



### Confirmation Project

- ◎ Five Denominations:
  - African Methodist Episcopal
  - United Methodist Church
  - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
  - Presbyterian Church (USA)
  - Episcopal Church
- ◎ What is the state of confirmation
- ◎ How does it contribute to youth discipleship?

### What did they find?

Vibrant Confirmation:

- ◎ Common Purpose/Understanding
- ◎ Elements
- ◎ Factors
- ◎ Focus Areas

### Understanding of Confirmation

- ◎ Goal:
  - Maturing in Faith
    - A faith that connects knowledge, belief, and action into a confirmand's identity.

### Understanding of Confirmation

- ◎ Process:
  - Starts with some familiarity with the Christian story, practices and theology
  - Maturation happens as young people engaged in **learning activities within a community of faith**
  - Concluded with making a **personal commitment while participating in a public rite**

### Understanding of Confirmation

- ◎ Tasks:
  - Appropriate time to **ask questions** about faith.
  - **Strengthen** personal faith.
  - **Learn** more about God and faith.
  - **Develop a personal view** of faith.

## Understanding of Confirmation

### Definition:

Confirmation provides an important opportunity for young people to encounter the **gospel anew** in ways that

- strengthen their **understanding of the faith**,
- deepen their **experience of the Christian community**, and
- equip them to discern their calling to **join in God's mission to the world**.

As congregations participate in confirmation ministry they bear witness to the redemptive love of God and the covenant of grace into which all Christians are baptized.

## Understanding of Confirmation

### ● ELCA Statement:

“Confirmation ministry is a **pastoral and educational ministry** of the church that helps the baptized through Word and Sacrament **to identify more deeply with the Christian community and participate more fully in its mission.**”

*The Confirmation Ministry Task Force Report – adopted by the third biennial Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA on September 1, 1993.*



## Five Elements of Vibrant Confirmation

- Design
- Leadership
- Ecology
- Curriculum
- Relationships

## Custom-Designed

- One size does NOT fit all
- Must listen to context
- Adaptive

## Leadership

- Sets the tone: vision and energy
- Includes a champion and a team
- First priority:
  - Heart for discipleship and young people
- Secondary (but important):
  - Particular gifts and skills

## Ecology

- Confirmation is part of a larger whole

“Congregations with vibrant confirmation programs have, or are developing, **cultures of discipleship for all ages.**”

## Curriculum

- ⊙ Weaves together:
  - Scripture
  - Christian tradition
  - Everyday life issues
- ⊙ Content grounds and centers the learning

## Relationships

- ⊙ Web of relationships in which the rest of confirmation rests
- ⊙ Invisible yet powerful force in confirmation
- ⊙ Mentors: clear predictor of faith growth
- ⊙ Confirmation is “more than” learning about faith – it is about being integrated into a faith community.

“If the desired outcome is to discover a Christian way of life – engaged with a community of faith and in their everyday life – then cultivating significant relationships is key for vibrant confirmation.”

## Five Factors for Vibrant Faith Formation

- ⊙ Five factors that had clear effects on the confirmation students’ overall faith in terms of : **believing, behaving, and belonging**
  - **Faith in the Home** – far and away the strongest factor
  - Youth Program/Youth Group attendance
  - Vacation Bible School attendance
  - Sunday worship attendance
  - Camp attendance

## Five Focus Areas for Vibrant Confirmation/Faith Formation

- ⊙ Relevance Matters
- ⊙ Leadership Matters
- ⊙ Congregational Culture of Discipleship Matters
- ⊙ Camp Matters
- ⊙ Relationships Matter

## Reflections

- ⊙ What did you hear?
- ⊙ What did you hear for your congregation?
- ⊙ How do these understandings guide us into the future?
- ⊙ What opportunities does it provide?

## Resources

- ⊙ [www.nemnsynod.org/Confirmation](http://www.nemnsynod.org/Confirmation)
- ⊙ [www.theconfirmationproject.com](http://www.theconfirmationproject.com)
- ⊙ Word and World:
  - [http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/issues.aspx?issue\\_id=151](http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/issues.aspx?issue_id=151)