



“What was your faith life like as a kid - did you go to church every Sunday (or more often)?”

This month our 8-9th grade confirmation students will be interviewing various people - parents, elders, pastor - asking questions designed to help them find out what a commitment to follow Jesus looks like in real life. The above question is one a confirmation student asked me.

The short answer to the question they asked is “Yes, and yes.” Our family, dad, mom and I, went to church every Sunday - and more often.

We had a Sunday routine in our home: Sunday School, Church and then Sunday Dinner at home. (We always had pancakes and sausage for Sunday dinner.) While we ate dinner we listened to The Lutheran Hour radio program. I can’t ever remember missing church on Sunday except if someone was sick. There was no reason to miss church. There were no stores open. There were no school-sponsored sporting events. (And if there had been, I can say with 100% certainty that my mom would have had a rule: No church. No baseball. Period. End of discussion.)

When I was in elementary school, we still had something called “Release Time.” That was when the public school would let kids - all kids - out of school an hour early every Wednesday afternoon to attend “Release Time Classes” at their churches. (And, of course the question will come, “What about kids who didn’t go to church?” I literally didn’t know any kids who didn’t belong to a church, so that wasn’t an issue when I was growing up.)

Release Time Classes for high school kids were confirmation instruction. For us younger kids it was kind of like Sunday School on Wednesday. By the time I was confirmation age the public school had quit “release time,” so our confirmation classes were held on Saturday mornings.

We also had Sunday School classes for all age kids - from as young as three years old to seniors in high school. My dad started teaching Sunday School when I was three, so that I would have someone to go with me to Sunday School, since I didn’t have any brothers or sisters to go with. Dad taught Sunday School for the next 25 or so years. I remember that everyone liked Albert’s class, because he was so easy going. He didn’t yell like some other teachers when the kids would get distracted by, well, pretty much anything :)

At home my mom would read a daily devotion from The Portals of Prayer everyday before school and work. I would say prayers before going to sleep at night. I can’t say that I read the Bible much back then - except to prepare for confirmation class. The King James Version was pretty much the only translation we had available, and, for me, the Shakespearian English it was written in may as well have been a foreign language. Later, my mom had gotten a modern-language paraphrase called The Good News Bible that put things into much easier-to-under English.

In short, from the earliest days that I can remember, God was a very central part of my life growing up. I thank God, literally, for my parents giving me that firm foundation!

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net