

## Mentors for Youth Confirmation

One of the most important parts of the confirmation process is the Confirmand's relationship with a sponsor, whom we refer to as their Mentor during this process. We encourage Confirmands to think of an adult member of St. George's (someone other than family members, clergy, or youth staff) whom he or she thinks would do a good job of listening to them and talking with them about life and the Christian faith. Parents may suggest names if the youth asks for their help in choosing a Mentor, but the final decision belongs to the Confirmand. If you're new to St. George's and/or unsure of who to ask, please contact the youth staff for suggestions. Please choose a Mentor by the end of November. **Parents, please share the following information and dates with your potential Mentor about their role before they commit. Once they have committed, please fill out the Mentor Registration Form at our website:** <https://www.stgeorgesnashville.org/community/youth>

Mentors are asked to attend the following events; if you are unable to attend an event, please let Marshall Clark know at [marshall.clark@stgeorgesnashville.org](mailto:marshall.clark@stgeorgesnashville.org) and ask one of your confirmand's parents to attend in your place:

1. Attend the **Blessing of the Confirmands** on Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at the 8:45 service. Mentors will come forward with the Confirmands during announcements for a prayer and attend a Mentor Orientation at 11:15am in Johnson Hall.

2. Have **two 30-45 minute one-on-one conversations** with your Confirmand between February and Confirmation Sunday. You may schedule these conversations at whatever time and place works for both of you. The two conversations should occur with the Confirmand's parents nearby but out of hearing range.

- The first conversation, held at some point in February, is dedicated to the Mentor and Confirmand getting to know each other, including the Mentor sharing some part of his or her "faith story" with the Confirmand. The Mentor will talk about how they came to know God and what impact their Christian faith has on their life.
- The second conversation, held at some point in April, is dedicated to the Confirmand sharing their final reflection paper with the Mentor. The Confirmand will be working on this during our class and then sharing it with their Mentor. In response, we hope the Mentor and Confirmand can discuss how the Confirmand is thinking and feeling about being confirmed and why they are choosing to take this step.

3. Attend an **Ash Wednesday meeting and service** with your Confirmand. On Ash Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, Confirmands and Mentors will gather at 5:15PM in Johnson Hall for a meeting to discuss Lenten disciplines and attend the 6:00PM service at St. George's together.

4. Attend **Holy Week services** with your Confirmand. Mentors and Confirmands attend the following services together: Maundy Thursday (April 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30PM) and one of our Good Friday services (April 19<sup>th</sup> at noon or 6:00PM).

5. Attend the **Rehearsal and Dinner with Bishop Bauerschmidt**, Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 5:30PM-7:30PM

Confirmands & Mentors will meet in the church at 5:30PM for the rehearsal of the confirmation service and then have dinner in Hampton Hall with Bishop Bauerschmidt as our special guest and speaker.

6. Attend the **Confirmation service**, Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at the 8:45AM service  
Confirmands and Mentors gather in Hampton Hall at 8:00AM for final instructions before the 8:45AM service. The Mentors will stand with the Confirmand as the bishop lays hands on them and prays for them. After the service we will have a reception in Hampton Hall.

7. **Safeguarding God's Children:** All adults who volunteer with youth at the church are required by the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee to take the online Safeguarding God's Children course, which takes about an hour. Please go to <https://stgeorgesnashville.wufoo.com/forms/zds6thr0me7lvq/> to register; staff member Katy Valesky will set you up with an online login to complete this course. Once completed it is valid for 5 years.

## Youth Confirmation: Mentor & Confirmand Conversations

“Youth, seeking to enter adulthood, are looking for guides or mentors, who can show them adult forms of life that radiate with the love of Christ. Youth are not simply looking for information about religion—they’re looking for how ideas are embodied, how faith is lived out, how following Jesus impacts an adult’s perspective and actions. They’re looking for adults who embody and practice their theology with a particular way of life—a way that mirrors the freedom and passion of Jesus Christ.”

- Mark Yaconelli from the *Youth Ministry and Spirituality Project*

### Conversation #1: Sharing Your Faith Story

The main goal of the first conversation between mentor & confirmand is to share with them the difference that God makes in your life. It doesn’t have to be a dramatic story of conversion; each Christian has a story to tell about our relationship with God. Hearing someone else describe how they encounter God helps us see what being a Christian looks like, beyond simply attending church.

### Questions To Help You Prepare Your Faith Story:

- Who has influenced you the most in your faith in Christ? What about them or their life inspired you? Are there any key stories of that person you can share with your Confirmand?
- How does being a Christian shape your life and your purpose in life? How has being Anglican and Episcopalian shaped you?
- When and where were you baptized/confirmed? What do those milestones mean to you today?
- Describe turning points in your life and relationship with God or seasons when you have especially grown in your faith.
- What part of our liturgy and worship do you connect with most? What does receiving the Eucharist mean to you? What does it look like to be a faithful adult member of the church?
- How do you and your family make faith part of your daily life at home?
- Do you have a favorite Bible verse or story? Show them to your Confirmand and talk about why they speak to you.
- Do you have a favorite Christian book or author? What have they taught you about the Christian faith and life?
- Do you have a favorite hymn or Christian songs? Which lyrics in that song speak to you?
- Describe a moment or experience when you’ve felt God was present with you.
- How do you tend to encounter God? Some examples may be through reading the Bible, listening to sermons at church, personal prayer time, reading a devotional, listening to or performing music, reading, serving, being in nature.
- What spiritual gifts do you believe you have? How did you discover them? How do you try to use them to bless others?

### **A Few Ideas:**

- Pray about this as you prepare your story. Ask God to remind you of the ways that he has been at work in your life. Ask God to be at work as you share your story.
- Think about what life was like when you were your confirmand's age. What did faith in Christ mean to you then, and how has your relationship with Christ changed since then? If you could talk with the 13 year old you and tell them something being a Christian, what would it be?
- Bring pictures to show them. They can help youth connect with your sharing about your past.
- This doesn't have to be a monologue! Since this is a one on one conversation, give them room to ask you questions.

### **Conversation #2: Listening to your Confirmand's faith story**

The Confirmands will be writing a brief reflection paper about what being confirmed means to them. We will be giving the confirmands a few different prompts (see the handout titled "Confirmation Reflection Paper"). Each prompt gives the confirmand an opportunity to articulate why they are choosing to be confirmed. The confirmand can read what they have written to you directly or they can summarize. Listen carefully and respond to what they have shared. Ask them about their questions about God, church, and faith. What in class or our reading has interested them the most or raised questions for them? What is their favorite thing about church and their least favorite thing? Remind them that you are praying for them.

---

"Another important general way religious congregations may better engage youth is through simple, ordinary adult relationships with teenagers. Adults other than family members and youth ministers could be intentionally encouraged to make better efforts to learn teens' names, to strike up conversations with teens, to ask meaningful questions of youth, to be vulnerable themselves to youth in various ways, to show some interest in teens, to help connect them to jobs and internships, to make themselves available in times of trouble and crisis, to work toward becoming models and partners in love and concern and sacrifice. This would no doubt resound positively in broader areas of youth religious belief, commitment, and practice and in youth outcomes more generally. None of this takes a Master of Divinity degree. It is simply a matter of appreciation, attention, effort, and continuity from ordinary mature adults..."

- Christian Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*

## Sharing Your Faith Story

Adapted from a handout by Seawell Brandau  
written for St. George's Adult Confirmation class

**Brief** – Keep your story brief and focused, because 1) it will help you emphasize the important parts of your story, and 2) the attention span of the hearer wanes quickly if you talk for too long.

**Faith** – Focus on your faith in Christ and how an event brought you to a new place in your relationship with God.

**Story** – Keep it in story form; when we tell stories, it helps the hearer relate it better to his or her own life.

### Possible story starters:

- A godly person or role model
- An answered or unanswered prayer
- A disappointment or failure
- A chance encounter
- Something someone said to you
- Something you learned
- A challenge
- A heartache
- An “ah-ha” moment
- A “mountain top” experience
- A health crisis
- A death in the family
- A terrible argument
- A song or some music which touched you
- An experience at worship
- An experience from centering prayer
- A small group experience
- When you broke something
- A Lenten experience

We all have many more than one “Brief Faith Story.” Think about them. Develop them. Maybe there is someone in your family to whom this story could be important. Think about an opportunity to share without overwhelming the hearer. Always respect the hearer and leave room for the Holy Spirit to work.

## **Preparing to Tell Your Faith Story**

Charles Fulton and Susie Miller  
*A Resource from the Diocese of Iowa*

1. Draw a time line from left to right on a sheet of paper, the left being your birth the right being the present.
2. On the time line mark and identify (by year) significant events that were turning points in your life.
3. Above the line describe the context within which the event occurred. What else was going on in your life at that time?
4. Below the line describe your awareness of God at that point. Was God present or absent?
5. What was God doing with you in that event – comforting, challenging, provoking, teaching, giving, providing, loving, affirming, etc.?
6. Look at the whole time line. Are there patterns in the turning point events of your life? What initiates turning points? What is required of you? How were you different after these events?
7. What are the patterns in your experience of God and your relationship with God? Is there a consistency in God's actions and responses in your turning points?
8. Imagine telling someone about your insights into God's presence and working in your life. Tell your story of how God has come into your life and what has been the result when you have recognized God's presence. Tell the story to yourself, then tell your story to a friend and listen for the response your story will trigger in your friend.
9. Tell your story to someone outside a faith community
10. Commit to inviting God into your life as your life line lengthens into your future, regularly engaging the Gospel with others.