

Road to Confirmation – Checkpoint conversation guide for:

Students

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 you have an understanding of the material
- Allow a space for you to ask any questions
- Clarify and correct any misunderstandings that you may have
- Support you during your 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), youth leaders, and rectors have a meaningful conversation with you and to check in with you as you pursue Confirmation. The questions in this discussion guide are from the Road to Confirmation online courses as well as the Youth THRIVE Small Group Curriculum.

To maximize the conversation, you 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

- Discussion Questions
 - 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.
- Prayer Focus
 - Each checkpoint conversation will have a suggested prayer focus tailored to that stage of the Road to Confirmation process.
- Next Steps
 - 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
 - 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.

Checkpoint Conversation 1 with parent(s)/guardian(s)

This checkpoint conversation is to take place after you have completed the “Confirmation” and “The Basics” online video courses on NDI.

Confirmation

- Discussion Questions - Confirmation
 - **What is Confirmation?**
 - **What does it mean to make a vow, in general?**
 - **What is the Confirmation vow?**
 - **Why do you want to be confirmed?**
 - **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?**
 - **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?**

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?](#)**
 - **Characteristics of the Persons of the Trinity:**
 - **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?](#)**
 - **Why is the Bible significant?**
 - **How is the Bible structured?**
 - **How would you describe what a sacrament is?**
 - **Discuss the significance of each of the sacraments and the effect each has on the lives of believers.**
 - **What is the Vision statement of the New Apostolic Church (found in the first few pages of the Catechism Q&A book)?**
 - **What is the Mission statement of the New Apostolic Church (found in the first few pages of the Catechism Q&A book)?**
 - **[What role should these statements play in the congregation?](#) How do they become more than just a plaque on the wall?
 - **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?**
 - **What are the statements that comprise the THRIVE Membership Expectations?**
 - *Transform your nature, using Jesus as your example, by...*
 - *Help spread the Gospel by...*
 - *Respond to the call to serve by...*
 - *Invest in your spiritual health by...*
 - *Value the Church by...*
 - *Embrace the promise of Jesus Christ's return by...*

- **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?**
 - *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.*
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- 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

Checkpoint Conversation 2 with youth leader

This checkpoint conversation is to take place after you have completed “The Gospel” and “The Articles of Faith” online video courses on NDI.

Before discussing “The Gospel” and “The Articles of Faith” courses, discuss with your youth leader any questions or additional thoughts on any of the topics from the previous checkpoint conversation.

The Gospel

- Discussion Questions - Confirmation
 - **The phrase “Gospel of Jesus Christ” appears in both the New Apostolic Church Vision and Mission statements. Part of our responsibility as Christians, and included in the THRIVE Membership Expectations, is our need to help spread the gospel. How would you describe the gospel to someone that asks about it?**
 - **Talk about a time someone shared their faith with you and told you about Jesus. What can you learn from how they did it? How would you go about sharing your faith with someone else?**
 - *Consider watching the video “[What is the Gospel?](#)” available on the NAC USA YouTube page and also in the NAC USA mobile app, to see an example of how the Gospel is shared conversationally.*
 - **What makes the gospel worth sharing? Why is the gospel important to you?**
 - **What could keep you from sharing the story of the gospel?**
 - **What are some key Bible verses that help explain the gospel?**
 - *Look up and read:*
 - Isaiah 53:5
 - Matthew 28:19-20
 - John 3:16
 - John 14:6
 - Romans 1:16
 - Romans 3:23
 - Romans 5:8
 - Romans 6:23
 - Romans 10:9-13
 - 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

The Articles of Faith

- Discussion Questions – Articles of Faith
 - **How would you describe a creed?**
 - **How many Articles of Faith does the New Apostolic Church have?**
 - **How can the Articles of Faith be categorized or ‘themed’ together?**
 - **The first three Articles of Faith are based on the “Apostle’s Creed” or “Apostolicum.” Most Christian churches believe in and subscribe to the foundations of faith defined by the Apostle’s Creed and also the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople. Why is it important to know that?**
 - **Are there any statements in the Articles of Faith that are confusing or unclear?**
 - **Recite, or read, the 10 Articles of Faith together.**

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- Prayer Focus – Checkpoint Conversation 2
 - Close your time together in prayer. Consider including a combination of the following suggested points:
 - Thank God for the good news of the gospel.
 - Ask God to reveal opportunities for you to share the good news of Jesus Christ with someone, and to provide courage in that moment.

 - Next Steps – Checkpoint Conversation 2
 - Study the Articles of Faith and find someone, or multiple people, to speak them out loud to.
 - Write out, or type in the notes of your phone, why Jesus is important to you. Carry this message with you wherever you go.

Notes

Checkpoint Conversation 3 with rector

This checkpoint conversation is to take place after you have completed “The Apostolate” and “Service for the Departed” online video courses on NDI.

Before discussing “The Apostolate” and “Service for the Departed” courses, discuss with your minister any questions or additional thoughts on any of the topics from the previous checkpoint conversations.

The Apostolate

- Discussion Questions - Apostolate
 - **What does the word “apostle” mean?**
 - **What is the role of an ambassador?**
 - **The Apostle ministry is the only ministry that Jesus established. Why did Jesus establish the Apostle ministry?**
 - **What do the Apostles teach?**
 - **On what authority do the Apostles exercise their responsibilities?**
 - **What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?**
 - **Did the Apostle ministry cease to exist after the death of the early Apostles?**
 - **How long did this interruption in the activity of Apostles last?**
 - **Why was the activity of the Apostles interrupted?**
 - **How was the Apostle ministry re-occupied after the death of the first Apostles?**
 - **Who is your current Apostle?**

Service for the Departed

- Discussion Questions – Service for the Departed
 - **What happens when someone dies?**
 - **How do we know that help is available for the souls that have departed?**
 - **Holy Scripture promotes the belief in life after death, and gives us knowledge about the realms of the departed. This topic effects each person differently. Discuss your feelings about life after death. When you hear “life after death,” “eternity,” or “realms of the departed,” what do you visualize?**
 - **What happens in a service for the departed?**
 - ***How do we know sacraments are available to the dead?***
 - ***What is our role in the service for the departed?***

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- Prayer Focus – Checkpoint Conversation 3
 - Close your time together in prayer. Consider including a combination of the following suggested points:
 - Thank God for establishing the Apostle ministry.
 - Praise God for His omnipotence and for being God of the living and the dead.
 - Ask God to strengthen us in our striving to remain faithful to Him.
 - Next Steps – Checkpoint Conversation 3
 - Memorize the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20
 - Memorize the fourth Article of Faith.

Notes

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...*"