

Components of the R4 Confirmation Classroom & Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan Details: The lessons start at the beginning of Jesus' ministry and somewhat chronologically arrive to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. In every lesson, you'll find a number of recurring components:

1. *Opening Activity:* The opening activity is designed to invite movement and interaction. It also demonstrates or introduces an idea that will be found in that lesson's Bible story.
2. *Opening & Closing Prayer:* Prayer is a central component in Jesus' ministry and should be a visible part of the Confirmation class. Also, you can use the closing prayer as a way to show your care and support for your students.
3. *Challenge of the Week:* At the end of every lesson, there is a challenge of the week that is usually a thought-experiment to be observed during the week. Then, in the next class, there is a Review of the Challenge of the Week that invites the students and teachers to talk about what they saw and their thoughts about it. The Challenge of the Week has two reasons behind it (listed by priority): 1. The review of the challenge of the week is the time during the lesson where the teachers are provided a clear opportunity to share of themselves and their understandings of God and how they implement and live out their faith and 2. The challenge of the week encourages the students to take the concepts and patterns found in stories from 2000 years ago and apply them in current, relevant, every day settings.
4. *Review:* One of the ways we learn is by repetition. So every lesson has a review section in it where the concepts of the last four weeks or so are reviewed.
5. *Scripture Passage:* Every lesson has a scripture passage. All of the other activities and components in the lesson are based on the themes and concepts found in that lesson's scripture.
6. *Supplies:* The materials that you will need in order to make the activities work best will be listed in this section.
7. *ASK/TELL:* The lessons are set-up in a way that, in case you need a substitute teacher, the substitute can simply walk in and *read* the lesson. No prep is required other than supplies. This is, of course, not ideal, but it is useful. Also, the questions and statements are provided in this format to help co-teachers know what to say next. It's like having a script. The more comfortable you are with the script, and the less you have to read directly from it, the better the class will go. However, it is strongly recommended that each teacher has a copy of the lesson with them to refer to, and if need be, read from, throughout the class.
8. *Snack:* This provides a respite from studying and structured interaction. The class can change their seating, gather around some food and talk about the week, or youtube videos or whatever else comes up. I tend toward donuts and muffins and coffee cake, but more healthy snacks have been known to appear as well.

9. *Main activity*: This can take many forms. Sometimes it is a video clip, sometimes it is a game, sometimes it is a brainstorming event, and sometimes it is a demonstration. Explanation and then how it ties-in with the scripture is provided in the ASK/TELL sections.

10. *Notebooks/Journals & Handouts*: Some of us learn better by reading than by hearing. Handouts reinforce what's being taught by putting the main points in writing. Also on the handouts are the scripture for that class and the challenge of the week. The notebooks will be a way for the Confirmation students to store the handouts. The notebooks/journals are to be provided for your students along with a place in the classroom to store them. At the end of the school year, they can then take home a notebook with all the handouts from the year.

Class Details: The lessons are written for a 1 and a 1/2 hour timeframe. But, if you have students who arrive on time, if you time your opening activity to *only* go 10 minutes and if you remove the snack, then you can fit the lessons into an hour timeframe. The best time to hold the class (in my experience) is before worship on Sunday mornings. The class can be taught with just one teacher, but a team-teaching approach (where both teachers are in the class for every class) allows for more insights as well as a change of pace in tone and approach.

Mentors are optional. If you choose to go with a mentor-approach, use the "Challenge of the Week" as a regular point of entry for mentor/confirmand conversations. This encourages a weekly contact between mentor and confirmand that will relate to at least some of what is being discussed in class.

Missions/Outreach Activities: Setting up and doing 3 mission outreach activities will provide a break from being in the classroom and will also create experiences that help the class gel. They do not have to be big activities, and can have different focus points. For instance, serving coffee and snack at Fellowship Hour after worship is a form of outreach. Finding a day-care center and having the confirmation students read to the kids who are there is another form of outreach. Playing board games (Bingo!) with the men and women at rest homes is a form of outreach (if bingo isn't your thing-o, bring your pets instead and offer some pet-therapy). If there's a local soup kitchen, sign up for an evening. If there's a local mission that your congregation is involved in, see if the confirmation class can help out. Use an Action/Reflection model, where, after the action, return to the church building, have ice cream (or some other kind of snack) and invite the class to reflection on their actions and share their observations. You'll want to have some questions prepared to prompt responses.

Prayer Retreat: The prayer retreat seeks to offer an extended time that allows the students to learn of and experience different prayer practices. The retreat takes "only" 6 hours and can be held at the church building. This keeps both the cost of time and money low for families. Have parents, though, help with preparation and provision of meals.