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Dates 2024

- Sunday 26th May and 2nd June Confirmation and Baptism Workshop 11:00-12:30pm
- Sunday 16th June Youth Confirmation and Baptism in 9am Service

Contacts

Questions about the theology of confirmation or baptism, please contact Charles Cleworth (charles.cleworth@gracecity.com.au).

Questions and **sign up** for the confirmation and baptism Workshops, please contact Jason Kuan Youth Coordinator (jason.kuan@gracecity.com.au)

Questions about logistics or would like to book into confirmation or baptism, please contact Lily Layt our administrator (lily.layt@gracecity.com.au).

Introduction

Youth confirmation and baptism is a wonderful opportunity for teenagers to reflect on and profess their faith. The teenage years can be a challenging time for exploring identity and worldview. At this formative age, parents and youth leaders can be instrumental in nurturing, encouraging and supporting the faith of teenagers. Youth confirmation and baptism are a great avenue for intentional discipleship during the teenage years.

Confirmation does not appear in the Bible, Jesus was never confirmed. Confirmation is used as an opportunity for those baptised as infants to share their own confession of faith in Jesus and for them to declare their membership at Grace City Church.

Teenagers not baptised as infants can be baptised and then confirmed as youth. They will have the same special opportunity to declare their faith and church membership.

The workshops are an incredible opportunity for families to discuss what it means to be Christian. They are also an excellent opportunity for a home and church partnership. In the two Sunday workshops, we work through some big questions such as:

- Who is God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit?
- What is your salvation story?
- What are confirmation and baptism?

Theology of Confirmation

Q: What are infant baptism and dedication?

A: Baptism symbolises the cleansing of sin, new life in Jesus and welcoming into the people of God. The washing of water of baptism represents the spiritual washing that happens through the Holy Spirit. Dedication is an opportunity for parents to thank God for their child/ren, express their desire to raise their child/ren so that they might know and love God, and to ask for the church's support in doing so. Dedication doesn't involve water. At Grace City, we strongly encourage members to baptise their child/ren. Infant baptism and dedication can be done at any point, but we tend to recommend that this takes place as early as possible, generally between the ages of 0–3.

Q: What are youth confirmation and baptism?

A: Confirmation is a ceremony in which youth publicly declare their commitment to Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, profess what they believe as a Christian and promise to strive to serve and obey him as a member of the church. In the service, youth will be asked to *"affirm before God and his church the Christian faith into which you were baptised."* That will involve saying the Apostle's Creed as a summary of our faith. Therefore the youth and parent workshops look at why the Apostle's Creed is a good summary of our faith and how it arises out of Scripture.

Q: Why do we confirm youth?

A: Confirmation does not appear in the Bible, Jesus was never confirmed. It is practised by the Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman Catholic denominations. For Presbyterians and Anglicans, confirmation is used as an opportunity for children baptised as infants to share their own confession of faith in Christ and for them to declare their membership of Grace City Church. Confirmation has a different meaning and significance for Roman Catholics.

In infant baptism, we pray that God will use our teaching of his word to bring children into real life with him. Confirmation, therefore is the public ceremony where people who have been baptised declare that they are followers of Jesus Christ and that they want to be members of this church (this gathering of God's people).

Q: What does it mean to be Anglican?

A: The founding documents of the Anglican Church are the 39 Articles (theology) and the book of Common Prayer (church life). They were drawn up by Thomas Cranmer and agreed to in 1562. Every Anglican minister needs to agree to their teaching in order to be licenced.

The Anglican church is also part of the Reformation movement which sought to uphold 4 foundational truths:

- Bible alone - not the teaching of the church or pope
- Faith alone - our works don't contribute to our salvation but flow from it
- Grace alone - our faith is a gift, not earned
- Christ alone - Jesus is our only saviour and king

Q: Do Christians have to be baptised or confirmed?

A: No, confirmation or baptism does not make you a Christian. However, confirmation and baptism are wonderful opportunities for a family to discuss what it means to be a Christian through the parent and youth workshops. It is also a great time for youth to consider what it means to be a Christian and why they follow Jesus. The teenage years are also a great time to make a personal profession of faith. But confirmation or baptism does not make anyone a Christian and therefore is not compulsory.

Q: Why does it have to be the bishop conducting confirmation?

A: Historically, it has always been the bishop who has conducted confirmations. Several years ago, it was debated at synod as to whether rectors (senior ministers) should be able to conduct confirmations. The synod voted against this idea. While there is nothing in the Bible to suggest that only a bishop could do something like this (i.e. lay hands on and pray for people), it's also not a bad idea for the following reasons:

1. As an overseer of many different local churches, there is a sense in which the bishop represents more than just the local church (i.e. Grace City). For him to be the one who confirms people is a helpful reminder of the fact that we are not just members of Grace City, but of Christ's universal church. Thus, we are not a cult, but a church in fellowship with many other churches.
2. A very imperfect parallel of this can be seen in Acts 8. Philip goes up to preach in Samaria and the people get converted, but they do not receive the Holy Spirit until the Apostles come and lay their hands on them (Acts 8:14-17). This is a unique moment in the history of redemption. But the point of this episode seems to be a way of ensuring that the Samaritans (whom the Jews historically hated) were not seen as second class citizens in the Kingdom of God, but had Apostolic approval/confirmation that they were in fact legitimate believers, on par with the Jews who trusted in Christ.

Q: Why would a youth get baptised and confirmed on the same day (or not)?

A: In a confirmation service that also includes people getting baptised, both the people getting baptised and the people getting confirmed make the same promises. In the service, the promises made by both are as follows:

Do you turn to Christ?

I turn to Christ.

Do you repent of your sins?

I repent of my sins.

Do you reject selfish living, and all that is false and unjust?

I reject them all.

Do you renounce Satan and all evil?

I renounce all that is evil.

In other words, Part 1 (of the two parts of confirmation outlined above) are identical.

The extra thing that happens in confirmation is that the bishop lays hands on the confirmer and prays for them. What this means is that in a service where you have some people getting baptised only and others getting confirmed, the bishop only lays hands on and prays for the people getting confirmed. The effect is that it can look like those who only got baptised have somehow missed out, and that their initiation ceremony is incomplete. This obviously isn't the case, but it can be the unintended consequence of getting baptised but not confirmed when others are getting confirmed.

Q: Why can local church ministers baptise but not confirm people?

A: Firstly, anyone can baptise someone, you don't even have to be an ordained minister.

Interestingly, in the Acts 8 example from earlier, it is presumably Philip who baptised the recently converted Samaritans (Acts 8:12). But the Apostles Peter and John lay hands on them and pray for them (Acts 8:17). To be clear, nobody is suggesting that the bishop has the power to give the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands. That's not what is happening in Acts 8 either. It is just an analogy.

Secondly, it's entirely impractical for baptisms to be restricted to the bishop, as there are just too many to do. These tend to take place all through the year, particularly with infants and new converts. However, it is more practical to schedule confirmations for a specific date once a year.

Logistical Questions and Answers

Q: What age do you recommend confirmation? What if my child is not ready?

A: The bishop is happy to confirm any youth member who is ready to make a public profession of faith. However, we will run the workshops and youth confirmation and baptism annually. **So we would recommend waiting until youth are at least in High School.** Many churches wait until youth are in Year 9 or 10 to do confirmation. As our youth group includes a spread of ages, we've decided not to enforce a set school grade.

Q: Who runs the confirmation?

A: In the Anglican denomination a bishop confirms Christians. The bishop for the South Sydney region is Reverend Michael Stead. He places his hands on each candidate (youth) which is an old symbol showing his fellowship, as a representative of the denomination, with the candidate.

Q: Does it matter if a youth was baptised in a different denomination e.g. Presbyterian or Uniting? Can they do Anglican confirmation?

A: It does not matter how or where a child was baptised as an infant. It also does not matter if the baptism involved physical water. If a youth was baptised as an infant they can do confirmation.

Q: What if a youth was dedicated as an infant, can they be confirmed?

A: A child who was dedicated as an infant will first be baptised. This will not be full immersion but will be a splash of water on their head. The service accommodates this. See below for the service outline. Following the baptism, the youth will then also be confirmed. See above in the theology Q&A.

Q: What if a youth would like to be baptised using a full immersion in the tank at Grace City or at Malabar Beach?

A: Yes this is possible, but will be run on a separate occasion overseen by Matthew Varcoe. They are generally run around April and October. The process will be the same as an adult baptism. Youth are welcome to attend the confirmation workshops even if they decide not to do confirmation.

Q: If I have other children, is there any childcare provided during the two workshops?

A: There is no formal child care. However, we will run the workshops in the upstairs offices. So we will have a movie playing in the Years 3-4 room (old Youth room). So younger siblings are welcome to be upstairs watching a movie.

Q: What is covered in the workshops?

A: There are two workshops on consecutive Sundays prior to youth confirmation and baptism. At least one parent and youth must attend both together.

Workshop 1:

- What are confirmation and baptism?
- What is the Apostle's Creed?
- Who is God?
- Homework: Prepare your testimony

Workshop 2:

- Share your testimony
- Who is Jesus?
- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- Homework: Read through the order of service

Q: How many youths can be baptised and confirmed at one time?

A: Youth confirmation and baptism will take place in our 9am service. Currently, we can accommodate up to 15 youths. We may find in future years that we need to run a separate service if numbers increase.

Q: Should we invite family, friends and godparents?

A: Yes absolutely. This is a wonderful opportunity for your child to confidently profess their faith. This is a special celebration and should be shared with others, whether they are Christian or not. This is also a great evangelistic opportunity.

Q: What time should we arrive on the day?

A: We will run through the service at 8:30am with the bishop. We ask that all youth arrive at this time so they are confident about what they need to do and say.

Q: What should my child wear?

A: Whatever they are comfortable in. We recommend smart casual dress. Remember that the stage lights are quite bright, so white clothing can become see-through in the bright lights.

Q: What will be said in the confirmation and baptism?

A: A full outline of the service can be found on the next page.

Q: Will my child receive any formal paperwork or acknowledgement of confirmation and baptism

A: Your child will receive a book and certificate to commemorate the date of confirmation and baptism.

Service Outline

Below is the outline for the youth confirmation and baptism service at Grace City Church.

Confirmation and Baptism

Those who have been baptised and confirmed, and desire to acknowledge the obligation of membership in the church, are called to study and seek to understand the Bible and the Christian faith more fully, to take their part in the life of the church, to hear the word of God and share in the holy communion, and to pray faithfully and regularly both publicly and privately.

They are called to share with others, by word and example, the love of Christ and his gospel of reconciliation and hope. And they are called to love their neighbour as themselves, to honour all people and to pray and work for peace and justice.

I invite all of you, as you are able, to commit yourselves to this calling and to join now in prayer for those who have been confirmed.

We gladly do so.

**May the Holy Spirit strengthen us
for the work he calls us to do.**

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
In the name of Christ. Amen.

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

BISHOP: We welcome those who come to be baptised.

*MINISTER (or Sponsor): I present **M** and **N** to be baptised*

BISHOP: We welcome those who come to be confirmed.

*MINISTER (or Sponsor): I present **X**, **Y** and **Z** to be confirmed*

Those who are to be confirmed come to make for themselves the promises that were made on their behalf at baptism. Others come to make these promises in their own name.

You must therefore declare your allegiance to Christ and your rejection of all that is evil: the devil and all his works, the empty display and false values of the world, and the sinful desires of the flesh. Therefore, I ask you:

Do you turn to Christ?

I turn to Christ.

Do you repent of your sins?

I repent of my sins.

Do you renounce evil?

I renounce evil.

You must now yourselves profess Christian faith before God and his church. I invite you to join with the congregation and say the Apostles' Creed.

The congregation stands

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.**

He descended to the dead.

**On the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. *Amen.***

Will you, with God's help, strive to keep his holy will and commandments and serve him faithfully throughout your life?

I will.

You have heard these our brothers and sisters respond to God's call to love and serve him. Will you support them in this high calling?

We will do so.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,

who has made heaven and earth.

Blessed be the name of the Lord,

as in the beginning, so now, and forever. Amen.

THE BAPTISM

Let us pray.

Father, in joyful obedience to your Son,

we baptise into his fellowship those who come to him in faith.

Set apart this water for the symbolic washing away of sin,

that by the power of your Holy Spirit,

M and **N** may be cleansed from sin and walk in newness of life,

and continue forever in fellowship with Christ and his people,

and at the last day, be raised with Christ to full and eternal life.

Do you ask for baptism in the faith you have professed?

I do.

[Name], I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God has called you into his Church.

We therefore receive and welcome you

as a fellow member of the body of Christ,

as a child of the same heavenly Father,

and as an inheritor with us of the kingdom of God.

I sign you with the sign of the cross to show that you are to be true to Christ crucified and that you are not to be ashamed to confess your faith in him.

Fight bravely under his banner

against sin, the world, and the devil,

and continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant to your life's end.

God has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Shine as a light in the world, to the glory of God the Father.

THE CONFIRMATION

The Confirmation Candidates stand before the Bishop

Let us pray that God will enrich with his Holy Spirit each of these who have been baptised and confessed Christ.

Almighty and everliving God, you have been pleased to grant to your servants new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and have given them forgiveness of their sins; strengthen them, we pray, with the Holy Spirit; grant that they may grow in grace; and give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of discernment and inner strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and fill them, Father, with wonder and awe in your presence, now and for ever.
Amen.

Those being confirmed are called by name to the front by the Bishop. He lays hands on them and prays ...

Defend, O Lord, this your servant with your heavenly grace. We pray he/she may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit until he/she comes to your everlasting kingdom.
Amen.

Let us pray.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

Almighty and ever living God, we pray for these your servants upon whom, after the example of the apostles, we have now laid our hands to assure them of your love for them. May your fatherly hand ever protect them. Let your Holy Spirit ever be with them to lead them into all truth and to uphold them in obedience to your word. Strengthen them with your heavenly grace as they spiritually feed on Christ and keep them in eternal life, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.