

BIG GOD

BIG QUESTIONS

CONFIRMATION FOR A GROWING FAITH

Confirmation Preview

"My heart I offer you, Lord, promptly and sincerely."

—John Calvin

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For a sample video, go to www.pcusastore.com/BGBQ.



Big God Big Questions has been spot-on with Reformed theology, age-appropriate questions, and leadership resources. We love the Infographics.

—Michelle Thomas-Bush, associate pastor,
Myers Park Presbyterian Church,
Charlotte, North Carolina

Scope and Sequence

Session 1: What Is Confirmation?

Joshua 24:1–3, 13–15, 22–25

The biblical concept of covenant loyalty is introduced in relation to the practice of Confirmation. Because God has been loyal/faithful to us, we are called to be loyal/faithful to God. Confirmation, as a reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant, calls us to make specific promises to God, ourselves, and the church.

Session 2: How Do We Know and Trust God?

Psalms 105:1–45; Hebrews 11:1–38

When God calls us to covenant loyalty, God calls us to trust. When we understand how God has acted in the past and promises to act today and tomorrow, we can trust in God's promises even in the face of uncertainty.

Session 3: What Is Sin and How Do We Turn from It?

Genesis 3:1–24; Genesis 4:1–16; Exodus 32:1–10, 34:1–10;
2 Samuel 11:1–27; Exodus 20:1–17; Matthew 22:34–40

If we have organized our lives around anything other than God, then our hearts are sinful. We do things that break God's heart, hurt other people, and damage God's creation. We even hurt ourselves. We are called to work in the world against sin and evil to transform society in gratitude for God's grace and mercy.

Session 4: Who Is Your Lord?

Philippians 2:1–13; Exodus 3:13–15; 1 Kings 18:20–39

To claim Jesus Christ as Lord is one way we express trust in the gracious mercy of God. God sent Jesus to human beings to show us how to live in loyalty to Jesus as our Lord. As Reformed Christians who emphasize the sovereignty of God, we affirm the Lordship of Jesus Christ so that nothing else in the world can claim lordship in our lives.

Session 5: Who Is Your Savior?

Ephesians 2:1–10; Exodus 3:1–17; Luke 19:1–10; 2 Kings 5:1–15;
Mark 2:1–12; Matthew 18:21–35; Luke 15:11–32

Humans are utterly dependent on the triune God for their salvation. Jesus Christ crucified is the only Savior and Lord, and all people everywhere are called to place their faith, hope, and love in him. To claim Jesus Christ as Savior is one way we express trust in the gracious mercy of God.

Session 6: What Does It Mean to Be a Disciple of Jesus?

Mark 8:27–38; Mark 12:41–44; Matthew 20:22–28; Acts 7:51–60

Jesus Christ is not asking to be a part of your life. He is asking to be your life. Even today the church and the believer are called to answer the question, "How do we faithfully obey Christ's Word"? As Christ saves us *from* sin, Christ saves us *for* discipleship.

Session 7: What Does It Mean to Show Christ's Love?

John 21:15–19

Jesus Christ taught his followers that to serve the least in the world was to serve him. We continue to make significant connections between affirming Jesus' love for us and our call to show Jesus' love to our neighbors, near and far.

Session 8: Will You Devote Yourself to the Church's Teaching?

2 Timothy 1:1–14; Hebrews 12:1–2

As part of the church's ongoing commitment to "faith seeking understanding," we devote ourselves to the study of the Scriptures and the teachings of the church. In so doing, we come to understand more fully the nature of the faith we profess in Baptism and at Confirmation. Study of the Apostles' Creed is an essential step toward professing the faith.

Session 9: Will You Devote Yourself to the Church's Fellowship?

1 Corinthians 12:12–31; John 13:1–17

As Presbyterians, we know that every person has a place and purpose in the body of Christ. Our different gifts find purpose when we work together in service.

Session 10: Will You Devote Yourself to the Breaking of Bread?

Exodus 12:1–20, 29–36; Luke 22:14–23; Luke 24:13–35; Acts 10:1–48

Jesus shared many meals with his followers, breaking bread to feed the hungry, to welcome the outcast, and to assure the disciples of his abiding presence among them. Table fellowship was at the center of the church's first crisis—how could Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus sit at a table and eat together?

Session 11: Will You Devote Yourself to the Prayers?

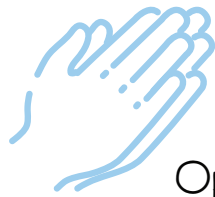
Luke 18:1; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18; Psalm 51:10, 17; Romans 5:5

Prayer focuses our attention on God and away from ourselves. When that happens, we open our hearts to God to become active in our lives, seeking community and justice for all humanity.

Session 12: Are You Ready to Cross Over?

Joshua 3:7–4:7; Romans 6:3–4

The Confirmation class culminates with a water crossing—Joshua and the Jordan, and the baptism we share in Jesus' death and resurrection. Crossings are lifted up as important transitions in life and in the life of faith, especially for young people at their Confirmation.

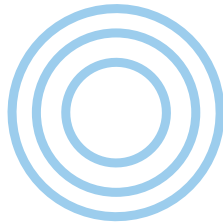


Opening Prayer



Study the Bible

Begin with an exploration of how the Bible answers the Big Questions.

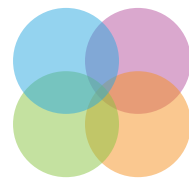


Get Started

Build trust and relationships through icebreakers and group-building activities.

Teacher Resources:

Bible, theology, and confirmand information
Key words
Supply lists
Infographics
Videos
"I0I" activities



**BIG GOD
BIG QUESTIONS**

CONFIRMATION FOR A GROWING FAITH

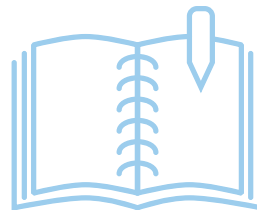
The Rhythm of the Session

BIG Journal

Gives space to engage and reflect on the content of the sessions, consider the BIG Questions, check in on feelings about Confirmation, and prepare for the next session.



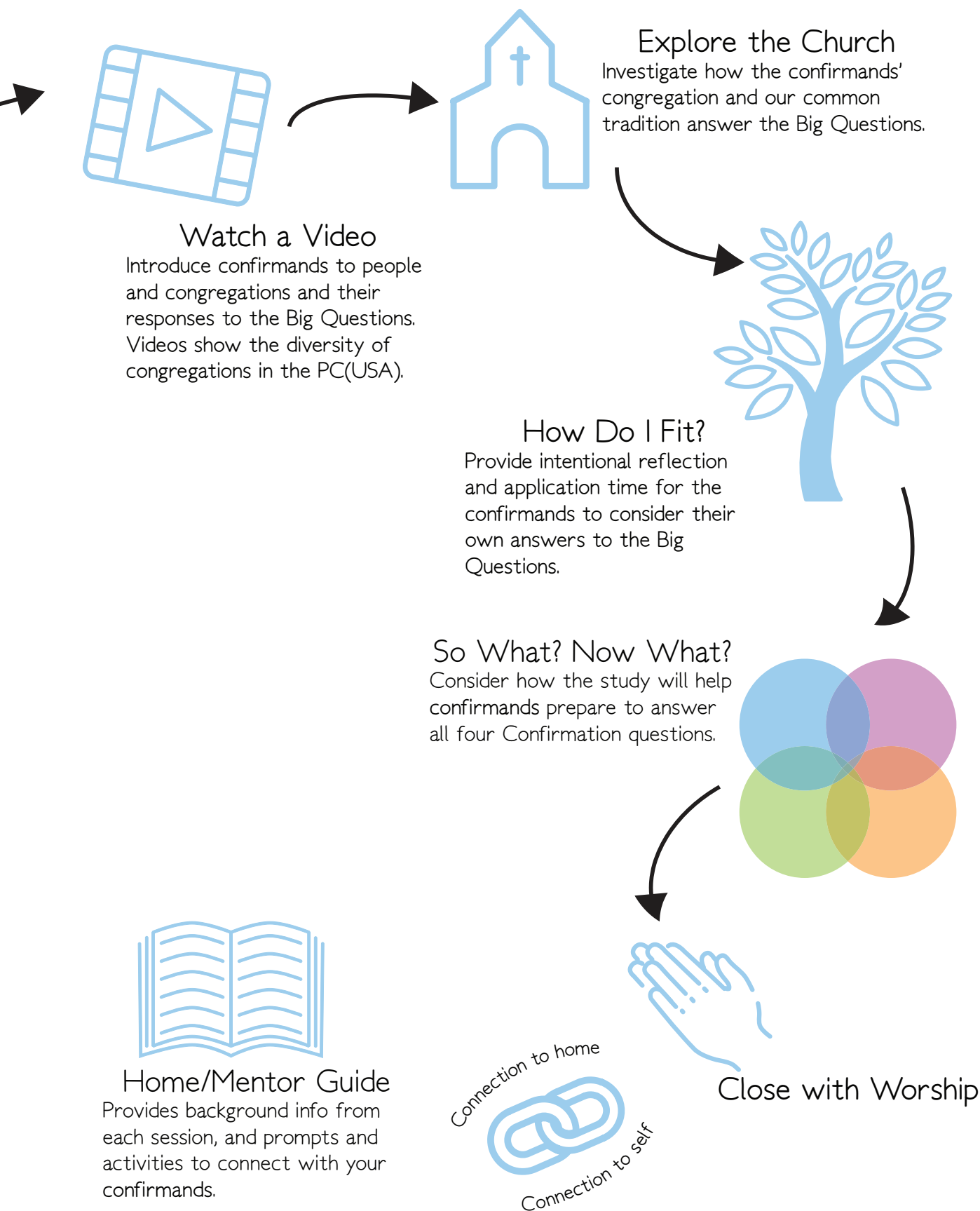
Connection to the next session



Connection to each other

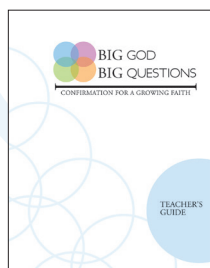


Connection to self



The components of Big God Big Questions

... make the curriculum enjoyable to lead and use with your Confirmation classes



The Teacher's Guide

Available in print or download.

... has twelve sessions that are ninety minutes, which can be split into twenty-four sessions that are forty-five minutes.

... includes lesson plans that guide the confirmands through the study of Scripture, the church, the Reformed tradition, and personal reflection.

... provides key words to help understand “church vocabulary.”

... offers brief explanations of biblical and theological context, as well as connections with contemporary youth issues.

... is written for small groups of five confirmands with suggestions for larger groups.

... makes essential connections to the BIG Journal.

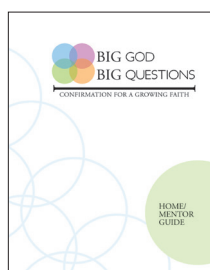
... includes “101” Activities to be used at the teacher’s discretion to support confirmands who may need to review foundational information on the Bible, the sacraments, worship, and more. In college, introductory courses are often numbered 101 to signify that they are entry level. The “101” activities can be used as a pre-Confirmation review over several weeks, in a retreat setting, or as additional help included in a session. Since every group of confirmands differs from year to year, you may find yourself using different “101” activities each time you lead Confirmation.



The BIG Journal

Available in print only.

... gives confirmands ways to engage with the content from the sessions, a secure space to keep track of work done in class, a private space for self-reflection, and opportunities to prepare what they are to bring to the next session.



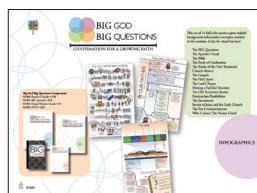
The Home/Mentor Guide

Available in print only.

... is a simple resource that serves a dual purpose for the mentor and the home.

... provides simple background information from each lesson and offers relevant prompts to work with confirmands on reinforcing the lesson, check-ins as they progress through the class, and opportunities to practice putting their faith in action.

... provides conversations or activities for each session for confirmands to share with their mentors and parents/caregivers.



The Infographics

Available in print or download.

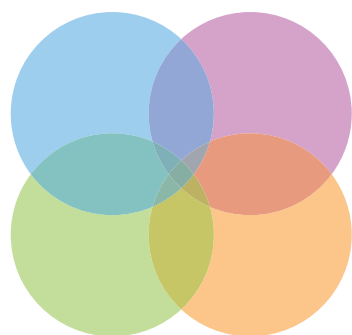
... come in a set of sixteen 11" x 17" posters (or downloadable to size as you prefer) to provide visual connections with the content of the curriculum. Suggestions for using the infographics are offered in the Teacher’s Guide. Look for other ways to include the infographics.



The DVD/Videos

Available in DVD or download.

... includes twelve videos that introduce confirmands to a variety of real Presbyterians and communities around the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), illustrating the breadth of experiences within the church.



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CONFIRMATION FOR A GROWING FAITH

TEACHER'S
GUIDE

The Teacher's Guide . . .

- Has twelve sessions that are ninety minutes, which can be split into twenty-four sessions that are forty-five minutes
- Includes lesson plans that guide the confirmands through the study of Scripture, the church, the Reformed tradition, and personal reflection
- Provides key words to help understand “church vocabulary”
- Offers brief explanations of the biblical and theological contexts, as well as connections with contemporary youth issues
- Is written for a small group of five confirmands with suggestions for larger groups
- Makes essential connections to the BIG Journal

Great curriculum and very easy to follow. I really like the variety of activities. Confirmands are responding well to writing in the BIG Journal and looking up verses in the Bible. The mentors coming to class really help with discussions. They also like the hands-on activities and games.

—Susan Stackhouse, teacher, First Presbyterian Church,
Goldsboro, North Carolina



What Is Confirmation?

In baptism the church celebrates the renewal of the covenant with which God has bound his people to himself. By baptism, individuals are publicly received into the church to share in its life and ministry, and the church becomes responsible for their training and support in Christian discipleship. When those baptized are infants, the congregation, as well as the parents, has a special obligation to nurture them in the Christian life, leading them to make, by a public profession, a personal response to the love of God shown forth in their baptism.

—Confession of 1967, 9.51

What Is Session 1 About?

The biblical concept of covenant loyalty is introduced in relation to the practice of Confirmation. Because God has been loyal/faithful to us, we are called to be loyal/faithful to God. Confirmation, as a reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant, calls us to make specific promises to God, ourselves, and the church.

Bible

Joshua 24:1–3, 13–15, 22–25

Joshua 24 offers the final of several examples of covenant peppered throughout the book of Joshua. Nearing his death, Joshua recounts the past and entreats the people to remain faithful to God and the covenant. Joshua cautions them that God is not bound to be faithful to them if they stray to other gods.

Theology

Confirmation calls youth to make a personal and public response to the love of God shown forth in the baptismal covenant, whether Baptism occurs in childhood or at the Confirmation worship service. In Confirmation, confirmands are asked to commit themselves to Jesus Christ and to affirm their intentions to live out their faith as part of a faith community.

Confirmands

Youth form fierce loyalties. Friendships are extremely important to them. They would do anything for one another, yet if one slips and tells a secret or goes somewhere that all weren't invited, the group turns on that person. Hormones are in control of emotions and physical changes, which are rapid and confusing. Through the covenantal emphasis of Confirmation, the church makes opportunities for youth to develop healthy relationships with other youth and with adults whom they feel that they can trust.

Key Words

Covenant is a relationship started by God with God's people. A hallmark of covenant is the expectation that each party will remain loyal to the relationship. Confirmation is an opportunity to affirm and reaffirm the covenant the church makes in Baptism.

Confirmation is an act of covenant renewal that includes three parties: 1) God confirms a youth's baptismal identity as a child of God, whether Baptism occurred in childhood or will happen at the Confirmation worship service; 2) the youth confirms their faith in Jesus Christ and the teachings of the church; and 3) the congregation confirms the youth's spiritual gifts for ministry and active church membership.

Membership in the church happens at Baptism. Confirmation signals a shift from being a baptized member to an active member (that is, active in the ministries and governance of a congregation).

Supplies

Bibles
Infographics: The BIG Questions, The Old Testament Stories, The Holy Spirit
DVD/Video, media player
BIG Journal, one for each youth
Copies of Resource 1a (p. 104), magazines
Copies of cards cut from Resources 1b–e (pp. 105–108)
Prepared newsprint (see “Covenant Loyalty in Our Church”)
Wide variety of colored cloth, paper, or paint swatches (see “So What? Now What?”)
Large trash can (see “Close with Worship”)
Name tags, newsprint, colored pencils, sticky notes, markers, glue, poster board

Guests to Invite

Confirmation mentors, one per youth

Engage guests in all parts of today's session. Suggest they lead an activity. Encourage participation in conversations.

Notes and Reminders

What Is Confirmation?

I. Get to Know Each Other

Supplies:
Name tags,
markers, copies
of Resource 1a

Welcome each youth and confirmation mentor. Wear name tags. Hand out BIG Journals to the confirmands. Have the youth/mentor pairs mingle, asking and answering questions on Resource 1a. The pairs introduce one another to the group by using the answers they have collected.

Pray: Dear God, thank you for bringing us together. Help us ask questions. Help us listen to each other's answers. Help us be OK when we don't know the answer and help us be OK when our answers are different. Help us to be brave enough not just to learn together, but to grow together. Amen.

Be sure to respond to discussion questions yourself, from time to time. Letting youth know about your life as a Christian is a significant way to “share your faith” with confirmands.

Have the confirmands and mentors name the promises and commitments they have made or expect to make in their lives. Suggestions include: the Pledge of Allegiance; the Girl Scout or Boy Scout promise; the honor code from a local middle or high school; marriage vows; and other promises people make. Discuss:

- Why do we make promises?
- What difference does a promise make in the way we act?
- What happens when we break promises? Who is hurt?
- What do you know about the idea of “covenant” as a special form of promise?

Remind the group that covenant is a legal term that binds two parties together, like a contract or a promise. In the Bible, God is the one who makes the covenant. God says, “I will be your God, and you will be my people.” Ask:

- What does it mean to be God's people?

2. Covenant Loyalty in the Bible

Supplies:
Bibles,
Infographic:
The Old
Testament
Stories,
magazines,
newsprint, glue,
poster board,
colored pencils,
sticky notes

Joshua 24:1-3, 13-15, 22-25 (Joshua calls the people to covenant faithfulness)

After the death of Moses, Joshua led the people through the Jordan River into the promised land. They had been wandering in the desert for over forty years, trusting in the promises of God to be fulfilled. However, entering this new life and this new land would not be easy. When the Israelites entered and possessed the land of Canaan, the inhabitants worshiped many gods and created idols, statues, or figures, which they believed had powers. In their minds, their gods ruled natural things such as rain, lightning, hail, the harvest, how many children they had, and so forth. They gave their loyalty to these visible “gods.” It would have been easy for the Israelites to give their loyalty to “gods” they could see and touch while mixing with the local people. Joshua was worried. Let's discover why he was worried.

Distribute Bibles. Read aloud Joshua 24:1-3, 13-15, 22-25. Discuss:

- What does the story tell you about covenant loyalty?
- What does it mean to “put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel” (v. 23)?



Large group?
Form teams
and make
several
collages.



Have a volunteer create and draw a symbol of Joshua 24 on a sticky note and place it by Joshua on The Old Testament Stories infographic.

Hand out magazines and newsprint. Find pictures of things that youth and adults allow to become “gods” (such as TV, sports, success, alcohol, drugs, video games, computers, money, and so on). Tear the pictures out of the magazines and glue them on the poster board to make a collage. Hold the collage for “Close with Worship.”

When the collage is complete, ask:

- In what ways do these things become “gods” for us? How do they attract our loyalty away from God?
- How can we put away our “gods” and give our hearts to God?
- What are some things we can do to be Joshua for each other and stand firm against the appeal of false gods?
- What promises do you think you will be asked to make at Confirmation?

Have confirmands and mentors reflect on the Joshua story in the BIG Journal, pp. 6–7.

24/12
plan

For twenty-four sessions that are forty-five minutes, jump to “So What? Now What?” and offer a closing prayer of your own. Begin the next session with the video and discussion.

For twelve sessions that are ninety minutes, continue with the video and discussion.

3. Watch a Video

Supplies:
Sample video
available at
www.pcusastore.com/BGBQ,
media player

I Cue the video for session 1. Ask the confirmands and mentors to listen for ways that Presbyterians express their convictions about the Christian faith and the church. Note the four BIG Questions or the vows the confirmands will be asked when they are confirmed.

4. Covenant Loyalty in Our Church

Supplies:
Prepared
newsprint

I Print the following questions on newsprint and post:

- In what ways have you shown loyalty to God?
- How important have promises or vows been in your faith life?
- How have you tried to live out the vows you made at your Baptism and your Confirmation?
- What would you want to say to our generation about faith, Jesus Christ, God’s grace, the church, and so on?



Ask the confirmands and mentors to pair off. Have the youth ask the mentors the posted questions. Jot down notes in BIG Journals, p. 3. Ask confirmands to share their findings with the group. Discuss:

- Of all the things you heard the mentors say about loyalty to God, what stands out to you? Why?
- Of all the things you heard the mentors say about promises and vows, what stands out to you? Why?

What Is Confirmation?

- What did the mentors want to say to your generation about faith, Jesus Christ, God's grace, and the church? How do their words challenge you and your faith?

5. How Do I Fit?

Supplies:
Newsprint,
markers



Pair off the confirmands and mentors. Have the pairs turn to BIG Journal, p. 4, where each youth/mentor pair writes a covenant agreement. When all have finished and signed their covenants, ask for reports from each pair.

Make a group covenant. On one sheet of newsprint write the heading "We Promise to God," and on the other write "We Promise to Each Other." Record ideas on the proper newsprint. Confirmands and mentors sign the covenant as a way of saying they will honor it.

Point out that the youth and parents/caregivers can use BIG Journal, p. 5, to make a similar covenant.

Congregational Connection

On several sheets of newsprint, write "The Congregation Promises." During or following a worship service, challenge the members of the congregation to pledge their commitment to the Confirmation covenant by signing "The Congregation Promises" and adding a way that they plan to support the confirmands.

6. So What? Now What?

Supplies:
Infographic:
The BIG
Questions;
prepared
cards cut from
Resources 1b–e
gathered into
separate sets; a
wide variety of
colored cloth,
paper, or paint
swatches



Help the confirmands make connections between what they learn and the BIG Questions to be answered during the Confirmation worship service. Gather around the sets of word cards, each of which includes the words of one of the four BIG Questions and answers. Have the group put each set of words in order.



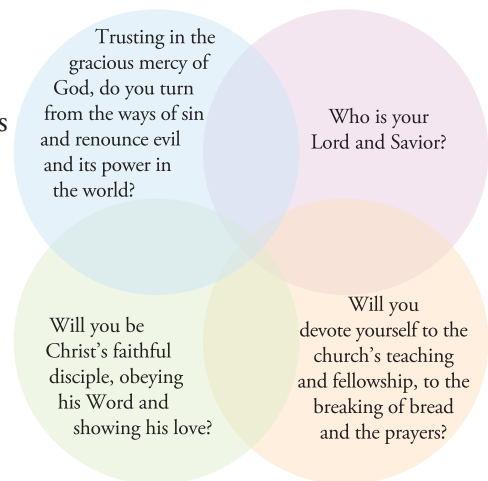
Post The BIG Questions infographic, and ask the confirmands to open their BIG Journals, p. 9. Discuss:

- What is at the heart of each BIG Question?
- Which BIG Question do you think is the most important?
- What do you think God expects of young Christians today?

Invite each person to hold a piece of cloth, paper, or swatch with a color that captures the feeling of their current commitment to God.

Ask volunteers to say, "My devotion to God is _____ (*name of color*) because _____." After each speaks, all respond, "Praise the Lord!"

Confirmands can use the BIG Journal, p. 8, to reflect on what they have learned about God, themselves, and the church.



Large group?
Form four
teams. Give
each team a
set of word
cards to put
in order.





For next time, ask the confirmands to complete BIG Journal, pp. 10-11.

7. Close with Worship

Supplies:
Infographic:
Holy Spirit,
large trash can,
collage made
earlier in the
session

Post The Holy Spirit infographic and invite participants to note the many times and places in which the Holy Spirit is active. Tell the confirmands that the Holy Spirit has been and will continue to be active in their lives, particularly during this season of Confirmation as they open themselves up to study Scripture, worship and serve together, and consider questions of faith.

Invite the participants to stand in a circle, holding the collage. Place a large trash can in the center of the circle. Suggest each person pick one thing on the collage that could become too important in life.

Prompt the confirmands and mentors to ask that one thing not become a little god for them.

Consider using
The Holy Spirit
infographic and
praying for the
Spirit's activities
in your lives
and the world at
the end of each
session.

Have the participants rip the collage into pieces and put the pieces into the trash can.

Before you pray together, tell the participants that at the end of the prayer, you will say, "In Jesus' name, we pray that in our lives and in the world the Spirit..." Explain that at that point, each person is invited to take turns reading the words at the bottom of The Holy Spirit infographic (*moves, breathes, animates, and so on*).

Pray: *God, thank you for Joshua's story. It reminds us that our highest loyalty belongs to you. Help us to put you and those things that draw us to you ahead of the false gods we have put on our collage, especially (each person may name one thing). In Jesus' name, we pray that in our lives and in the world the Spirit (participants take turns reading the words at the bottom of The Holy Spirit infographic). Amen.*

Looking Ahead

Invite to session 2 church members who have a long history with your congregation and who are willing to take part in conversation with the confirmands.

Set up and review the video for session 2. Make the video available to parents/caregivers and mentors, keeping it secure and private.

Gather Bible dictionaries.



1. What is the biggest animal you have ever seen in person?

Name: _____

Answer: _____

2. What is the biggest decision you have ever had to make?

Name: _____

Answer: _____

3. What is the biggest group of people you have ever had to speak in front of?

Name: _____

Answer: _____

4. What is the biggest thing you have ever climbed?

Name: _____

Answer: _____

5. What is the longest road trip you have ever taken?

Name: _____

Answer: _____

6. What is a big mistake you have made (that you are willing to share)?

Name: _____

Answer: _____

7. What is the tallest building you have ever been in (and did you go to the top)?

Name: _____

Answer: _____

8. What is your biggest question about Confirmation?

Name: _____

Answer: _____



Trusting

[1]

in the

[2]

gracious

[3]

mercy of God,

[4]

do you turn from

[5]

the ways of sin

[6]

and

[7]

renounce

[8]

evil and

[9]

its power in

[10]

the world?

[11]

I do.

[12]



| | |
|-------|---------|
| Who | is |
| [1] | [2] |
| your | Lord |
| [3] | [4] |
| and | Savior? |
| [5] | [6] |
| Jesus | Christ |
| [7] | [8] |
| is my | Lord |
| [9] | [10] |
| and | Savior. |
| [11] | [12] |



Will you

[1]

be

[2]

Christ's

[3]

faithful

[4]

disciple,

[5]

obeying his

[6]

Word

[7]

and showing his

[8]

love?

[9]

I will,

[10]

with

[11]

God's help.

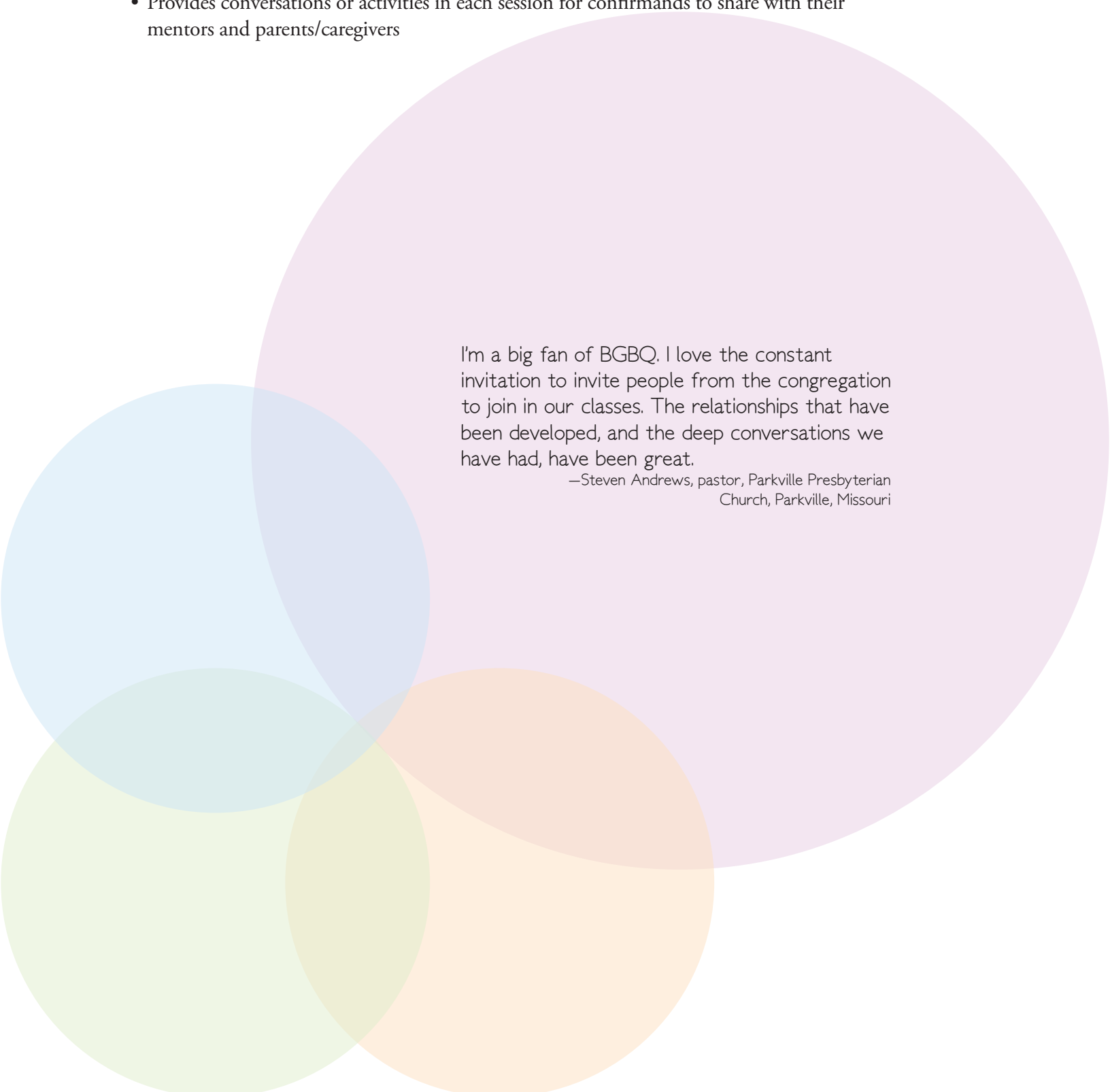
[12]



| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Will you devote | yourself |
| [1] | [2] |
| to the church's | teaching and |
| [3] | [4] |
| fellowship, | to the breaking of |
| [5] | [6] |
| bread | and the |
| [7] | [8] |
| prayers? | I will, |
| [9] | [10] |
| with God's | help. |
| [11] | [12] |

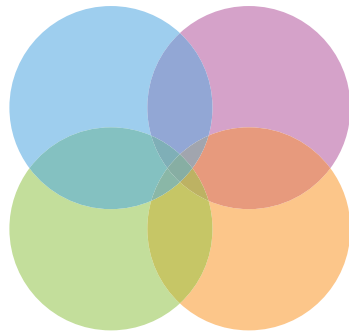
The Home/Mentor Guide . . .

- Is a simple resource that has a dual purpose for the mentor and the home
- Provides simple background information from each session, relevant prompts to work with confirmands on reinforcing the lesson, check-ins as they progress through the class, and opportunities to practice putting their faith in action
- Provides conversations or activities in each session for confirmands to share with their mentors and parents/caregivers



I'm a big fan of BGBQ. I love the constant invitation to invite people from the congregation to join in our classes. The relationships that have been developed, and the deep conversations we have had, have been great.

—Steven Andrews, pastor, Parkville Presbyterian Church, Parkville, Missouri



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BIG QUESTIONS

CONFIRMATION FOR A GROWING FAITH

HOME/
MENTOR
GUIDE

What Is Confirmation?

The BIG Question

Confirmation is an act of covenant renewal that includes three parties:

1. the Spirit of God confirms a confirmand's baptismal identity as a child of God, whether baptism occurred in childhood or will happen at the Confirmation service;
2. the confirmand confirms their faith in Jesus Christ and the teachings of the church; and
3. the congregation, including parents and other family members, confirms the confirmand's spiritual gifts for ministry and active church membership.

If there should be only one word to encompass the whole [of Confirmation], it might be “embrace.” Yes, they were embraced, welcomed into the church at baptism; but as life progresses God continues to welcome us into new stages of faith and accountability for it, and we have the opportunity over and over to embrace the covenant in which God embraces us.

—Ron Byars, *Exploring Confirmation: Embraced by and Embracing the Covenant*

Continuing the Conversation

In baptism the church celebrates the renewal of the covenant with which God has bound his people to himself. By baptism, individuals are publicly received into the church to share in its life and ministry, and the church becomes responsible for their training and support in Christian discipleship. When those baptized are infants, the congregation, as well as the parents, has a special obligation to nurture them in the Christian life, leading them to make, by a public profession, a personal response to the love of God shown forth in their baptism.

—Confession of 1967

Joshua 24:1-3, 13-15, 22-25

The biblical concept of covenant loyalty is introduced in relation to the practice of Confirmation. Because God has been loyal/faithful to us, we are called to be loyal/faithful to God. Confirmation calls us to make specific promises to God, ourselves, and the church.

Key Words

Covenant is a relationship started by God with God's people. A hallmark of covenant is the expectation that each party will remain loyal to the relationship. Confirmation is an opportunity to affirm and reaffirm the covenant the church makes in Baptism.

Confirmation is an act of covenant renewal that includes three parties:

1) God confirms a youth's baptismal identity as a child of God, whether Baptism occurred in childhood or will happen at the Confirmation worship service; 2) the youth confirms their faith in Jesus Christ and the teachings of the church; and 3) the congregation confirms the youth's spiritual gifts for ministry and active church membership.

Membership in the church happens at Baptism. Confirmation signals a shift from being a baptized member to an active member (that is, active in the ministries and governance of a congregation).

Your Confirmand

Youth form fierce loyalties. Friendships are extremely important to them. They would do anything for one another, yet if one slips and tells a secret or goes somewhere that all weren't invited, the group turns on that person. Hormones are in control of emotions and physical changes, which are rapid and confusing. Through the covenantal emphasis of Confirmation, the church makes opportunities for youth to develop healthy relationships with other youth and with adults whom they feel that they can trust.

Ideas for Connecting with Confirmands at Home and with Mentors

Parents/caregivers and mentors, in collaboration with the confirmands, select activities to explore the themes in each session.



Discussion idea

(For parents/caregivers) With your confirmand, complete the covenant in the BIG Journal, p. 5. This is a fantastic way to talk about what you expect from each other during Confirmation, as well as a tool to hold each other accountable. Discuss: How has your loyalty to God changed or grown since you were the age of your confirmand? What has God done for you in your life? What would you want to say to our generation about faith and relating to God?

Movie idea

The film *Amazing Grace* (2006, PG) tells the story of William Wilberforce, an eighteenth-century British antislavery activist and member of Parliament. Much of Wilberforce's motivations and inspiration come from his commitment to God and the mentorship of pastor John Newton, the author of the hymn "Amazing Grace." Discuss how our loyalty to God affects our public lives.

Discussion idea

With your confirmand, read the following covenant stories. In each story, look for what God promised and what God expected in return (that is, what it meant to be God's people): Genesis 17 (Abraham and Sarah); Genesis 32:22–32 (Jacob wrestles with the angel); and Exodus 19–20 (Ten Commandments). Discuss: What did God promise in each covenant? What did God expect? What does it mean to be God's people? What do you think God expects of young Christians today?

Movie idea

View a movie clip that illustrates the power of being named a recipient of covenant love. In *Toy Story* (1995, G), Woody and Buzz Lightyear, two toys, are trapped in the house of neighbor Sid, who destroys toys. Buzz, who used to think he was a real "space ranger," has learned he's "only a toy." Depressed, he's given up hope of getting home. Show the scene from 0:56:40 (thunderstorm) to 0:59:37 ("Yes, sir!"). Discuss: How is Buzz reminded of his most important identity? How does remembering change Buzz? How is Andy's ownership of Buzz and Woody like God's covenant with us? How can we remind one another of our most important identities as members of God's covenant?

Looking Ahead

Ask the leader of the Confirmation class to share the video for session 2.

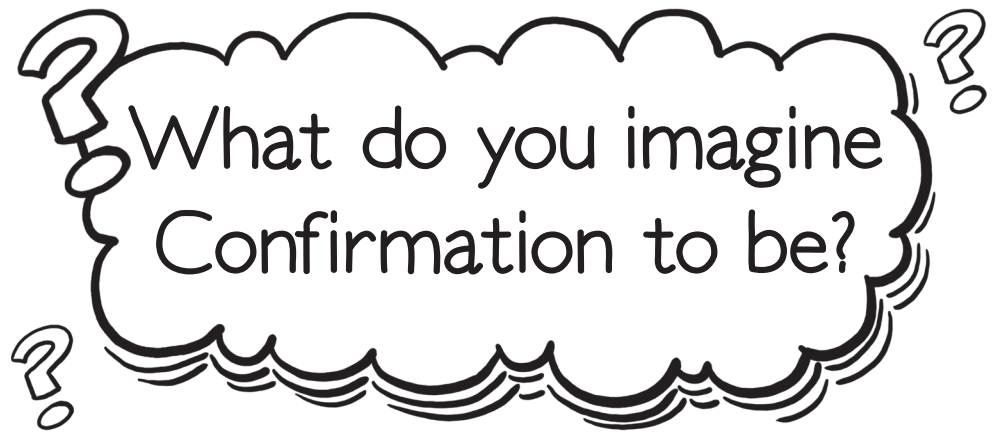
The BIG Journal . . .

- Gives confirmands ways to engage with the content from the sessions
- Provides a secure space to keep track of work done in class
- Features a private space for self-reflection
- Has opportunities to prepare what they are to bring to the next session
- Provides “postcard” pages that will help confirmands formulate their faith statements

We just totally reworked our entire Confirmation schedule based on the curriculum. I taught the Bible 101 lesson last week at our first meeting, and it went really well! I love that it has journals to go with it and a parent/mentor book.

—Virginia Callegary, Director of Christian Education, First Presbyterian Church of Howard County, Columbia, Maryland



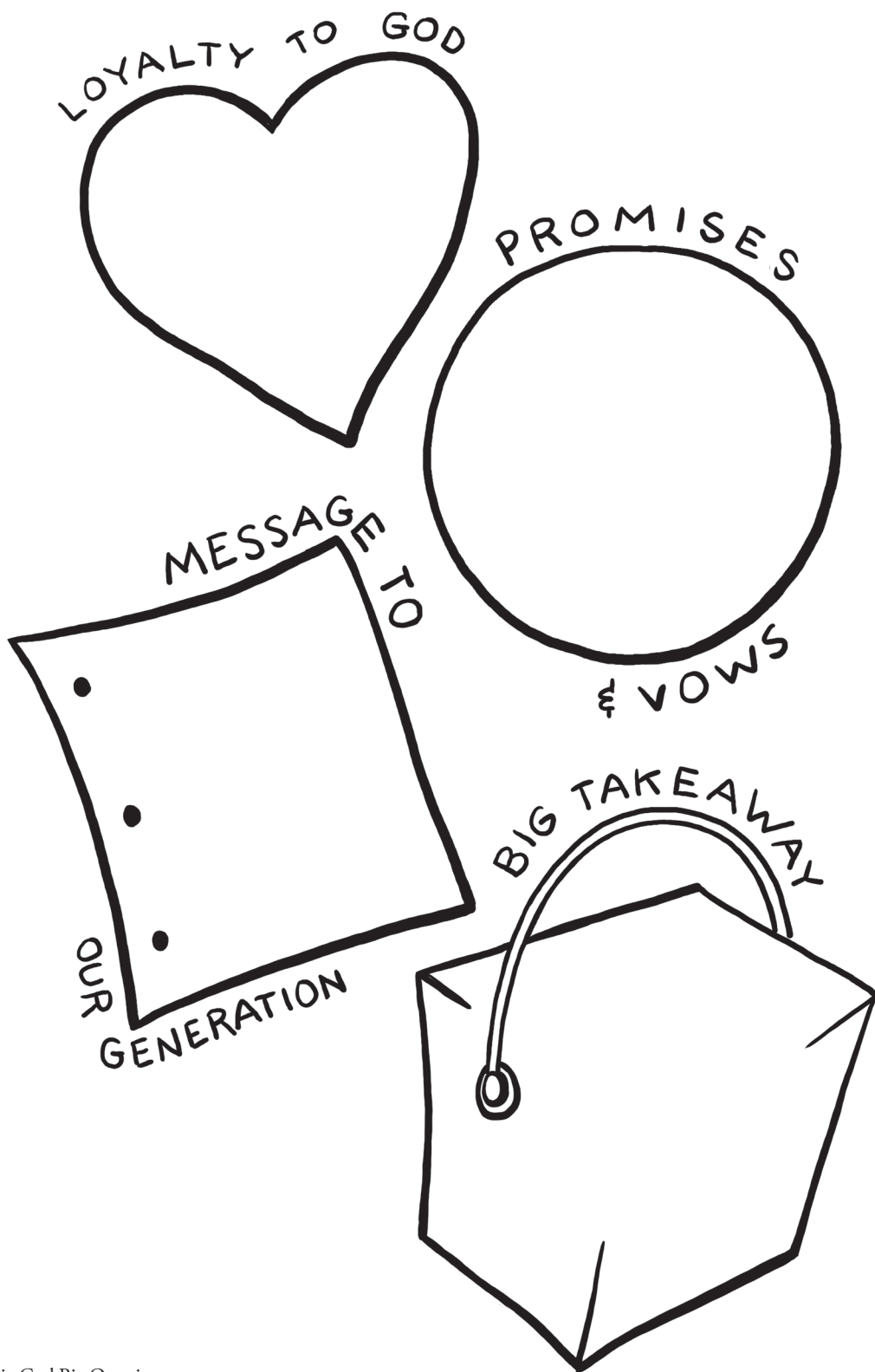


Words We Use

Covenant is a relationship started by God with God's people. A hallmark of covenant is the expectation that each party will remain loyal to the relationship. Confirmation is an opportunity to affirm and reaffirm the covenant the church makes in Baptism.

Confirmation is an act of covenant renewal that includes three parties: 1) God confirms a student's baptismal identity as a child of God, whether Baptism occurred in childhood or at the Confirmation worship service; 2) the student confirms his or her faith in Jesus Christ and the teachings of the church; and 3) the congregation confirms the student's spiritual gifts for ministry and active church membership.

Membership in the church happens at Baptism. Confirmation signals a shift from being a baptized member to an active member (that is, active in the ministries and governance of a congregation).



PWE PROMISE

Working with your mentor, write what each of you brings (tangible and intangible) to Confirmation. What promises will you make to each other in this process?

I will bring .

.

I will bring

.

I promise

.

I promise

.

Student signature

Date

Mentor signature

For Me and My House

What questions do you have about being a child of God?

In what ways do you want to practice your

your family to support you in Confirmation?

faith during Confirmation? How do you want

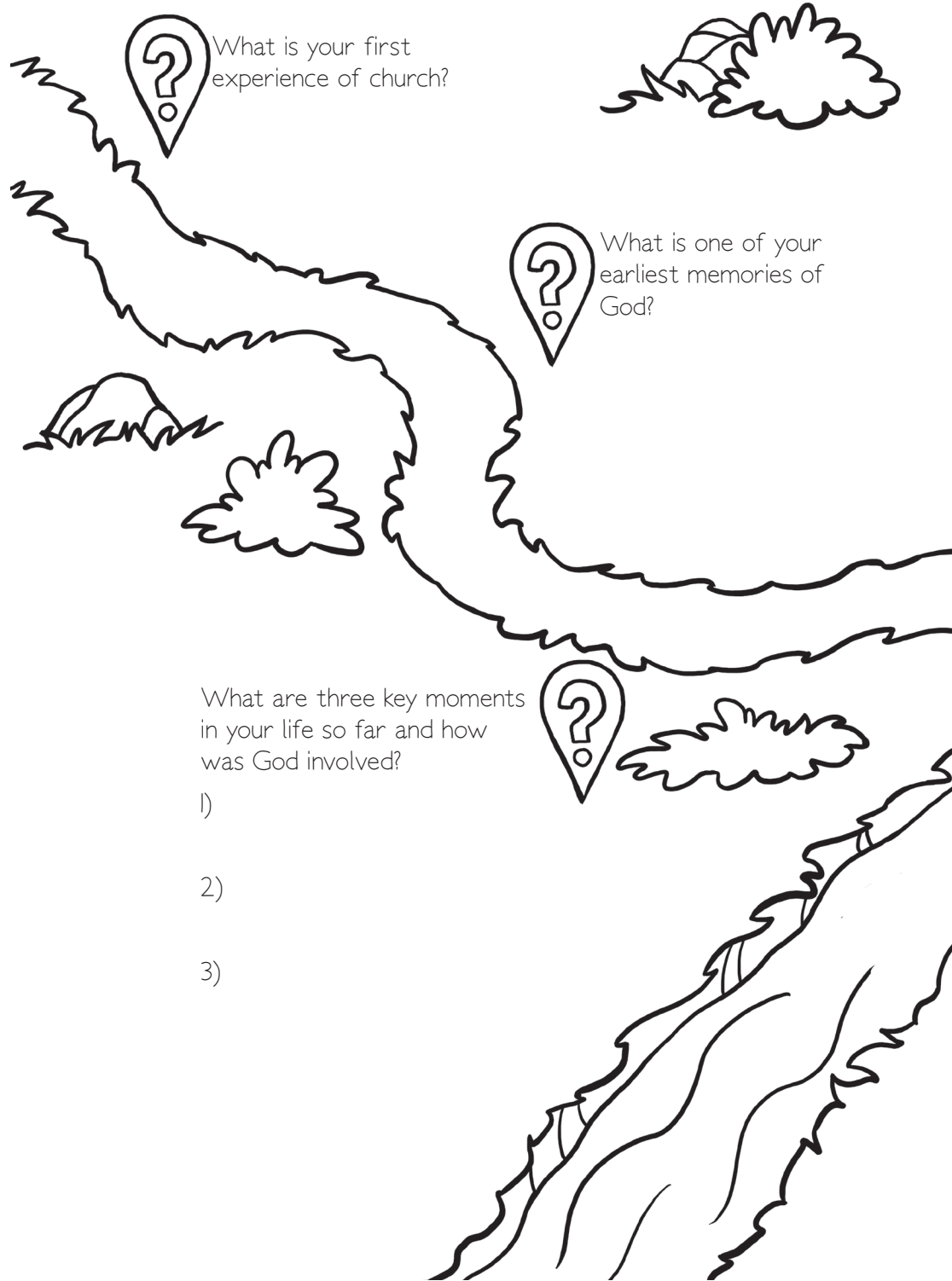
Sign as a covenant with a family member and say a brief prayer of thanks for one another to God.

Date

Student signature

Family member signature

Use the story of Joshua 24 to reflect on your own faith story:



YOUR FAITH JOURNEY

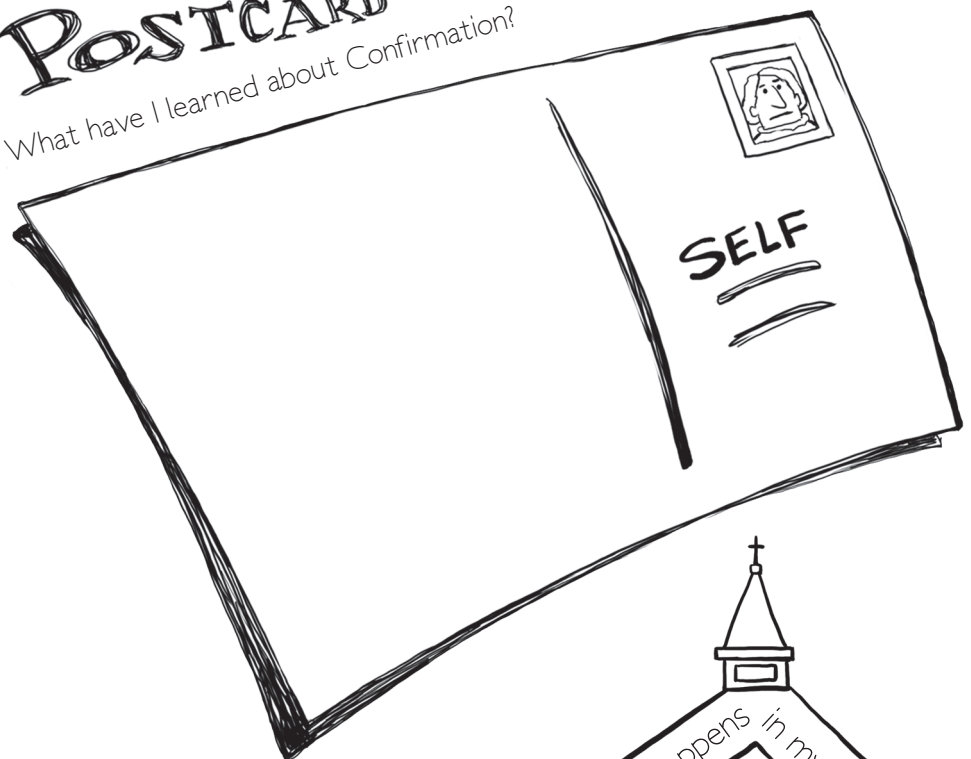
What are some
of the barriers
to your faith?



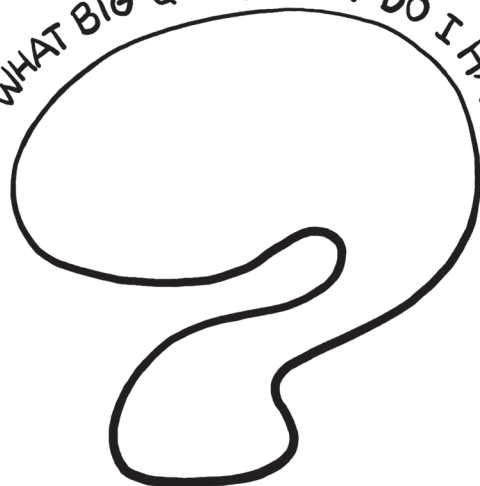
What do you think
a profession of faith
should include?

POSTCARD

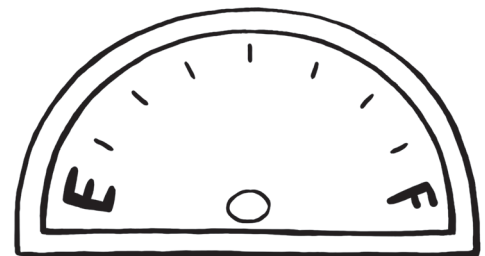
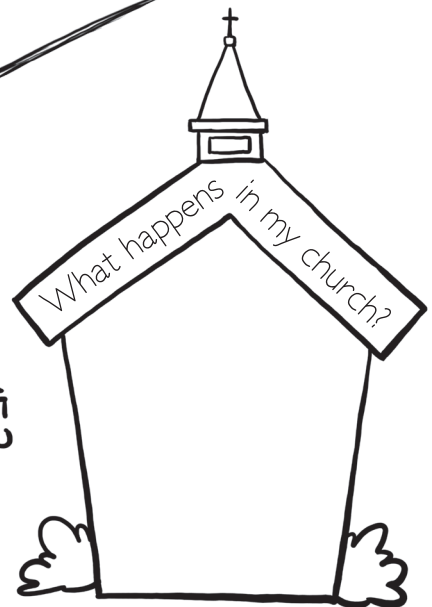
What have I learned about Confirmation?



WHAT BIG QUESTION DO I HAVE?

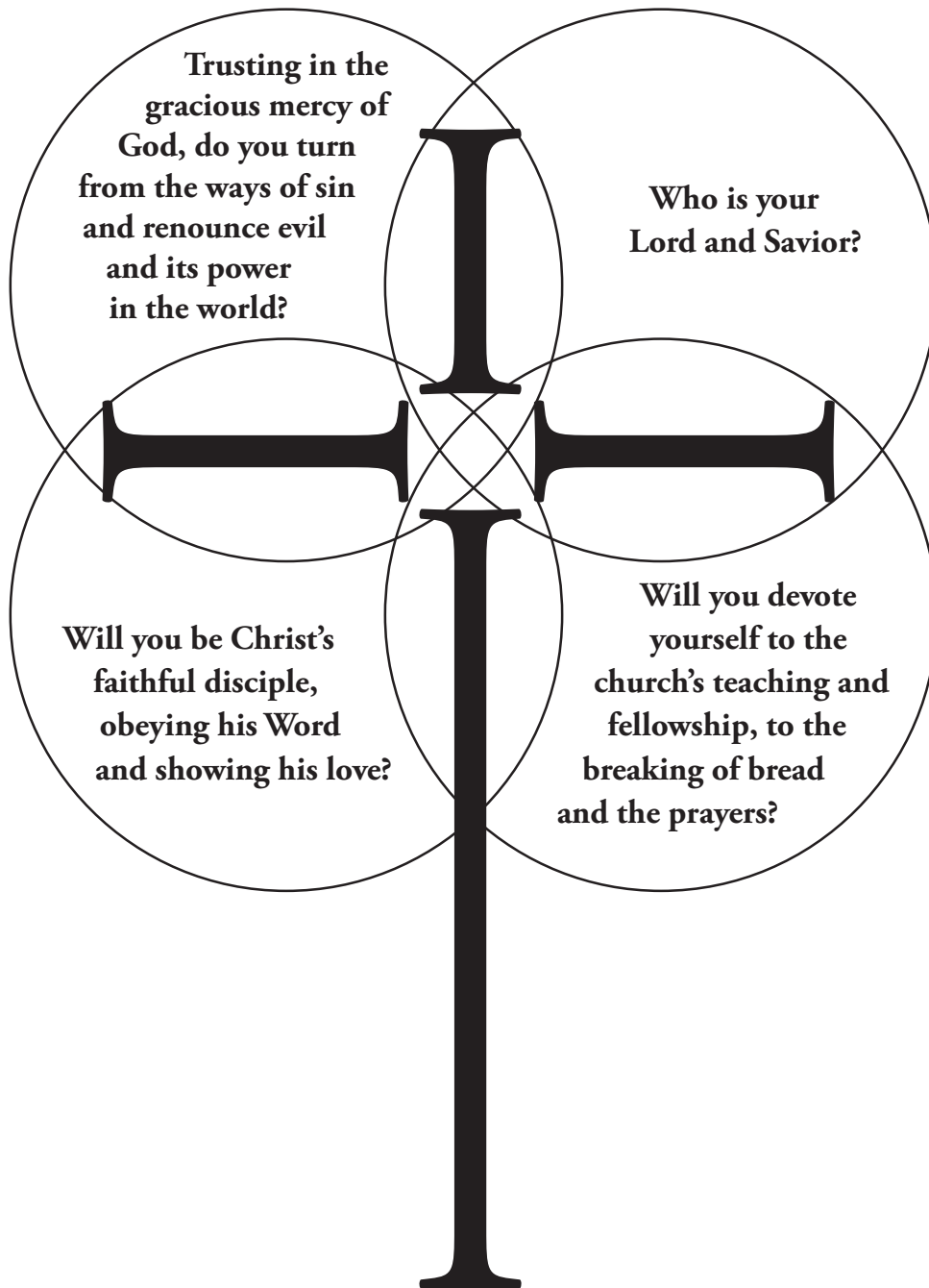


WHAT LITTLE QUESTION DO I HAVE?



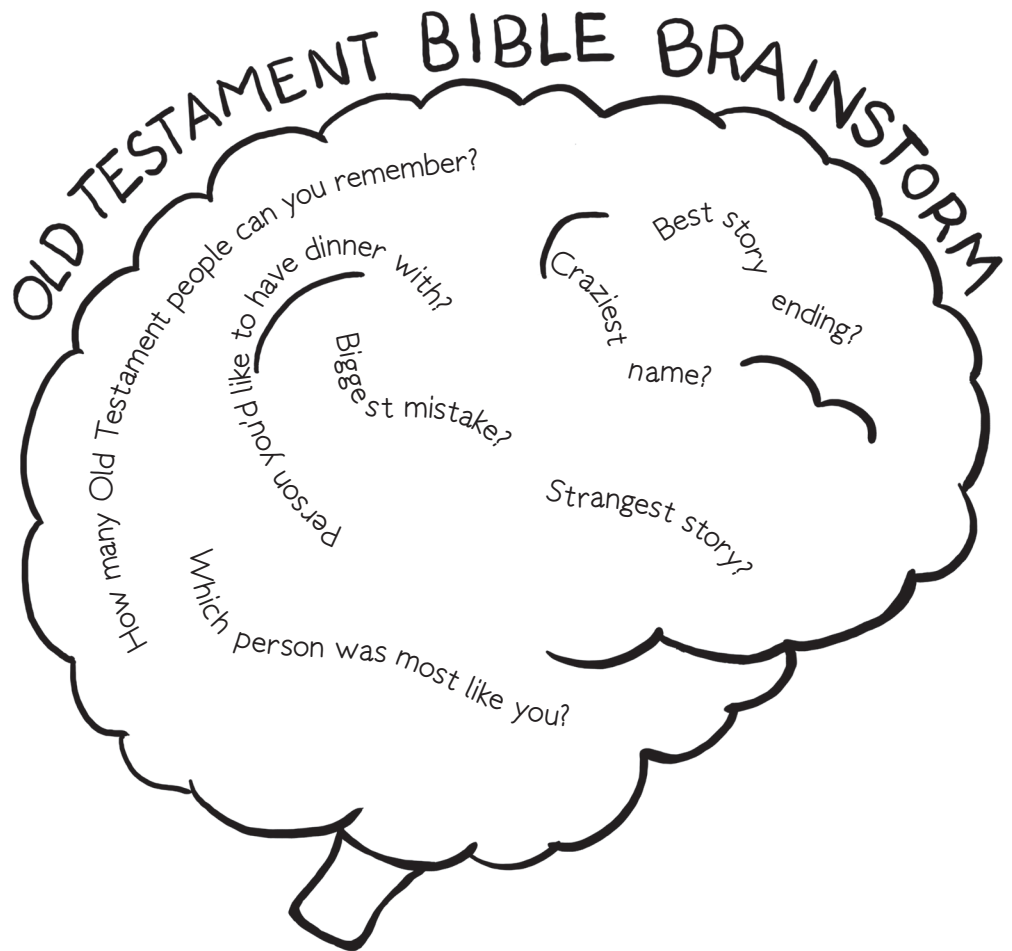
How do I feel about being confirmed?

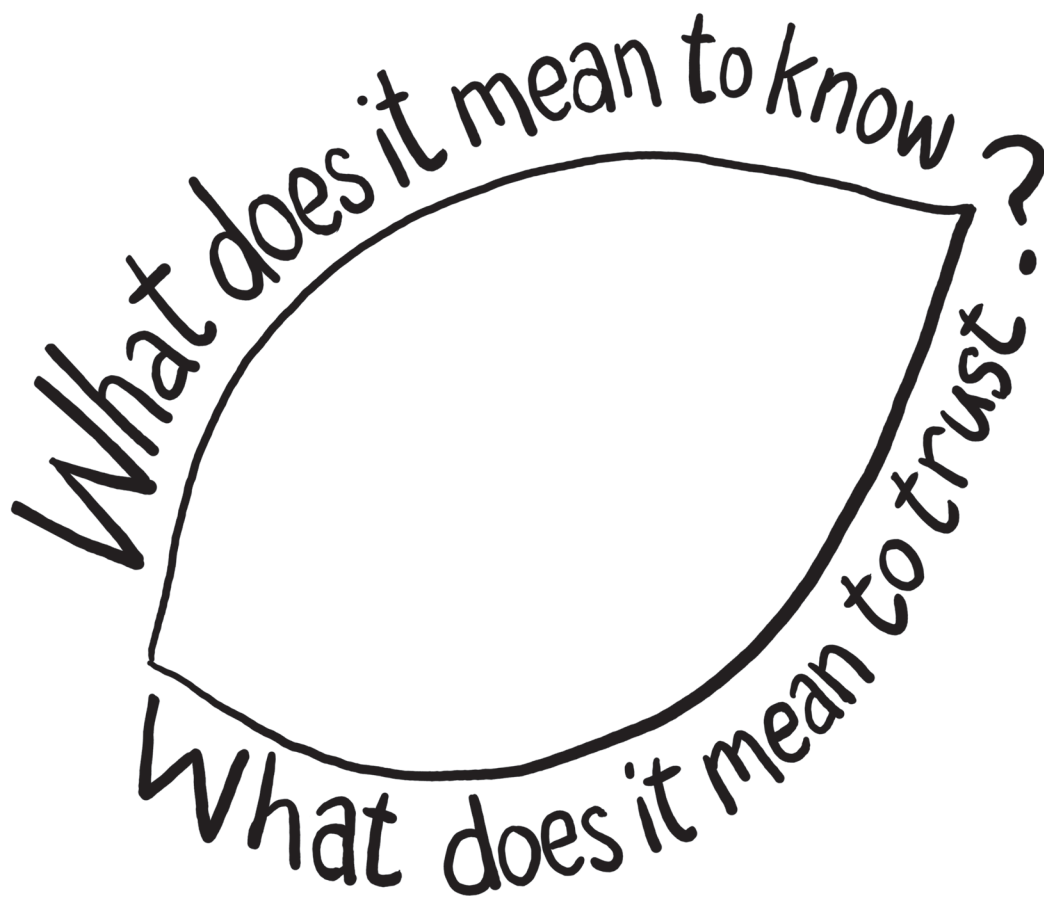
THE BIG QUESTIONS



Looking Ahead:

Next session,
we will focus on the
Old Testament and
the stories of God's
faithfulness to the people.





Words We Use



Trusting God means believing (having faith) that God acts faithfully in the world. Loving God is the greatest of all the laws. Loving God and trusting God go hand in hand. Belief means “giving your heart to something.” To whom do you give your heart?


Grace is the love that God gives to us—not because we have earned it but because God loves us despite our mistakes. Grace is a love bigger than we can imagine.

Mercy is God’s willingness to forgive us again and again, even when we break our promises to God and one another.

Covenant is the agreement in which God vows to be faithful to the people and the people promise to be faithful to God. The Bible shows us that God is trustworthy when it comes to God’s promises.

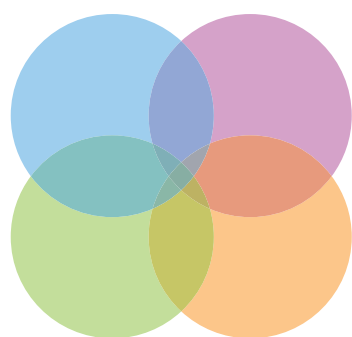
The Infographics . . .

- Come in a set of sixteen 11" x 17" posters to provide visual connections with the content of the curriculum
- Are also available as downloads for projection and printing
- Can be used in a variety of ways outside of Confirmation



I am THRILLED to see infographics incorporated into teaching strategies because I think they are designed to make big chunks of material more manageable, and I, for one, am glad to see Confirmation not deal in such concrete ways with church history but with lived experience within a tradition that encompasses Scripture and the church and personal engagement with big questions. I'm so excited about this!

—Ann Thomas Knox, retired certified Christian educator, Richmond, Virginia



BIG GOD

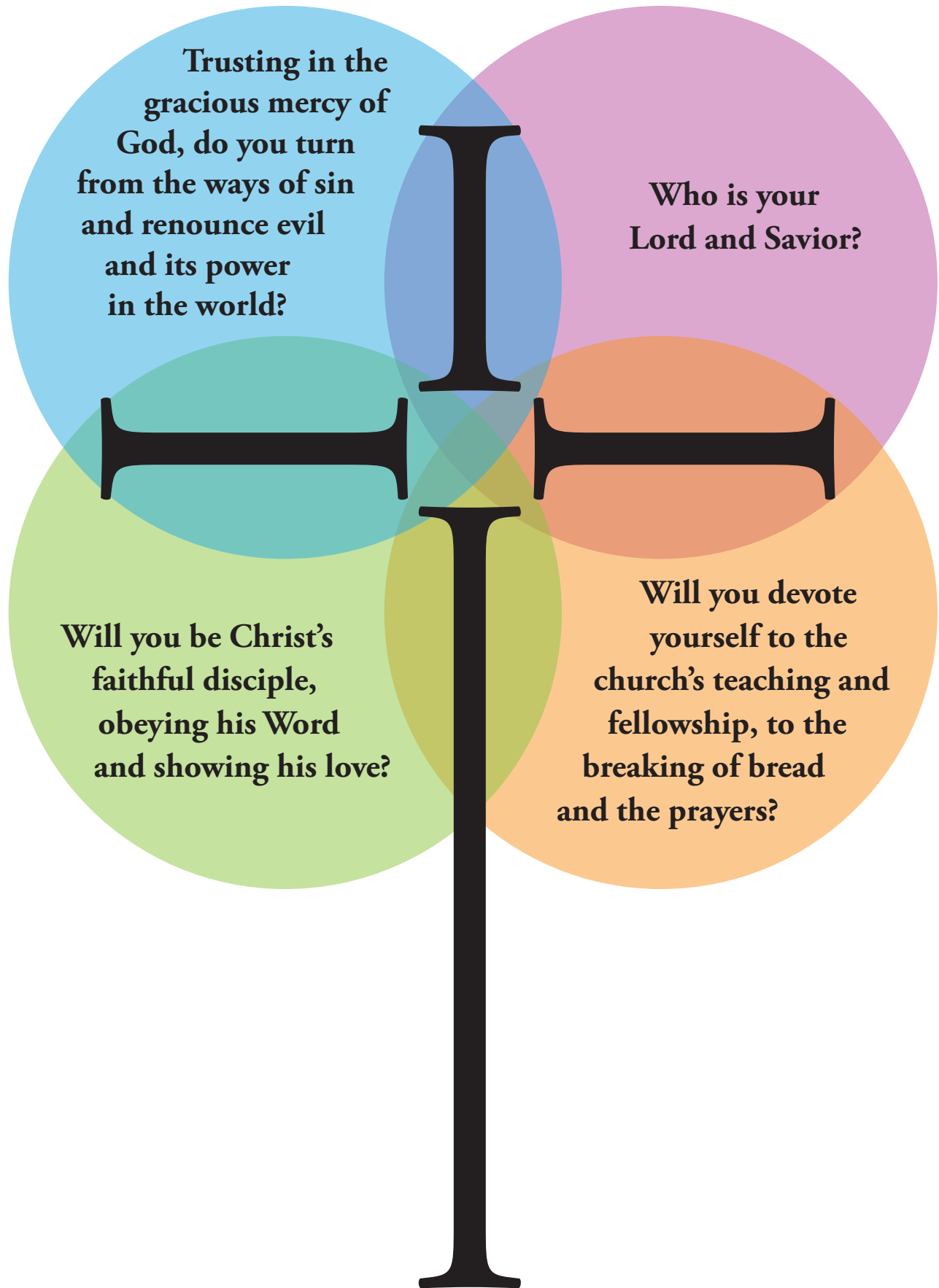
BIG QUESTIONS

CONFIRMATION FOR A GROWING FAITH

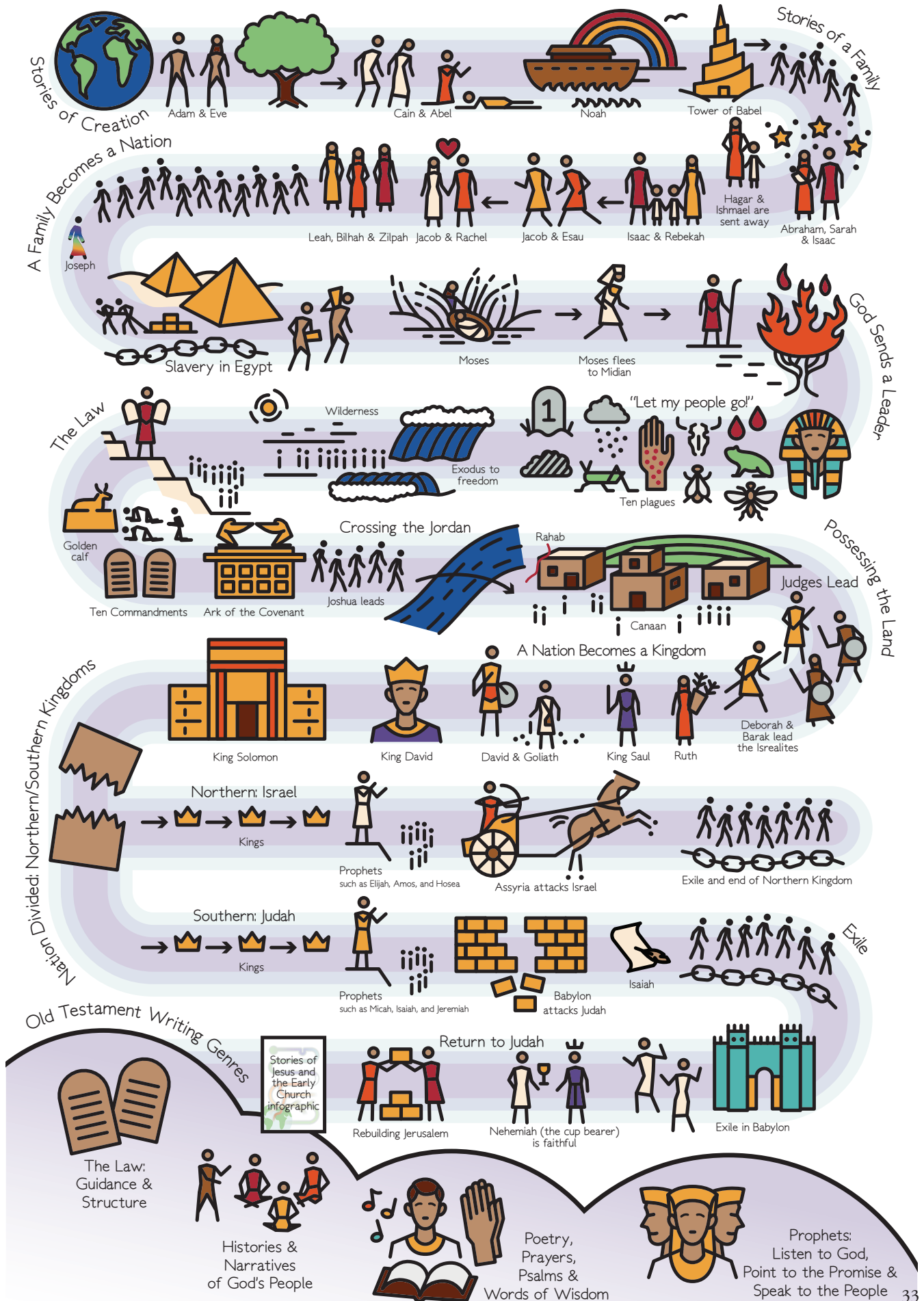
INFOGRAPHICS

The infographics have been reduced to fit this book.
Their actual size is 11" by 17".

THE BIG QUESTIONS



THE OLD TESTAMENT STORIES



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