TOP 5 KEYS

TO A SUCCESSFUL CONFIRMATION

1. Know your cultural context. There is no such thing as a one size fits all confirmation plan. Each church, city and neighborhood is unique.

• How does the structure, content, and teaching methods show an awareness of your cultural context?

2. Confirmation is a bridge, not graduation. It is an opportunity to connect young people with their church in ways that will nurture their ongoing spiritual growth.

• What opportunities are there for meaningful involvement?

• How will you help confirmands discover what they have to offer?

• How will you help confirmands find place and belonging in your congregation to become part of something bigger?

• How will you help your church and confirmands learn to be interdependent?

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3. Encourage questions. Creating an open, safe and healthy environment for honest questions will be an important priority.

• Do confirmands feel that your physical and relational space is safe to ask questions? How do you know?

• Do leaders honor and respond to questions positively?

• Is the curriculum attentive to or guided by confirmand questions?

 -Does the pedagogy and structure lend itself to discovery learning?

4. Strong Leadership and Administration. Pastors and their support of the confirmation program is critical to its success and effectiveness. Additionally, the coordination of parental involvement and goal setting by church leadership sets the tone for what to expect.

• Are parents involved? To what degree?

• How can we engage parents more? Parental commitment? Parent class? Do parents help teach?

• Set Goals: "What do we want them to KNOW, to UNDERSTAND, and to DO as a result of confirmation?"

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5. High expectations. Your approach to confirmation as the teacher/leader will help to foster each of these essential components; your approach to ministry will lay a foundation—good or bad.

• What will be expected of the confirmands: level of engagement, attendance?

• What is expected of teachers?

• What is expected of parents?

 -Each family should consider the needs of their son or daughter to determine if they are ready for confirmation. Readiness is about the heart and head but also about priorities and schedule. Each family will need to consider how they will re-prioritize sports and other priorities in order for their daughter or son to participate in the confirmation process. By incorporating parents prior to the beginning of confirmation with an information session where you explain the process, distribute and walk through with companion resources is vital.

Building these relationships during this time will be key to long term relationships in youth ministry. By impacting their child, they will be more likely to say "yes" to requests in the future. This will require a lot of your time. While you may be tempted to pass off this role to someone else, I encourage you to cultivate this one for yourself as it will "pay dividends"—so to speak.

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• What is expected of mentors? Being a confirmation mentor will require many of the same qualities as you, the teacher/leader. It shall require understanding of the importance confirmation, a passion for engagement, openness to share and listen, and an ability to relate to young people.

• What is expected of the Pastor(s)? Involve the Sr. Pastor as often as possible. Look for ways to include the Sr. Pastor and any other clergy as you deed appropriate. The greater the number of opportunities for him or her to engage the group, the better the connection with the confirmands. It is also great for the confirmands to know that they pastor is accessible. Offer for them opportunities to lead discussions, especially theology and the sacraments, and to share his or her call story and the joys of ministry.

• What is expected of the rest of the youth ministry? Older teens who have been through confirmation can be utilized as junior mentors.
 -How can your youth ministry support and encourage the confirmands during the process?

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