



Road to Confirmation – Checkpoint conversation guide for:

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

The decision to make the Confirmation vow and to receive the Confirmation blessing is a very important milestone in a youth's journey of faith. The Road to Confirmation process is to ensure a youth is well-equipped and prepared to make their Confirmation vow.

The purposes of the checkpoint conversations are to:

- Ensure the students have an understanding of the material
- Allow a space for the student to ask any questions
- Clarify and correct any misunderstandings that the students may have
- Support the students during their ongoing spiritual development
- Strengthen relationships

This guide is not intended to be a script, but rather has been prepared to help the parent(s)/guardian(s) have a meaningful conversation with their child and to check in with them as they pursue Confirmation. Using the content within this guide, prayerfully allow the Holy Spirit to work with you to shape and direct your checkpoint conversation.

Scheduling the checkpoint conversations

- The order of the checkpoint conversations is outlined in the sequence of courses on the next page.
- Periodically check in with the student so that you know what stage of the Road to Confirmation they are on. Once they have completed the course prior to the designated checkpoint conversation you are responsible for having, please schedule the checkpoint conversation with the student.
 - The student should also have a checkpoint conversation guide (available on NDI) that indicates when the checkpoint conversations happen in the sequence of the courses, and what the discussion questions for the checkpoint conversations are.
- If you have more than one student that is eligible for Confirmation, ideally each conversation happens individually, rather than as a group, since the students eligible for Confirmation will likely be going through the self-paced online video courses at various times. This also helps emphasize the importance of building and strengthening discipling relationships.
- It is important that the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), rector, and youth leader know ahead of time that the conversation will take place. This reduces the student from feeling surprised or pressured to answer any questions or have a discussion.
- The conversation may be anytime and anywhere, as long as those involved know ahead of time that it is happening. However, the place should be comfortable for the student. Consider having the checkpoint conversation around a meal, or going out for ice cream. The checkpoint conversations aren't intended to be intimidating encounters, but rather comfortable conversations discussing faith.
- The student and checkpoint conversation facilitator (parent(s)/guardian(s), youth leader, rector) should have a Bible (strongly recommended) and Catechism Q&A (recommended) on hand during the checkpoint conversations for easy reference.
 - The Catechism Q&A is available electronically [online](#)

Road to Confirmation sequence

All courses can be accessed on NDI (NAC-USA Development Institute) using this menu order: Resources—Faith Arc—Youth—Road to Confirmation. ndi.nac-usa.org

| Course Topic | Estimated completion time | Notes |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Confirmation | 15-20 minutes | This course should be taken with a parent or guardian |
| The Basics | 20-25 minutes | Checkpoint Conversation 1 with parent(s)/guardian(s) |
| The gospel | 20 -25 minutes | This course can be taken with a youth leader |
| Articles of Faith | 25-30 minutes | Checkpoint Conversation 2 with youth leader |
| The Apostolate | 20-25 minutes | |
| Service for the departed | 15-20 minutes | Checkpoint Conversation 3 with rector, or other ordained minister |
| | | Final Conversation with student and some combination of support team (rector, youth leader, parent(s)/guardian(s)) |

How to use this guide

The checkpoint conversation guide has the following sections (**F** and **S** indicate if the feature is on the Facilitator guide and/or the **S**tudent guide):

- Discussion Questions (**FS**)
 - These are questions that are designed to encourage discussion and interaction around the given topics. The facilitator isn't there to just listen to the student talk, nor is the student there to just listen to the facilitator. The encounter should be a conversation where both the student and facilitator are able to discuss the questions openly.
 - **Questions in blue** are verbatim from the online video courses.
 - ***Italicized notes*** are ideal and possible answers to the discussion questions (**F**)
- Big Idea (**F**)
 - The discussion questions should eventually lead to the Big Idea points. These are the main takeaways for those given topics. The student should have a solid understanding of the Big Idea points and be able to restate and explain them in their own words.
- Prayer Focus (**FS**)
 - Each checkpoint conversation will have a suggested prayer focus tailored to that stage of the Road to Confirmation process.
- Next Steps (**FS**)
 - Next steps are the student's opportunity to take what they've learned and put it into practice. They are practical, attainable, and potentially challenging actions that students can take to grow in their relationship with God. The facilitator may support the student by also committing to the suggested next steps.
- Common Questions (**FS**)
 - The Road to Confirmation is to ensure a youth is well-equipped and prepared to make their Confirmation vow. As the student explores and processes their faith, common questions may arise. This feature includes some of the common questions and suggested answers.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

The Bible outlines that the primary spiritual teaching and development happens in the home. In Deuteronomy 6 we can read, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."*

While the family dynamic is changing, the need for a parent or role model in the home to disciple their children is not changing. As a church, we understand that demands on our time are abundant, but when you look at the 168 hours in a week and realize that the children may only be exposed to an official church activity for 2 or 3 hours a week, it becomes clear that those few hours alone are not enough to build up the faith in the hearts of the children.

Please understand, this isn't to imply that you aren't already investing in your children's spiritual development, but rather is emphasizing the importance of such efforts. As a church, we want to partner with parents and help them better disciple their children.

Being a parent comes with great responsibility. Parents often think that they have little or no influence on their children, especially as they get older, but research suggests otherwise. The church, as an organization, can't replace the influence that parents have on their children. But what we can do is help parents in their personal walk with the Lord and equip them to be teachers of the gospel.

At your child's baptism and sealing, you took responsibility to raise them according to Christ's teaching. Thank you for bringing them this far, and continue to walk with them as they are on the Road to Confirmation.

Checkpoint Conversation 1

This checkpoint conversation is to take place after the student has completed the "Confirmation" and "The Basics" online video courses on NDI.

Confirmation

- **Discussion Questions - Confirmation**
 - **What is Confirmation?**
 - *Confirmation is the act of blessing in which young New Apostolic Christians take upon themselves the obligations which their parents or guardians undertook on their behalf at their baptism and sealing. Confirmands vow to be faithful to God and publicly, before the congregation, profess the New Apostolic faith. Once confirmed, these Christians take full responsibility before God for their life of faith. (Catechism Q&A question 663)*
 - **What does it mean to make a vow, in general?**
 - *When making a vow, you're declaring a commitment. You're promising to uphold the content of the vow being made.*
 - **What is the Confirmation vow?**
 - *"I renounce Satan and all his work and ways, and surrender myself to You, O triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in belief, obedience and the earnest resolution to remain faithful to You until my end. Amen." (Catechism Q&A question 667)*
 - **Why do you want to be confirmed?**
 - *To receive God's blessing.*
 - *To take responsibility for the development of my faith.*
 - *To make a public declaration that I believe in God and need Him.*

- **What does it mean to live out the Confirmation vow, in applicable terms? How can we renounce Satan and surrender to God in our family? In our congregation? In our community?**
 - *Renouncing Satan means we have to acknowledge his influence and the evil around us and within us. We must realize that Satan can't MAKE us do anything but that we are tempted by evil and when we sin, we are choosing evil over what is Godly.*
 - *We can renounce Satan and surrender to God when we:*
 - *choose to build people up and encourage others rather than gossip or tear people down.*
 - *Put God and His purposes first when making decisions.*
 - *Decide and go through the process of forgiving others rather than holding grudges.*
 - *Remember that God has a plan for us that is bigger than ourselves.*
- **What is another promise you've made? What helped you keep it? Was there anything that threatened you staying true to that promise? If so, what?**
- *As a parent, if you were confirmed (either in the New Apostolic Church or another denomination) consider sharing and discussing with your child what you remember from your experience of being confirmed. How has your understanding evolved over the years?*

- Big Idea - Confirmation
 - By making the Confirmation vow, you are taking responsibility for your faith and spiritual development.
 - You will be vowing to renounce Satan and surrender to the triune God.
 - Through receiving the Confirmation blessing, God equips you to fulfill the vow.

The Basics

The Basics course consists of modules that cover the topics of: the Trinity, the Bible, the sacraments, the New Apostolic Church Mission and Vision Statements, and the THRIVE Membership Expectations.

- Discussion Questions – The Basics
 - **How would you describe the Trinity?. Who are the three Persons of the Trinity and what are each one's characteristics?**
 - *God is a spiritual, perfect, and completely independent being. He is eternal, without beginning and without end. The one God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These aren't three different gods, but rather three Persons who are the one God. (Catechism Q&A question 51)*
 - *Both the Old and New Testaments contain many references to the trinity of God.(Catechism Q&A question 62)*
 - **Characteristics of the Persons of the Trinity:**
 - *God, the Father, is the Creator of heaven and earth.*
 - *God, the Son, is the Savior and Redeemer who became human and gave His life as a sacrifice for the redemption of mankind.*
 - *God, the Holy Spirit, is the Comforter and Helper, the Spirit of truth. (Catechism Q&A questions 66 and 200)*
 - **As a parent, consider sharing and discussing with your child how you've experienced the triune God's activity in your life.**
 - **God wants a relationship with us. Relationships are a two-way street. What does your part in the relationship with God look like?**
 - **Why is Jesus' death on the cross significant for all?**
 - *Through His sacrificial death, the Son of God established the way for sinners to be delivered from spiritual death and attain eternal life (Catechism Q&A question 99).*
 - *Read, or ask your child to look up and read, 1 John 4:9-10:*
 - *"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins".*
 - *Consider asking your child to look-up "propitiation" on their phone.*

- **Why is the Bible significant?**
 - *The Bible is the collection of writings that record God's revelation and His acts in the course of the history of salvation. The Bible is the basis for Christian living. The New Apostolic Church's teachings are founded on the Bible.*
- **How is the Bible structured?**
 - *The Bible is comprised of two main parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. While the writings of the Old Testament refer to the covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, the writings of the New Testament refer to the new covenant that God made with humankind through the sending of His Son. Both the Old and New Testaments are connected and testify of God's plan of salvation for humankind. (Catechism Q&A question 10)*
 - *The author of the Bible is God. Human beings, whom the Holy Spirit inspired for this purpose, wrote down what God revealed. (Catechism Q&A question 13)*
- **How would you describe what a sacrament is?**
 - *Sacraments are holy acts of God that bring us closer to Him through our faith as believers. In the New Apostolic Church, we celebrate three sacraments: Holy Baptism, Holy Sealing, and Holy Communion.*
- **Discuss the significance of each of the sacraments and the effect each has on the lives of believers.**
 - *Through Holy Baptism with water, we begin a new relationship with God and become a Christian. Through the water, there is a washing away, or dying, of our old self, and a new life in Christ is initiated. Through our faith and profession of Christ, we join the assembly of Christians to become a part of the church and the Body of Christ. Holy Baptism is an act of God that shows He accepts us when we believe in Christ.*
 - *Through Holy Sealing, God gives the baptized person the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17, Acts 19:1-6). Together, Holy Baptism and Holy Sealing comprise the rebirth out of water and the Spirit. Through this rebirth, we become a child of God.*
 - *Holy Communion is a remembrance and profession of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is through the repetition of this meal that we find strength and renewed life in Christ (Luke 22:19-20; John 6:53-58).*
- **What is the Vision statement of the New Apostolic Church (found in the first few pages of the Catechism Q&A book)?**
 - *A church in which people feel at home and, inspired by the Holy Spirit and their love for God, align their lives to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and thus prepare themselves for His return and eternal life.*
- **What is the Mission statement of the New Apostolic Church (found in the first few pages of the Catechism Q&A book)?**
 - *Reaching out to all people in order to teach them the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to baptize them with water and the Holy Spirit.
Providing soul care and cultivating a warm fellowship in which everyone shall experience the love of God and the joy of serving Him and others.*
- **What role should these statements play in the congregation? How do they become more than just a plaque on the wall?**
 - *People feel at home at church when it is a loving and welcoming environment. We should strive to eliminate judgement and accept everyone, acknowledging they are a soul that Jesus Christ died for.*
 - *We prepare ourselves for His return by following Jesus' teaching and example.*
 - *We reach out to all people by intentionally inviting others and showing them that God, and we, care for them.*
 - *Everyone can experience the love of God when our own actions are motivated by the love of God.*
 - **How else can these statements come to life in our family? Congregation? Community?**
- **The Vision statement uses the phrase, "...align their lives to the Gospel of Jesus Christ..." How do we do this?**
- **What do you think when you hear the word "thrive"?**

- **What is “THRIVE” in the context of the New Apostolic Church USA?**
 - *Introduced in 2016, the THRIVE Membership Expectations are expectations for all members of all ages. Featured in a booklet that all families received and that new members receive, the THRIVE Membership Expectations outline what is expected of Christians in the New Apostolic Church.*
 - *The THRIVE acronym and statements are also the basis for the Youth THRIVE Small Group Curriculum.*
- **What are the statements that comprise the THRIVE Membership Expectations?**
 - *The THRIVE Membership Expectations are available on the [NAC USA website](#) and in the [NAC USA mobile app](#).*
 - *It is important that the students know the **bold statements** of the acronym below.*
 - *As a member of the New Apostolic Church USA, you are expected to:*
 - **Transform your nature, using Jesus as your example, by...**
 - *exemplifying the fruit of the Spirit as Jesus did. Use them to measure your spiritual maturity. (Galatians 5:22-23)*
 - *forgiving as Jesus forgave, unconditionally and fully (Matthew 6:12, 18:21-22, Luke 17:3)*
 - *being engaged and present when celebrating Holy Communion to experience its transformational power. (1 Corinthians 11:24)*
 - **Help spread the Gospel by...**
 - *sharing how God's plan of salvation has impacted you. (2 Timothy 2:2, Ephesians 1:13)*
 - *being a disciple of Jesus Christ. (John 13:34-35)*
 - *living and leading like Jesus, in word and deed. (Colossians 3:17)*
 - **Respond to the call to serve by...**
 - *discovering and developing your spiritual gifts and engaging in the congregation by using those gifts. (Ephesians 4:11-16)*
 - *edifying the Body of Christ by acknowledging and appreciating the gifts of others. (1 Corinthians 12:4-27)*
 - *showing your love for Jesus through helping your family, congregation, community, and those in need. (Luke 10:30-37, Matthew 25:35-40, Mark 9:35)*
 - *directly serving Jesus Christ. (Romans 14:17-19)*
 - **Invest in your spiritual health by...**
 - *praying. Prayer cultivates a relationship with God and helps deepen your knowledge of Him and yourself. (Colossians 4:2)*
 - *reading and studying the Bible. The Holy Scripture is inspired by God's word and equips us for righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*
 - *actively partaking in the divine service experience and celebrating the presence of the Triune God, allowing the encounter to transform your daily life. (Romans 10:17, 1 Corinthians 11:23-29)*
 - *continually pursuing knowledge of the Triune God through the Gospel so that your thinking is not static, but is constantly renewed. (Romans 12:2, John 17:3)*
 - *worshipping together. (Psalm 29:2, 1 Chronicles 29:10-15)*
 - **Value the Church by...**
 - *giving voluntary offerings to God in appreciation and thanksgiving for that which He has provided for you. (1 Chronicles 29:9, Luke 21:1-4)*
 - *tithing and expressing your desire to participate in the church of Christ which God has established. (2 Corinthians 9:7, Matthew 10:8)*
 - *engaging in intentional community by sharing your life and spiritual journey with others through fellowship. (Acts 2:42-47, 1 John 1:3, 1 Corinthians 12:25-27)*
 - *praying for others. (Philippians 2:3-4, Galatians 6:2)*
 - **Embrace the promise of Jesus Christ's return by...**
 - *being future-oriented and focusing on His promise. (Philippians 3:12-14)*
 - *preparing for it by applying the Gospel to every part of your life. (John 14:3)*
- **Do you think it is good for Christians to have certain expectations for their lives, such as the ones in the THRIVE acronym? Why or why not?**

- **Big Idea – The Basics**

- *God, the Father, our Creator, God, the Son, our Savior and Redeemer, and God, the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Spirit of truth, are one and invite me into relationship with them.*
- *The Bible is a collection of writings about God's activity, promises, and commandments. The whole of Scripture points to Jesus Christ and the overarching plan of salvation.*
- *Sacraments are holy acts of God that bring us closer to Him through our faith as believers. In the New Apostolic Church, we celebrate three sacraments: Holy Baptism, Holy Sealing, and Holy Communion.*
- *The Vision and Mission statements of the New Apostolic Church are actionable statements that should guide our decisions and our behavior, both in the congregation and our personal lives.*
- *Being a Christian is not a passive experience, but a lifelong journey of development. The THRIVE Membership Expectations outline what is expected from a mature disciple of Jesus Christ. They can be found in the THRIVE booklets in the congregation, on the church's website (<https://ndi.nac-usa.org/en/resources/you-re-home/thrive>), and on the church's mobile app.*

- **Prayer Focus – Checkpoint Conversation 1**

- Close your time together in prayer. Consider including a combination of the following suggested points:
 - Thank God for His love, His Son, His Spirit, and the plan of salvation
 - Ask God for focus in studying His Word in the Bible
 - Ask God for the strength to fight against sin and temptation
 - Ask God for heightened sensitivity when experiencing your next celebration of Holy Communion, so that you can encounter Jesus in a new and deeper way

- **Next Steps – Checkpoint Conversation 1**

- Make a list of the people in your direct spheres of influence (your family, congregation, community) and begin intentionally showing them the love of God. Pay attention to them, hear their needs, and make yourself available to serve them in the areas where they need help and comfort.
- Invite someone you know to come to small group discussion or attend church with you next Sunday.

Notes

After the conversation

- Remind the student to be in contact with the youth leader regarding when they finish the next 2 online courses, "The Gospel" and "The Articles of Faith," so that they can schedule the next checkpoint conversation.
- Inform the youth leader and rector that your checkpoint conversation took place. Share any points of concern, without breaking any confidences that your child may have shared with you. If a particular point seems questionable, ask their permission to share it with the youth leader and/or minister.
- Continue to include your child and their faith journey in your prayers.

Common Questions for the Road to Confirmation

1. How can God be three Persons at one time?

God is Father, Son, and Spirit. This is one of the great mysteries of the faith. We know that it's true because the Bible makes it clear over and over again, but we can't fully understand how it works. One of the greatest proofs of the reality of God is that there's much about Him we can't understand. Isaiah 55:8 tells us that, "His thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways."

2. How can I trust God if I don't fully understand Him?

There are lots of things in life that we trust but don't completely understand. To trust God is to have faith in God. Faith is defined as "trust or confidence in something or someone." When you sit in a chair for the first time, you are showing faith that the chair will hold you. Until you sit, you really don't know if the chair will stay together. We trust God based on His history, character, and promises. Over time, as you grow closer to God, trusting Him will become more natural.

3. Why does God love us so much?

He chooses to - He freely loves us. More than a feeling, love is a choice. The Word tells us in 1 John 4:8 that God is love, so He is really the embodiment of that choice in action. It's even more beautiful when we understand that God isn't forced to love us because of a feeling. He chooses to love us, unconditionally and always, out of His own free will.

4. Does God still love us when we mess up?

Yes! Romans 5:8 says that, "God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Think about that for a moment. God loves us so much that even while we were doing wrong, He sent His only Son to die on a cross so that we could be forgiven and free. That's how much He still loves us when we mess up. His love is unconditional!

5. I want to do right, but I keep sinning. Is being a "good Christian" supposed to be this hard?

None of us are perfect. Jesus lived the only perfect life that the world has ever seen. We should always strive to be like Jesus, but it's a process, and we will fall short. Every Christian struggles and is faced with temptation and difficulty, but there are practical steps we can take to help us. Find an accountability partner, make spending time in the Word a habit, and pray regularly. As you grow, you'll find your walk with the Lord feels more and more natural as you move forward on your journey of faith. Keep going!

6. What can I do to earn God's love and approval?

Nothing. You don't have to earn it and you wouldn't be able to even if you tried. Fortunately, you can just receive it. Ephesians 2:8 tells us that, "by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." You don't have to do anything except put your faith in Jesus to receive God's love and approval.

7. What happens if sharing my faith doesn't work?

The truth is that our responsibility is to share our faith and trust God to take care of the results. Ideally, you want the person to accept Jesus and enter into a vibrant relationship with Him. That may not happen right away every time. Whenever you share your faith, you move the ball down the field some. You plant a seed. Someone else may come along later and water it. You may never see that person come to Christ, but you played a role.

8. Do I have to share my faith?

Yes. God expects us to talk about Him. It can sound intimidating, but it's really just telling your own story. Tell them about what God has done in your life and share the hope you have as a result. 1 Peter 3:15 instructs believers to, "...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you..."

9. How do I know if I am hearing from God?

We can try to answer this in two parts. First, one of the best ways to discern whether or not you are hearing from God is to dive into His Word. God will not contradict Himself, so if you feel like the Spirit is telling you something, check it with God's Word. On top of that, you can know that the Holy Spirit always offers hope, while the enemy beats down. The Holy Spirit calms, comforts, convicts, leads, and encourages, while the enemy obsesses, worries, condemns, and confuses.

On an even more practical note, you can ask yourself these 4 questions:

- Does what I'm hearing line up with Scripture?
- Is it consistent with God's character?
- Is it being confirmed through messages I'm hearing at church in the preached word or studying in my quiet times?
- Would it please God?

10. Is Jesus the only way to Heaven?

In John 14:6, Jesus says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Jesus is the only way to Heaven. He lived, died, and rose again so that everyone could have a path to freedom and salvation through Him.

11. What is the Bible?

The Bible is the living Word of God, and is our guidebook to life. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says it best, "The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone."

12. How do I get more from my Bible?

There are three great steps to take towards getting the most out of your Bible. First, accept its authority by receiving God's Word with an open heart and respond to His Word with obedience. Second, absorb its truths by hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on God's Word. Third, apply its principles. James 1:22 tells us plainly, "Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

13. Why are there different translations/versions of the Bible?

The Bible was originally written in ancient Greek and Hebrew. Different translations exist because language is alive, constantly developing and changing. The truths in God's Word stay the same, but the words we use to communicate them effectively change along with the language. Overall, we believe that the Holy Spirit is that author of the Bible.

14. What is the difference between the Old Testament and New Testament?

The Old Testament is the foundation. The New Testament is the fulfilment. God made promises in the Old Testament and keeps His promises in the New Testament. The Old Testament is about God making the world. The New Testament is about God saving the world. God's people in the Old Testament was Israel. God's people in the New Testament is the Church. And yet, God desires all men to be saved, as indicated in 1 Timothy 2:3-6, "*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all...*"