

**Your Essay:**  
**What Does Affirmation of Baptism mean to you?**

Read the excerpt from C. S. Lewis on the next page with care and thoughtfulness and, in response, write an essay with care and thoughtfulness (C. S. Lewis is the author of the stories about Narnia that were made into movies a few years ago). It is this essay and your selection of a Confirmation Verse that will be the basis for a conversation with Pastor Al & elders of this parish. This conversation will:

- review your investment in the David Lutheran Catechism Process.
- serve as a significant basis for the Church Council to recommend you to the congregation as someone ready to take mature responsibility for the covenant God made with you in Holy Baptism.

You are highly encouraged to give extensive and thoughtful effort; simply, a continuance of the extensive and thoughtful effort you been encouraged to give all along. Do heed that Affirmation of Baptism is no more an automatic, work-free guarantee to receive than say, your high school or college diploma. As such, it would seem wise for you to bring into this conversation a working familiarity with your Small Catechism, as has been the encouragement offered to you all along. The Small Catechism can serve as a resource for your thinking and writing alongside the Bible. Other resources you might find helpful are any hand-outs from catechism class and responses received to worship reflections.

**Now, don't panic!** You've already been doing the work; now, you're just bringing it all together. You can do this! You know what love is and you know how to affirm it. Besides, you'll be sitting with sisters and brothers in Christ. Yes, we do expect you to have matured in the past two years, no different than Jesus expects any of us to mature every year of our lives. If you would like a good sense of what the tone of this time will be, read the entire chapter of Luke 24. If you're still queasy, talk to me.

Sufficient length for this essay is  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 page, using Times New Roman font in 12 point, and double-spaced lines with 1 inch margins. Do remember what you've been taught about plagiarism in school. *All you've been taught about plagiarism applies here and, at a higher level: plagiarism is a violation of the Seventh Commandment.*

**Aids for selecting a Confirmation Verse, if you don't already have one on your heart:**

- Length: usually, one verse; though, it can be a bit longer to capture a context
- From: Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament
- Before you think about it, before you open the Bible to look for one, pray. Perhaps something like:
  - “Lord Jesus, I am yours. I seek a verse to guide my days, to give meaning to my life. I seek something that both can be both reassurance and vision.”
  - Next, sit in silence and listen for a while.
- As you think about Scripture, listen deep inside yourself for something that brings you peace; or, something, that is a challenge. Seek a verse, in other words, that has deep meaning for you.
- If you think of a part of a verse but cannot find it, go to <http://www.biblestudytools.com>. There, you can type in a word or a part of a verse and search. Select the NRSV (New Revised Standard Version) as that will be the same as your bible from catechism class.

## **For Reading & Reflection in Preparation for Your Essay & Interview**

We can all understand how a man forgives offenses against himself. You tread on my toe and I forgive you, you steal my money and I forgive you. But what should we make of a man, himself unrobbed and untrodden on, who announced that he forgave you for treading on other men's toes and stealing other men's money? Asinine fatuity is the kindest description we should give of his conduct. Yet this is what Jesus did. He told people that their sins were forgiven, and never waited to consult the other people whom their sins had undoubtedly injured. He unhesitatingly behaved as if He was the party chiefly concerned, the person chiefly offended in all offenses. This makes sense only if He really was the God whose laws are broken and whose love is wounded in every sin. In the mouth of any speaker who is not God, these words imply what I can only regard as a silliness and conceit unrivalled by any other character in history....

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

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C.S. Lewis says in this reading, "You must make your choice". Perhaps that could be a way to begin this essay on what Affirmation of Baptism means for you. Below are some possible opening sentences you could consider beginning with. Select one, or create your own.

- I choose to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. He chose me before I ever knew him! I am a beloved child of God and I want to do something with this good news. I want to . . .
- I choose to not believe that Jesus is the Son of God and . . .
- I choose to be truthful and say I'm not sure what to believe . . .
- I choose to orient my life around this way of forgiving and loving like Jesus, because . . .
- You know, God loves me so much and Jesus wanted me to know that so much that He died on the cross rather than not tell me such good news. Therefore, I am ready to affirm my baptism because . . .
- I know for sure that confirmation is not at all like graduation. I've not finished a thing. I've only just begun, meaning . . .
- I am so thankful for 1 John 4:15! I'm growing in this! Now, let me tell you what this means for my life . . .

Do bear in mind your Lutheran foundations. We believe God loves us and saves us through Jesus Christ before we ever choose God. Remember, we don't have to do anything to get God to love us.