

## Survey Responses

1. We confirm and commune on Palm Sunday for the eighth graders.  
Pastor Christopher Hazzard, St. John's, Westfield, MA
2. With regard to Communion/ Confirmation, *Hope* in **Storrs** use this policy:  
  
The key pastoral point I share is the "passive" nature of "receiving" as connected with the faith based sacrament of communion. Confirmation is more of an "active" pursuit of information, understanding, and experiences in the journey of discipleship.  
  
**Communion:** We target an age of being able to honestly "examine one's self" based on 1 Cor 11. Typically around 10 years old.  
**Confirmation:** target 7th / 8th ' 9th grade for faith based discussions. Goal is not to acquire a certain volume of information, but to explore concept of faith in Christ and the possible value of "church" in that relationship with Him.  
God's Peace.... Joe [Nollet]
3. A couple of years after I got here, I wanted to lower the age of communion to 4th or 5th grade and let the kids decide when they wanted to come for confirmation. Since this was a new and innovative idea, the congregation said no.  
In the past we had defacto confirmation beginning in 5th grade when parents decided they didn't want to waste 4 years driving their kids to confirmation when they could do it all at once, with their 7th grade and 5th grader in the same class.  
Pastor Jim Kerner, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Suffield, CT 06078
4. Here at Grace Lutheran in Nashua, NH, our communion age has not changed. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, after completing a 2 year confirmation class, our youth are confirmed and then may partake of Holy Communion. God bless you & yours, Dianna [Hauf] secretary
5. No. We tried that years ago but move the age back to grade eight. It was hard to get the kids back for confirmation once they were communing. Leon [Schulz], St. Paul, Providence, RI
6. We have lowered confirmation age for younger siblings of youngsters living in NH, RI, ME and western MA so that they can be confirmed together and subsequently their families don't need to drive an additional year or two for classes.  
Peace always, Pastor Dutzmann, First, Boston, MA
7. We lowered the age of First Communion to Age 10. Pr. Jim Butler, St. Luke's Dedham, MA
8. Our confirmands are usually around Jr. High age, and they come to Holy Communion once they are confirmed. Jesus took 3 years with the first class and He was waaaaaay better at this than me. We're doing it in 2 years because the culture is so impatient. Ironic, isn't it? If there was a kid that was younger, and was precocious enough to learn the catechism, I would have no problem with that. But I'll cross that bridge if I ever get to it.

As far as Communion being "linked" to Confirmation, how can one examine oneself in the Faith before receiving, or even be kept strong in the Faith as a result of receiving, if one is totally *unfamiliar* with the Faith?

Baptism is another story, and I think maybe this is where people get confused. I would baptize an infant no matter who brought them, immediately. I would baptize any adult who wanted to turn from their sin to Jesus, immediately. I don't understand the post-apostolic practice of Catechism leading to *Baptism*. I don't see it in the NT.

I think a great District discussion on Confirmation would be on the subject of cultural Lutherans who want their kids confirmed, and then do not intend that they keep any of their confirmation vows (like their parents don't). I feel bad for the kids, and I give it my best shot (Yes, with the help of God!), expecting that God's Word will take even though their family life is designed to pull them away. (Every pastor's lament, I'm sure). But it would be very instructive to see how some other pastors have approached it.  
Happy Eastertide!

Don [Colageo], Immanuel, Manchester, NH

9. No we have not lowered the age of either. We have no age for First Communion. It is when the child is ready based on Parents, Sunday School Superintendent, and me. Usually around 9-12 years old. Confirmation is three years either 6th-8th grade or 7th-9th grade....again depends on maturity and readiness. Pastor Dan Eddy, Christ, Scituate
10. Tim-- We've separated the two. Still confirming at the end of 8th grade... but communing as early as 6th grade (1st communion Maundy Thursday). Have discussed adjusting further (lowering communion / raising age of confirmation, etc) but no recommendations/decisions at this time. --Steve [Bartell] Faith, Exeter, NH
11. Regarding Youth Confirmation & First Communion at Our Savior, Westminster: As I understand it, the practice has been to confirm & receive first communion around 15/16 years of age (typically 10th grade). I'll be discussing this with the elders and congregation in the near future and would like to encourage a change to lower age for both. I would definitely be interested in the compiled stats from this survey.  
Thanks, Rev. Peter Gregory
12. Sir,  
I inherited First Communion here in Smithfield. I took some time during Lent to come up with the requirements. I'm about to begin home visits to work with the parents and talk with each child. I'm very excited! I even wrote a little hymn to help teach the children about Communion.  
**Jesus Loves Me! This I See**  
*I wrote the following hymn stanzas as a way of teaching children about Holy Communion. It is to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me," and these two stanzas could follow stanzas 1 and 2 in Lutheran Service Book, hymn 588.*

Jesus loves me when He says,  
Take and eat this piece of bread.  
It's My body, yes, it's true,  
Which I sacrificed for you.

Jesus loves me! This I see  
In the cup He gives to me.  
It's My holy blood, He says,  
Which for you I gladly shed.

*May we all believe so simply!*  
Christ is risen!  
Matt Richardt  
Our Redeemer, Smithfield

13. At Mt. Calvary, Acton Confirmation is still the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. First communion can occur as early as 6<sup>th</sup> grade with the concurrence of pastor plus parents plus child. Tim [Knapp]
14. Have not lowered either although I agree that - for at least reception of Communion - it would be a good idea. Phil [Alexander] Messiah, Fitchburg, MA
15. Confirmation is 2 years starting in 6th grade. Communion is typically after the first year. Eric Sahlberg
16. We are in the process of making it possible for people to receive communion at an earlier age prior to confirmation. Randall Pekari, Our Savior, South Windsor, CT
17. We still do Confirmation in 7th-8th grade. For what it's worth, a number of years ago, my dad separated First Communion and Confirmation, preparing kids for Communion at (I believe) age 10, and raising the Confirmation age to 9th or 10th grade. I could give you his contact info if you like. Timothy Boerger [timboerger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:timboerger@sbcglobal.net). Zion, Orange, CT
18. President Yeadon,  
At Immanuel-Danbury we lowered the Communion age to Fifth Grade. That's the time when the children start serving as acolytes. At Danbury our acolytes assist in distribution of the Sacrament, so I more or less thought: Why do they distribute a Sacrament they can't receive? Answer: Combine those two things together. This Fall we'll welcome new acolytes, and also offer the Early Communion Class. With the caveat that the parents can decide to opt out of Early Communion.  
Blessings, Walt [Harper]
19. Bethany confirms (usually) at the end of the Eighth-Grade and offers parents the option of allowing their children to take a First Communion course in Fourth-Grade (and receive First Communion on Palm Sunday) if they believe their children are "ready" to receive it.  
Timothy Krieger, Bethany, W. Hartford, CT

20. Redeemer has not lowered the age as of yet. I have traditionally tried to disassociate first communion from confirmation by communing confirmands on or before Easter with confirmation falling towards Pentecost.

I will have a 7th grader this fall but otherwise I do not have youth confirmands. I am working towards acceptance at the altar based upon baptism, membership, ability to examine oneself, and understanding of the sacrament regardless of age. I will retain a confirmation class that will include children that have memorized the Small Catechism, desire to be confirmed, have parent's endorsement, and my approval of readiness. Ideally it would be a one year course that opens the Scriptures and explains all that is in the Small Catechism without the tediousness of the pastor hounding students to memorize. Children recite to me on Sundays and I initial their copy of the Small Catechism. Once everything is initialed, that constitutes memorizing the SC. This process involves the parents and my teaching and encouragement of them. We read from the SC every Sunday and have assigned portions for devotion and memorization for each week. I emphasize the SC because it is the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as they have been taught it from the Small Catechism that they confess before the church in the rite of reception as members.

I do have one 15 year old that was confirmed early by Pastor Balfour but he was an exceptional case because of a disease that will shorten his earthly life.

Probably more than you were asking for and certainly not exhaustive on my part - but hopefully a good synopsis.

In Christ + Rev. Timothy E. Sandeno, Redeemer, Gorham, ME