into the Core session + sent home (Track Notes show how)

■ Experience ◌ Recommended ● Mentor Meeting ★ Must be folded in: holds a belief or UMC essential

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CONFIRMATION & DISCIPLESHIP · AGES 13–18

UNITED METHODIST EDITION



SESSION 1A (CORE) · UNIT 1 · WELCOME TO CONFIRMATION

Remember Your Baptism

Romans 6:3–4 · Matthew 28:19–20

THE WAY.

A confirmation & discipleship journey for youth

Inside: 60-minute plan · word-for-word teaching script · video options · discussion · practice · Big Question · student notebook · family page · self-paced version

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Remember Your Baptism

Scripture: Romans 6:3–4 · Matthew 28:19–20 · Hebrews 12:1–2 · Big Question: What is confirmation?

THE BIG IDEA

In baptism, God said yes to you first, and a whole church promised to help you grow. Confirmation is your first public yes back. It is not a graduation. It is a beginning.

By the end of this session students will…

- Explain the difference between a **baptized member** and a **professing member** of The United Methodist Church.
- Name the three baptismal promises (**renounce, accept, confess**) and the promise the **congregation** made, in their own words.
- Describe confirmation as their **first public "yes"** and the start of a lifelong race run together, not a second baptism or a graduation.

60-MINUTE PLAN

SEGMENT	WHAT HAPPENS	MIN
Gather + Opening Game	Welcome, opening prayer, *Relay of Witnesses* (A) or *Before I Could Remember* (B)	10
Watch	*Chuck Knows Church: Confirmation (Part 1)* + 2 follow-up questions	6
Teach	Four points: already in · God moved first · the church made promises · not a graduation, a beginning	15
Discuss	Warm Up, Go Deeper, Make It Personal (groups of 3–5)	12
Practice	"Three Promises, Your Words" + remembering our baptism at the water	10
Pray & Send	Big Question, closing prayer, water reminder + "Find Your Baptism"	5
	Total	**58**

Supplies

- A clear glass bowl of water and a small towel
- Game A: a baton (paper towel tube), 2 chairs, question cards · Game B: index cards, a basket
- 3 index cards: Renounce · Accept · Confess
- Pens; whiteboard or large paper
- Student Notebook (2 pages) + Family Page
- Screen, video cued up; slides (optional)
- A United Methodist Hymnal, open to p. 33

Before Class

- Check baptism records (or ask parents) so you know who is baptized. Keep it private.
- Read Romans 6:1–11, Matthew 28:16–20, and Hebrews 12:1–3.
- Read Baptismal Covenant I (UMH p. 33) and find the three questions and the congregation's promise.
- Preview the video. Plan your 60-second story.
- Pray for each student by name.

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PLANNING THIS SESSION

Track Notes & Tradition Note

USING THIS SESSION IN THE 12-WEEK TRACK

In the 12-week track, Session 1b (*Disciples, Not Just Members*) is not taught in class, so 1a carries the whole unit. Fold in 1b like this:

- **In Teach, Point 4:** after Matthew 28:19–20, add: "Jesus did not call people to simply be part of the crowd. He called disciples. Confirmation is about saying yes to following Jesus, not just being in the crowd, but walking as his disciple."
- **Take-home:** assign the 1b reflection page and its Big Question ("What is a disciple?"), with Matthew 4:18–22.
- **The covenant:** if you have no separate launch night, walk through your class covenant in the last five minutes and send it home for student and parent signatures. Name the three strands of the journey: weekly classes, service inside and outside the church, and a mentor from the church family.

32-WEEK TRACK TIE-IN

This session pairs with **E1 Launch Night with Parents** (covenant review and signing, baptism dates, meeting mentors). A strong way to open the covenant: read the congregation's baptismal promise first, then say, "This confirmation program is our church keeping that promise to you." Ask families to bring baptism certificates or photos so students can finish the "My Baptism" worksheet with a parent. The same promises return at **E8 Interview and Rehearsal**, when students walk through the service in which they will answer them for themselves.

Tradition Note · for the Discipleship Edition

Baptist and many non-denominational churches baptize only people who can profess faith for themselves, usually by immersion, so there is no confirmation: believer's baptism *is* the public profession, and this course prepares students for baptism and membership. Lutherans (ELCA) and Presbyterians (PC(USA)) baptize infants and, like United Methodists, treat confirmation as an affirmation of baptism rather than a sacrament. Roman Catholics count Confirmation as one of seven sacraments, and in the Episcopal Church confirmation is a sacramental rite performed by a bishop. United Methodists recognize two sacraments (baptism and Holy Communion), so confirmation is a response to a sacrament, not a new one.

Leader Care Note

- **Not every student is baptized.** Discovering this can become a good teaching moment, but never put anyone on the spot ("Who here isn't baptized?"). Talk with those families privately and loop in your pastor. A youth baptized during this journey professes faith at that baptism.
- **Baptized somewhere else?** Baptism is received only once, so a student baptized in another Christian church is not baptized again. Tell your pastor so it can be recorded.
- **Family stories can be tender.** Some students are adopted, live between homes, or had a parent or sponsor who has died. Keep the worksheet details optional and offer help through the church office.

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Gather + Opening Game

10 min

WELCOME

SAY

"Welcome to confirmation! I'm really glad you're here. Some of you have been in this church since before you could walk. Some of you are pretty new. Some of you are here because a parent signed you up, and that's okay too. Wherever you're starting from, you belong in this room.

Here's the first thing I want you to know. This is not just a 'special event' or a class you get through. It's a journey of learning, serving, and growing in your walk with Christ. Confirmation isn't about having everything figured out. It's about discovering what you believe and making faith your own. You don't need all the answers to be here. You just need to be honest. Let's pray."

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, thank you for bringing us here today to begin our confirmation journey. Thank you that you knew each of our names before we could say yours. Guide us as we learn, ask questions, and grow in our faith. Help us to follow Jesus not just with our words but with our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.

OPENING GAME · CHOOSE ONE

OPTION A **Relay of Witnesses** (higher energy · 7 min)

Purpose: Get everyone moving, laughing, and learning names, and plant the picture of faith as a race we run *together* (Hebrews 12:1–2), which returns in Teach, Point 4.

Supplies: a "baton" for each team (paper towel tube or rolled paper), one chair per team at the far end of the room, a stack of question cards on each chair.

1. Make teams of 3–5. Teams line up at one end; their chair sits at the other.
2. On "Go," the first runner carries the baton to the chair, grabs the top card, and runs back.
3. The runner reads the card aloud, and **every** teammate answers it quickly (one sentence each). The runner answers too.
4. The runner hands off the baton. Before the next runner can go, they must say one teammate's name and answer: "Jordan's favorite snack is hot Cheetos."
5. Keep going until every card is answered. Teammates cheer the runner the whole way. That's the rule: no silent teams.
6. The first team to finish sits down and cheers the others home. The race isn't over until every team finishes.

Question cards (write one per card):

- What's your name, grade, and school?
- Best snack of all time?
- Something you're really good at?
- Who is someone who always cheers you on?
- Hardest thing you ever stuck with?
- A place you'd love to travel?

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- Your go-to song for a long run or drive?
- One question you'd love to ask God?

Small group (5 or fewer): one team races the clock; try to beat your time in round two. **Limited space:** "run" by walking heel-to-toe or passing the baton around a circle.

> **BRIDGE** "Nobody finished that race alone. You needed the handoff, and you needed people cheering. The Bible says faith is exactly like that: a race, not a sprint, and we're surrounded by a crowd cheering us on. Tonight we're going to find out that your race started a lot earlier than you think."

OPTION B **Before I Could Remember** (calmer · small groups · 7 min)

Purpose: A low-pressure guessing game that helps new students be known, and sets up the idea that some of the best gifts come to us before we can choose them, like baptism.

Supplies: index cards, pens, a basket or hat.

1. Each person, leaders too, writes on a card one thing they were **given before they could remember** (see ideas below). No names on the cards.
2. Fold the cards and drop them in the basket.
3. The leader draws a card and reads it aloud. The group guesses whose it is.
4. The owner reveals themselves and tells the 20-second story behind it.
5. After each reveal, ask one follow-up: "Do you still use it or care about it today?"

Ideas to prompt the cards:

- My name, or who I'm named after
- A baby blanket or stuffed animal
- A nickname my family still uses
- The team my family roots for
- A family recipe or holiday tradition
- Something passed down from a grandparent
- A story about the day I was born
- A language, accent, or saying from my family

Larger group (10+): play in two circles with a leader in each. **Tip:** go first to model a short, fun answer.

> **BRIDGE** "So many important things were given to us before we could choose them. At some point, each of us decides what to do with them. Tonight we're talking about one of the biggest gifts many of you received before you could remember: your baptism."

Watch

6 min

Best pick · *Chuck Knows Church: Episode 43 | Confirmation (Part 1)*

Chuck Knows Church (UMC Discipleship Ministries) · about 3–5 min · official, funny, and fast; explains why young people are confirmed in the church.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKaG10BzsXs

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ALTERNATES

- ***Chuck Knows Church: Episode 76 | Confirmation (Part 2)*** · Chuck Knows Church · about 3–5 min. Frames confirmation as the sealing of the covenant made in baptism, with Chuck's own story. Pairs well with Part 1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2-8nLPcDAs
- ***What United Methodists Believe: Baptism*** · United Methodist Communications · about 3–5 min. Official summary of baptism as a covenant for all ages. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuIt2bJ6ePw
- ***Chuck Knows Church: Episode 12 | Baptismal Font*** · Chuck Knows Church · about 3–5 min. A light, visual hook if you'll do the water moment at your church's font. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gagtjjIo-8Y

Watch for…

1. Who acts first in baptism: God or us?
2. What makes confirmation different from baptism?

After the video, ask

1. What's one thing from the video you didn't know before?
2. According to the video, why do young people get confirmed?

No screen? Read the Teaching Script section marked ★ instead. Running times are approximate; preview the video before class.

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Teach: Not a Graduation, a Beginning

15 min

Read it word for word, or put it in your own words once you know it. Spoken time is about 10 minutes, which leaves room for pauses and questions. ★ marks the essential paragraphs for classes without video.

SAY · [SLIDE 1: REMEMBER YOUR BAPTISM]

"Let me start with a question, and be honest. When you heard you were signing up for confirmation, what did you think it was?" (*Pause. Take two or three answers.*)

"A lot of people think confirmation is how you join the church. Like the church is a club, this class is the application, and at the end you get your membership card. Tonight I'm going to tell you something that might surprise you. If you were baptized, you're not joining. You're already in."

1. You're already in

★ **SAY · [SLIDE 2: BAPTIZED MEMBER → PROFESSING MEMBER]**

"Baptism is the door through which a person enters the church. In The United Methodist Church, everyone who is baptized is a member. A baby baptized last Sunday is a member. If you were baptized when you were little, you've been a member your whole life. We call that a **baptized member**.

So what changes at confirmation? You become a **professing member**. 'Profess' just means to say out loud what you believe. At the end of this journey, you'll stand in front of the congregation, and your name will be recorded as a professing member of this church. That's something to celebrate!"

"Think of it like this. Maybe a grandparent opened a savings account in your name when you were a baby. It has been yours the whole time. But one day you walk into the bank and sign your own name. The account didn't become yours that day. You just started owning it. Baptism put your name on it. Confirmation is you signing your own name.

And if you haven't been baptized yet, you're in exactly the right place. You can be baptized as part of this journey, and that day will be your yes. Nobody in this room is behind."

2. In baptism, God moved first

★ **SAY · [SLIDE 3: WHAT IS A SACRAMENT?]**

"So what actually happened at your baptism? Most of us don't remember it. We were babies, maybe crying, probably in a very uncomfortable outfit. But here's what the church believes: even though you don't remember it, God was doing something real.

Baptism is one of two **sacraments** in The United Methodist Church. The other is Holy Communion. A sacrament is an outward, visible sign of an inward, spiritual grace, and a means through which God gives it. You can see the water. You can feel it. God picked something ordinary to show us something huge. Here's one way to hold the two together: if baptism is the welcome party, Communion is the family dinner we keep coming back to. Here's how Paul describes baptism."

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[3] *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?* [4] *We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.*

ROMANS 6:3–4 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

★ "Paul says that in baptism you were joined to Jesus. His death and his resurrection became part of your story. Going under the water, or having it poured or sprinkled on you, pictures the old life ending. Coming up pictures being raised to 'newness of life.' And by the way, it doesn't matter how much water was used. God's grace is at work regardless of the amount of water!

Now notice who does the work: 'We were buried with him.' 'Christ was raised.' Baptism is not mostly about what we do. It's about what God does. That's why we baptize babies. We believe God's grace is at work in a child's life before they can understand it or choose it. We call that **prevenient grace**, God's love that comes before we know it or ask for it. In the very first Christian sermon, Peter said it this way."

[39] *For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are far off, even as many as the Lord our God will call to himself.*

ACTS 2:39 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"To you *and to your children*. God's promise reached you before you could spell your own name. So here's a better way to say what some people get wrong. It's not that 'someone else made the decision for you.' Baptism was God's promise to you, and the church's promise to raise you in the faith until you could confirm it yourself. Which is exactly what you're doing now."

Key Words

Sacrament
An outward, visible sign of an inward, spiritual grace, and a means through which God gives it. United Methodists have two: baptism and Holy Communion.

Covenant
A promise-relationship with two sides. In baptism, God makes promises to us, and we (and the church) make promises back.

Prevenient grace
God's love that "comes before," already at work in us before we know it or ask for it.

Baptized member
Anyone who has been baptized. You are part of the church from your baptism on.

Professing member
A baptized person who has publicly made the baptism promises for themselves, usually at confirmation.

Confirmation
Your first public "yes" to the grace God gave you in baptism. Not a sacrament, not a second baptism, not a graduation.

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3. The church made promises, and this class is the church keeping them

★ **SAY · [SLIDE 4: A COVENANT HAS TWO SIDES]**

"Baptism is a **covenant**, a promise-relationship with two sides. God makes promises to us, and we make promises back. In a United Methodist baptism, the pastor asks three big questions. You can find the whole service in the United Methodist Hymnal, starting on page 33. It's called Baptismal Covenant I. Here they are in everyday words."

[SLIDE 5: RENOUNCE · ACCEPT · CONFESS]

RENOUNCE Will you say no to evil and the power it has in the world, and turn away from your own sin?

ACCEPT Will you accept the freedom and power God gives you to stand up against evil, injustice, and oppression, whatever form they take?

CONFESS Will you declare that Jesus Christ is your Savior, trust his grace completely, and serve him as your Lord, together with his church, open to people of every age, nation, and race?

"If you were baptized as a baby, your parents or sponsors answered for you, and promised to raise you in the faith. Then something else happened that most people forget. The whole congregation stood up and made a promise too. Every person in the room promised to surround you with love, to pray for you, and to help you grow in faith.

So here's what I want you to hear tonight. This confirmation class is not something the church is asking you to do for us. It's the church keeping its promise to you. Every Sunday you show up, every adult who teaches or mentors you, every service project we do together: that's a congregation keeping its word."

YOUR STORY · 60 SECONDS *Tell a short, true story about your own baptism or confirmation: what you remember, or what someone told you about it, and one person who kept the church's promise to you. If you don't remember your baptism either, say so. That makes the point beautifully.*

4. Not a graduation, a beginning

★ **SAY · [SLIDE 6: YOUR FIRST PUBLIC YES]**

"So what is confirmation? It's the first time you stand in front of the church and answer those promises *for yourself*. It's your first public 'yes' to what God already said to you in baptism.

Notice what it is *not*. It isn't a second baptism. You're baptized only once, because God keeps God's promises. God doesn't need a do-over. And please hear this: **confirmation is not a graduation.** It's not the finish line. Confirmation is not an ending. It is a beginning. Look at what Jesus told his disciples."

[19] *"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the*
Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] *teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you.*
Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." *Amen.*

MATTHEW 28:19–20 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

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"Jesus gives two jobs: **baptizing** and **teaching**. For most of you, the baptizing happened a long time ago. The teaching is happening now. And the goal isn't members. It's *disciples*. Jesus didn't call people to be part of the crowd. He called people to follow him."

★ **SAY · [SLIDE 7: THE RACE]**

"The Bible has a picture for this. Remember our opening game?"

[1] *Therefore let's also, seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let's run with perseverance the race that is set before us,* [2] *looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith…*

HEBREWS 12:1–2 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

★ "Faith is like a race. Not a sprint. Not a quick emotional moment. It's a race that takes perseverance, and you run it over a lifetime. There will be mountaintop days, and there will be valleys. Some days faith will feel strong and clear, and some days God will feel far away.

That's why confirmation isn't a decision you make on one good day with good feelings. It's a yes that says, **'Even so. Even still. I choose this journey.'** And here's the best part: God's faithfulness doesn't depend on yours. The baptismal covenant means God stays faithful to his promise, even when we're not always faithful to ours.

And you don't run alone. That 'cloud of witnesses'? Your parents, your mentors, your pastors, this church family: we're yours. We run together, and we keep pointing each other back to Jesus."

[SLIDE 8: WHAT HAPPENS ON CONFIRMATION DAY]

"On Confirmation Sunday, you'll answer those baptism questions yourself. Hands will be laid on you in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to keep working in you. And you'll promise to support your church with your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness. Between now and then, you'll ask questions, some of them hard, and that's good. At the end, you'll decide whether you're ready to say yes. It's your decision, and we'll take it seriously."

★ **SAY · [SLIDE 9: BIG QUESTION]**

"Every session has one Big Question. By the end, these answers become the backbone of your own faith statement. Here's the first. **What is confirmation?** Confirmation is **saying yes, for myself, to God's promises in my baptism.**

When people touch the water to remember their baptism, the pastor often says something simple: 'Remember your baptism and be thankful.' You might not remember the day. But you can remember that it happened, and that God hasn't stopped keeping that promise since."

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Analogy Bank

pick 1 per point

Choose the picture that fits your group. Every analogy limps somewhere, so name the limit out loud when students might take it too far. ◆ = FROM THE AUTHOR'S OWN CLASSES

Point 1 · You're already in

A **The savings account in your name.** Opened for you as a baby; one day you sign it yourself.

Use it when: students need "already yours, now you own it."

Where it breaks down: grace isn't a balance you spend down or earn interest on. Baptism starts a relationship, not an account.

B ◆ **The door.** Baptism is the door through which we enter the church.

Use it when: you want the simplest picture of "baptized member."

Where it breaks down: you don't walk through a door and forget it; baptism keeps shaping your whole life. And God opened this door, not you.

C **Your family name.** You had it from day one; someday you sign it on something that matters.

Use it when: family is a safe topic for your group.

Where it breaks down: you can't un-choose a last name, but you truly can say "yes" or "not yet" in confirmation. Be gentle with adopted or blended families.

Point 2 · In baptism, God moved first

A ◆ **Welcome party and family dinner.** "If baptism is the welcome party, Communion is the family dinner we keep coming back to."

Use it when: you want both sacraments in one sentence.

Where it breaks down: a party is over by evening, and it only celebrates what already happened. In baptism God is actually acting, and that grace keeps working.

B **Fed before you could say thank you.** Parents feed, hold, and name a newborn long before the baby knows who they are.

Use it when: explaining prevenient grace and infant baptism.

Where it breaks down: human parents can fail or leave; God's love doesn't. Handle with care for students with hard family stories.

C **The phone set up before you got it.** Someone charged it and added your number and contacts before it was ever in your hands.

Use it when: you need a quick, funny, tech picture.

Where it breaks down: a phone is a thing; grace is God himself reaching toward you. And you can't "factory reset" a baptism.

Point 3 · The church made promises, and keeps them

A ◆ **This class is the church keeping its word.** At your baptism the congregation promised to surround you with love and help you grow. Every class and mentor is that promise kept.

Use it when: always. This is the heart of the point.

Where it breaks down: churches are human and sometimes fall short. Our keeping is imperfect; God's keeping is not.

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B **The team that signed you.** When a club signs a young player, coaches promise to train them. Practice is the team keeping its promise.

Use it when: your group loves sports.

Where it breaks down: teams cut players who don't perform. The church doesn't cut you, and baptism isn't earned by talent.

C **Wedding vows.** Two sides, promises that hold "for better, for worse."

Use it when: explaining what a covenant is.

Where it breaks down: in baptism the partners aren't equal: God moves first and stays faithful even when we don't. That's why a "wedding ring" picture of baptism as mainly *our* pledge falls short.

Point 4 · Not a graduation, a beginning

A ◆ **The race and the cloud of witnesses.** Faith is a lifelong race, not a sprint, run with a crowd cheering you on (Hebrews 12:1–2).

Use it when: you played the relay game, or want the big closing image.

Where it breaks down: in a race there are winners and losers, and you earn your place. Here no one is competing, and grace isn't a prize.

B ◆ **"Even so. Even still."** Sticking with your team through a losing season, not just the championship year.

Use it when: students worry they'll "fail" after confirmation.

Where it breaks down: it can sound like it all depends on your grip. In the end God holds on to us more than we hold on to God.

C **Learner's permit to driver's license.** You've ridden in the car your whole life; now you take the wheel.

Use it when: you want "now it's your turn" for older teens.

Where it breaks down: a license is earned by passing a test and then you drive alone. Confirmation isn't a test you pass, and you never drive alone.

HANDLE WITH CARE *Some popular pictures teach a different view of baptism. Avoid "baptism is an outward sign of an inward change" or "baptism is my public declaration of my decision" (true of believer's baptism in other churches, but for United Methodists baptism is first God's act). Also avoid "putting on a team jersey" as the main image, and "someone else made the decision for you." Instead: God's promise, the church's promise, and now your yes.*

Discuss

12 min

Groups of 3–5, with one adult (or a mentor) in each group if possible. Pick the questions that fit your group; you won't need all seven.

WARM UP

1. What do you think confirmation means, in your own words?
   Follow-up: What did you think it was before tonight, and where did that idea come from?
2. Do you know anything about the day you were baptized: a photo, a story, who was there?
   Follow-up: If not, who could you ask this week?

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GO DEEPER

3. Why would God make promises to a baby who can't understand them?
   Follow-up: What does that say about how God's love works?
4. Faith is first a gift, given through your family and church. Why does it still matter to make it your own instead of just something your family believes?
   Follow-up: What would "owning it" look like for you?
5. Which of the three promises (renounce, accept, confess) seems hardest to keep? Why?
   Follow-up: Where do you see something that someone should stand up to?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

6. Baptism says God has claimed you and loves you. What's one label friends, school, or social media put on you that you'd trade for "claimed and loved"?
   Follow-up: What would change if you believed that this week?
7. If you could ask God one question about faith, what would it be?
   Follow-up: Write it on your notebook page. It becomes your first "Big Faith Question."

LEADER NOTE *Silence is okay, especially on the first night. Count to seven in your head before rephrasing. If no one answers, answer it yourself in one or two honest sentences, then ask again. Welcome doubts and hard questions: "That's a great question. Let's keep it on the list."*

Practice: Three Promises, Your Words

10 min

Purpose: Students put the baptismal promises into their own words, so they stop sounding like church language and start sounding like real choices. Then everyone remembers their baptism at the water, a simple, physical moment they won't forget.

STEPS

1. **Before class:** write one promise on each of three index cards, using the everyday wording from Teach, Point 3. Set the bowl of water on a small table in the center.
2. Split into three groups (or pairs). Give each group one card. **3 minutes:** rewrite the promise in one sentence you'd actually say to a friend, plus one example of keeping it this week.
3. Each group reads its version aloud. Write all three on the board under Renounce · Accept · Confess. Add a fourth heading, **The Church**, and ask: "What did the congregation promise you?" Write their answer.
4. **At the water:** invite students, one at a time, to touch the water (dip a finger, or touch their forehead). Say each name and the line below. Anyone may simply watch.
5. Close by reading the student-written promises together, out loud.

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SCRIPT

SAY (GROUPS)

"Every group gets one of the three baptism promises. Your job: say it the way a real person would say it. One sentence. Then give one example of what keeping it could look like this week. Three minutes."

SAY (AT THE WATER)

"This water isn't a new baptism. You only get baptized once, because God keeps his promises. This is a reminder. If you want to, come touch the water. I'll say your name and a short blessing."

For each student: **"[Name], remember your baptism and be thankful."** *(Student may answer, "Amen.")*
For a student who isn't baptized: **"[Name], God is already calling you. Be thankful."**

LEADER NOTE *This is an informal act of remembering, not a sacrament, so a volunteer may lead it. If your pastor prefers to lead it, invite them for the last five minutes. Keep the second blessing quiet and natural; don't announce who is or isn't baptized.*

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (3–5):** each student rewrites all three promises on their notebook page, then everyone shares a favorite.
- **Online:** everyone brings a glass or bowl of water to the call. Read the promises, then say each name and the blessing while students touch their own water.
- **At the font:** if your sanctuary is free, do the water moment at the church's baptismal font.

DEBRIEF

SAY

"Look at the board. Those are the promises someone once made for you, and the promise this church made to you, in your own words. You don't have to say yes tonight. But by the end of this journey, you'll get to. So what is confirmation? **Saying yes, for myself, to God's promises in my baptism.**"

Optional game alternative · Promise Sort

Write 12–15 short phrases on slips ("say no to evil," "stand up for someone," "trust Jesus," "pray for this kid," "serve with the church"…). Teams race to sort them into Renounce, Accept, Confess, and The Church piles. The winners explain one pile in their own words; then do the water moment.

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Pray & Send

5 min

BIG QUESTION (CALL AND RESPONSE)

LEADER	**What is confirmation?**
STUDENTS	**Saying yes, for myself, to God's promises in my baptism.**
LEADER	**Is it a graduation?**
STUDENTS	**No. It's a beginning.**

Say it twice. The second time, have students say it without looking.

CLOSING PRAYER

Faithful God,

Before we could walk or talk or even know your name, you knew ours. Thank you for the water, for your promises, and for the people who made promises to us. Thank you for every parent, sponsor, teacher, and church member who has kept them by loving us and bringing us here.

As we begin this journey, give us honest questions and open hearts. Help us learn what it means to turn from evil, to stand up for what is right, and to trust Jesus. When faith feels strong, and when you feel far away, keep us running. And when the day comes, give us courage to say for ourselves: even so, even still, we choose this journey.

Just as we received Christ Jesus, help us walk in him, rooted and built up in him. In Jesus' name, amen.

TAKE-HOME CHALLENGE · REMEMBER YOUR BAPTISM

1. The water reminder. This week, whenever you wash your hands or take a shower, look at the water and let it remind you of your baptism. Say, "I belong to God."
2. Find your baptism. Ask a parent, grandparent, or sponsor to tell you the story of your baptism, and fill in the "My Baptism" worksheet. Bring a photo or certificate next week if you have one (optional). Not baptized yet? Write one question you have about baptism.

SAY (BENEDICTION)

"Go in peace, and run the race of faith together. Keep your eyes on Jesus. And remember: you do not run alone. Next time we're asking what the difference is between being a church member and being a disciple of Jesus. See you then."

Next session: 1b · *Disciples, Not Just Members* (Matthew 4:18–22). In the 12-week track: 2a · *What Is the Bible?*

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Next Session Follow-Up: Open by asking, “Who noticed the water this week?” and “Who found out something about their baptism?” Invite two or three students to share a date, a church, or a story. Celebrate every answer, even “My mom couldn't remember.” Then review the Big Question: “What is confirmation?”

Go Deeper · The Theology Behind This Session (for pastors and leaders)

The United Methodist understanding of baptism is set out in *By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism*, adopted by the 1996 General Conference. It describes baptism as one of two sacraments, the “sign-acts” through which God's grace is made visible and effective. United Methodists baptize both infants and believers. Infant baptism rests on prevenient grace: God prepares the way of faith before we ask for or even know our need of help. Baptism is therefore first God's act of claiming and incorporating a person into Christ's body, not chiefly a human decision made by the candidate or on the candidate's behalf. Parents, sponsors, and the congregation make *vows*; God makes the *promise*. Water may be applied by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.

Because baptism is God's act and God is faithful to the covenant, it is received only once. People who want to mark a later turning point do not seek rebaptism; they reaffirm the baptismal covenant (for example, Baptismal Covenant IV in the Hymnal).

Every baptized person is a member of the church. *By Water and the Spirit* calls confirmation, for those baptized as infants, “the first public affirmation of the grace of God in one's baptism.” It includes a profession of faith and the laying on of hands. Confirmed youth become professing members. A youth baptized during this course professes faith at the baptism itself and needs no separate confirmation. Confirmation is not a sacrament; it is a response to one, and a renewal of the Spirit's work, not a finish line.

The service is Baptismal Covenant I, beginning on p. 33 of *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989). Its questions of renunciation, acceptance, and confession, the promises of parents or sponsors, and the congregation's promise to nurture the candidate are the covenant this session paraphrases. At reception into a local congregation, confirmands also make the membership vows of ¶217 of the *Book of Discipline*: to be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and to support its ministries by their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness (taught in Unit 11).

Liturgical texts are paraphrased here, not reproduced. Consult the Hymnal for the authorized wording.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

BIG QUESTION

What is confirmation? Saying _____, for _____, to God's _____ in my baptism.

1 · I'M ALREADY IN

Baptism is the _____ through which we enter the church. Everyone baptized is a _____ member. At confirmation I become a _____ member. "Profess" means to _____.

2 · GOD MOVED FIRST · ROMANS 6:3–4

A sacrament is an outward, visible _____ of an inward, spiritual _____. United Methodists have two: _____ and _____. Baptism means we "walk in _____ of life." God's love that comes before I know or ask is _____ grace.

3 · THE CHURCH MADE PROMISES · BAPTISMAL COVENANT I

PROMISE	WHAT IT MEANS, IN MY WORDS
R _____	
A _____	
C _____	

The congregation promised me its care, its _____, and its _____. This class is the church _____ its promise.

4 · NOT A GRADUATION · MATTHEW 28:19–20 · HEBREWS 12:1–2

Confirmation is not an _____. It is a _____. Faith is a _____, not a sprint, and I'm surrounded by a cloud of _____. "Even so. Even still. I _____."

KEY WORDS · MATCH THEM

___	Sacrament	A. A promise-relationship with two sides
___	Covenant	B. God's love that comes before I know or ask
___	Prevenient grace	C. An outward, visible sign of an inward, spiritual grace
___	Professing member	D. My first public "yes" to God's grace in my baptism
___	Confirmation	E. Someone who has made the baptism promises for themselves

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My Baptism

REFLECT

My Big Faith Question (one question I'd love to ask God):

Someone in my "cloud of witnesses" who has kept the promise to support me in faith:

FAITH STATEMENT BUILDING BLOCK #1

God made promises to me before I could answer (or, God is calling me toward baptism now). Today, what I want to say back to God is…

Save this. It becomes part of your faith statement at the end of confirmation.

FIND YOUR BAPTISM

Ask a parent, grandparent, or sponsor. Fill in what you can. It's okay to leave blanks.

Date I was baptized	
Church and city	
Pastor who baptized me	
Parents / sponsors / godparents	
Who else was there	
How the water was used	☐ sprinkled ☐ poured ☐ immersed ☐ not sure
Promises made	☐ Renounce ☐ Accept ☐ Confess ☐ Parents/sponsors ☐ Congregation
A story from that day	
How I found out	☐ asked family ☐ certificate ☐ photos ☐ church office records

Water reminder: each time I wash my hands this week, I'll remember: I belong to God. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Not baptized yet? My question about baptism:

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Dear family, your student has started confirmation. Thank you! This is not just a class; it's a journey of learning, serving, and growing in faith. This page tells you what we talked about and gives you one easy way to keep the conversation going.

WHAT WE LEARNED

- **You're already in.** In The United Methodist Church, everyone who is baptized is a member. Confirmation makes your student a *professing* member.
- **God moved first.** Baptism is a sacrament, a sign of God's grace that reaches us before we can understand it (Romans 6:3–4; Acts 2:39).
- **The church made promises.** At baptism, parents or sponsors made promises, and the whole congregation promised its care, challenge, and support. This class is our church keeping that promise.
- **Not a graduation, a beginning.** Faith is a lifelong race, run together (Hebrews 12:1–2). And you, family, are part of your student's "cloud of witnesses."

THIS WEEK'S BIG QUESTION

What is confirmation? Saying yes, for myself, to God's promises in my baptism.

Dinner-table question

"Tell me the story of my baptism. What do you remember about that day, and why did you want me baptized?"

Not baptized? Try: "What would it mean to you if I chose to be baptized?"

One way to help at home

Help fill in the "Find Your Baptism" worksheet: dig out the certificate, photos, or church name. Then join the water reminder: when anyone at home washes hands this week, say, "Remember your baptism."

A short family prayer

God, thank you for loving us before we could love you back. Thank you for the promises made at our baptisms and for everyone who has helped us keep them. Walk with us through confirmation. Help us run this race together, with our eyes on Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.

Questions about confirmation? Contact: _____

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Self-Paced Version

Missed this session, or taking the class online? Work through this checklist, then turn in your answers. Check each box as you go.

☐ **Read the Big Idea.** 1 min
In baptism, God said yes to you first, and a whole church promised to help you grow. Confirmation is your first public yes back. It is not a graduation. It is a beginning.

☐ **Watch the video.** 5 min
Chuck Knows Church: Episode 43 | Confirmation (Part 1)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKaG10BzsXs

☐ **Read the Scripture.** 3 min
Romans 6:3–4, Matthew 28:19–20, and Hebrews 12:1–2.

☐ **Learn the lesson.** 7 min
Read the teaching paragraphs marked ★ (ask your leader for them), or fill in Notebook page 1 using the Key Words and the Big Question.

☐ **Answer these three questions** (2–3 sentences each). 6 min

1. What's the difference between a baptized member and a professing member?
2. What promise did the congregation make at your baptism, and how is this class part of keeping it?
3. Why is confirmation "not a graduation, but a beginning"?

☐ **Start "Find Your Baptism"** on Notebook page 2, and write your Faith Statement Building Block #1.

☐ **Submit** your answers to your leader by _____ (photo, email, or paper).

☐ **Pray.** 2 min
Touch some water (a sink or a glass is fine) and pray: "God, thank you for your promises to me. Help me learn to say yes to you for myself. Amen."

☐ **Memorize the Big Question.** 1 min
What is confirmation? Saying yes, for myself, to God's promises in my baptism.

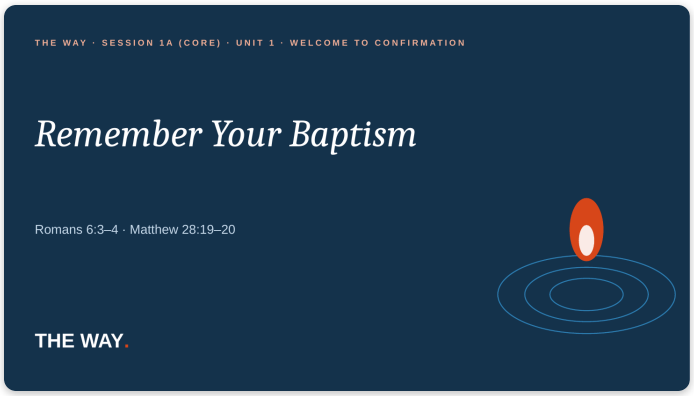
For leaders · Received on _____ Counts toward attendance ☐ Initials _____

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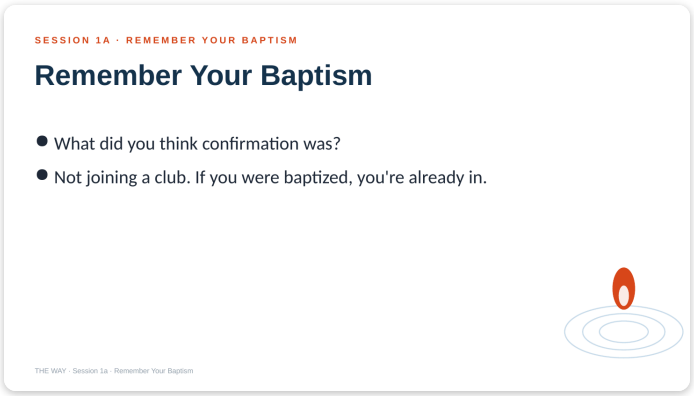
SLIDE PREVIEW · SESSION 1A

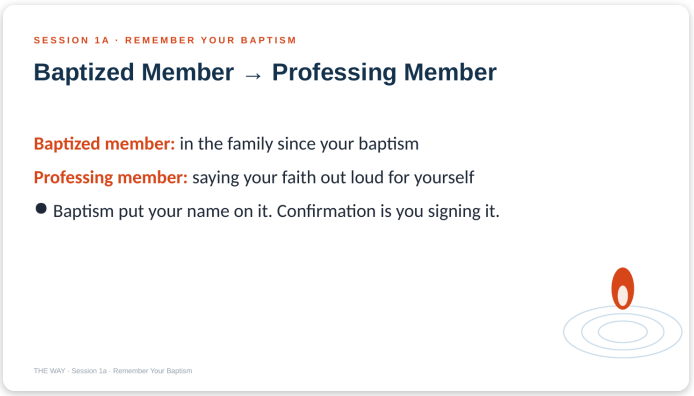
Slides that follow the script

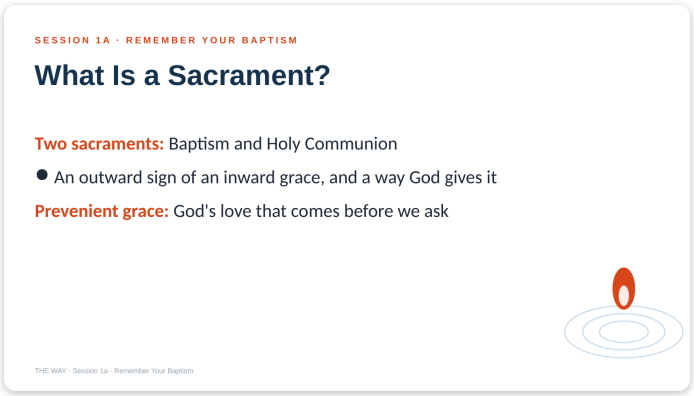
Every [SLIDE] cue in the Leader Guide has a matching slide, and the full script sits in the speaker notes. Session 1a has 18 slides; here are eight of them.

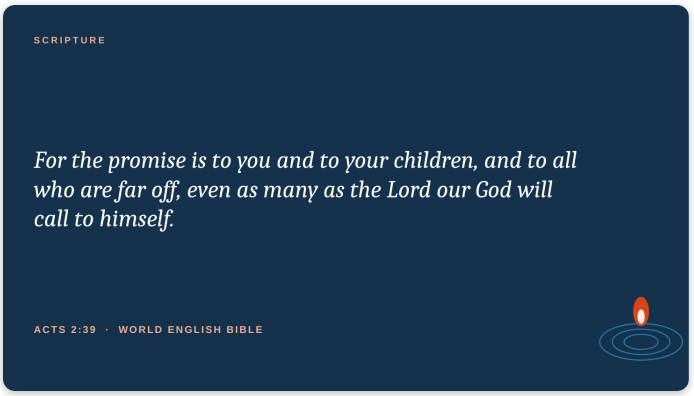


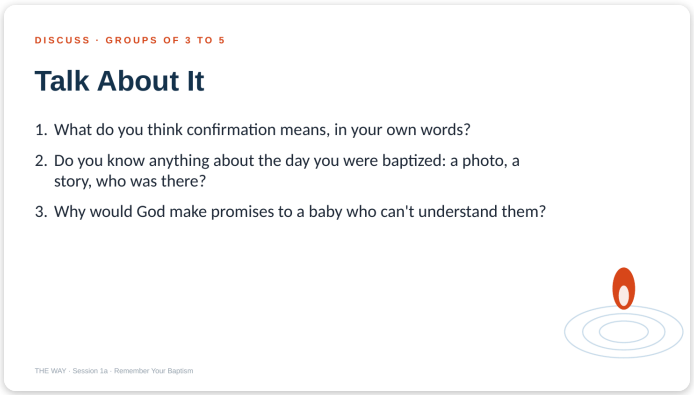














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