

What is Profession of Faith Mentorship?

Purpose statement: The Elmhurst CRC Profession of Faith experience exists to help junior high and high school age students take the next step toward becoming more like Jesus by publicly celebrating their saving faith in Christ and entering into the congregational life of Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church as communicant members.

Purpose of Profession of Faith Process:

1. Public testimony of saving faith in Christ
 - Present the gospel of salvation
 - Evaluate a young person's relationship to the gospel
 - Encourage the student to take the next step in his/her faith journey
 - Closure & celebration for those who pledged support at the time of baptism
2. Congregational identification & membership
 - Educate regarding fundamentals of Reformed theology
 - Clarify how an individual can & should live in local church community
 - Provide communicant membership to qualified students

Timeline & Due Dates

Due Dates:

- 1) **October 3 and 10** – Students are made aware of Profession of Faith program at Maximum Velocity and The Edge. Applications and target dates are made available.
- 2) **October 24** -- deadline for student submission of written applications (UNLESS YOUR MENTOR IS YOUR PARENT, PLEASE DO NOT ASK YOUR MENTOR UNTIL WE HAVE APPROVED HIM/HER)
- 3) **October 27** – students are informed of who their approved mentor is
- 4) **October 31** -- **deadline for students to ask mentors and give them their mentor packet (YOU CAN GET THE MENTOR PACKET AT WWW.ELMHURSTCRC.ORG/Students. Go to the “about” page and scroll down to Profession of Faith.**
- 5) **November 1-14** – Mentors contacted by Ron Huisman to talk about the mentorship expectations.
- 6) **November 14 – January 30-- mentors and students meet one-on-one five times**
- 7) **January 30** -- **mentoring sessions complete and STUDENT EVALUATIONS turned in**
- 8) **February 6** -- Group meeting to study Sacraments (**students only**)
- 9) **February 13** -- Group meeting to survey Canons of Dordt (**students only**)
- 10) **February 21** -- Elders and Deacons are assigned to conduct Profession of Faith interviews
- 11) **February 22 – March 21** -- interviews are conducted
- 12) **April 11** – Interviewers report to elders
- 13) **May 1 - Public celebration in worship and public professions of faith in Christ and a celebration between services.**

The items in bold are the areas you have to pay the most attention to.

Session Schedule and Content

- Weekly one-on-one mentorship gatherings
- 5 sessions in 10 weeks (November 15th – January 31st)
- Each session may be approached as a single unit or broken into pieces if the mentor feels it helpful.

Session 1

- Session 1a: God loves you & offers a wonderful plan for your life.

A. God's love

- "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).
- "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

- **When did you first hear these verses and how did they affect your life?**
- **How have you seen God's love in your life and how has that affected you?**
- **How have you shown God's love to others?**

B. God's plan

- "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).
- "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:11-13).

- **What do you think about the fact that God knows the plans he has for you?**
- **What do you feel is God's plan for this stage of your life?**
- **Have you ever gotten frustrated with God because his plan was different than yours? What was that like?**
- **How have you seen God "prosper" you?**
- **Sometimes the road to being prosperous is tough. How do you find God's love in tough times?**

- Session 1b: People are sinful & separated from God, so they can't know & experience God's love & plan for their lives
 - "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
 - "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).
- **Tell me about when you decided to accept the gift of eternal life?**
- **Have you had a chance to share that with anyone who does not believe the same things you do? If you have, tell me about it. If not, what's stopped you from sharing?**

- **Do you feel prepared enough to share your story with non-Christians? Why or why not?**
- **How can you do a better job of sharing this “gift” with other people in your life?**

Session 2: Jesus Christ is God’s only answer for people’s sin. Through Him you can know & experience God’s love & plan for your life.

- **How did Jesus take care of sin?**
 - “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8)
 - “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).
- **What is Salvation?**
- **What is Justification?**
 - Justification is God’s act of declaring a sinner righteous before God.
- **Why is it important?**
- **What is Sanctification?**
 - Sanctification is the process of being set apart or made holy.
- **Why is it important?**
- **Did He forgive everyone’s sin when He died? Why or why not?**
 - “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).
 - “But you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:26-27).
- **What about really religious people who don’t believe in Jesus, will they still be saved? Why or Why not?**
 - “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).
 - “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).
- **Do you know the Apostle’s Creed? Let’s memorize it together.**
 - *I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven*

*and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. 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 saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Session 3

- Session 3a: We must individually repent from our sin & submit to Jesus Christ as our Savior & Lord; then we can know & experience God's love & plan for our lives.
 - **What is repentance?**
 - Take a look at Acts 2:38, "Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" and James 4:6, "But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Now, please answer the next question.
 - **Why do we need grace?**
 - **James 4:6 says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." What is this verse saying? If we are proud, are we really not going to receive grace?**
 - **How do we repent?**

- Session 3b: Security/assurance of salvation
 - Take a look at the following verses and then ask the next question.
 - "But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:17).
 - "Set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Corinthians 1:22).
 - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).
 - **Can a person lose his or her salvation? Why or why not?**
 - **What if a person doesn't want Jesus anymore, can they just give Him up?**
 - "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:15-16).
 - "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).
 - **How would you respond to someone who told you that they "used" to be a Christian, but now they are not?**
 - **So if we're going to heaven, why don't we just sin as much as we can?**
 - **What should be our driving force not to sin?**

Session 4: The whole purpose for living is to glorify God by ministering [to God & to people].

■ **What does it mean to minister?**

■ **How do you minister to others?**

- Take a look at Matthew 25:31-46. What is Jesus saying in this passage?

■ **What is the specific work God has given you to do?**

■ **What do you believe concerning the Holy Spirit?**

Question and answer 53 talks about this and answers this question this way: *First, he, as well as the Father and the Son, is eternal God. (Gen. 1:1-2; Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4) Second, he has been given to me personally (1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 4:6), so that, by true faith, he makes me share in Christ and all his blessings (Gal. 3:14) comforts me (John 15:26; Acts 9:31), and remains with me forever (John 14:16-17; 1 Peter 4:14).*

■ **What do you know about Spiritual Gifts?**

■ **Let's take a look at what the Bible says about Spiritual Gifts (Rom 12:4-9; 1 Cor 12:7-10, 28-30; Eph 4:11)**

- "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully" (Romans 12:4-8).
- "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:7-10).

■ **Do you know what your Spiritual Gifts are?**

■ **If you do know what your Spiritual Gifts are, how are you using them? If you do not know your Spiritual Gifts, look at the passages again and try to figure out what your spiritual gifts are by thinking about what you are passionate about.**

■ **Why is it important to know and understand your Spiritual Gifts?**

NOTE: Before the start of this session, review the questions on the evaluation form. If you feel you will have a hard time answering those questions, be sure to ask some of the optional questions provided at the end of Session 5.

Session 5: Basics of the Christian Life (after salvation)

■ **What is the importance of growth in your Christian life?**

- "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:15-16).

■ **What does it mean to abide in Christ?**

- “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Galatians 5:16).
- **What does an effective prayer life look like?**
- “Pray continually” (1 Thess. 5:16)
- **What does it look like in your life right now?**

- **What is the significance of studying God’s Word?**
- “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- **How well do you do with keeping up with studying God’s Word?**
- **Why is it so important to be a part of a Christian community?**
- **What is the importance of being a member of a Church?**
- **How are community and Church different?**
- **What benefits come from having fellowship with fellow believers?**
- “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:20).

- **As Christians, how are we supposed to be witnesses? (Mt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)**
- “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).
- “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:1-2)
- **In what ways have you been a Christian witness or “imitator of God”?**
- **How can you improve in being a better Christian witness?**

Optional Questions (these may help you answer the questions on the evaluation form)

1. Based on formal question #1 asked in the Profession of Faith ceremony:
Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God sent to redeem the world, do you love & trust him as the one who saves you from your sin, & do you with repentance & joy embrace him as Lord of your life?
2. Who do you believe Jesus Christ is?
3. What is your relationship to Jesus Christ?
4. How do you feel about Jesus?
5. What is sin?

6. How has sin affected your life; & how does it affect your life now?
7. What happens to people when they die?
8. If you were to suddenly die right now, why would God let you into heaven? How do you know He would?

Student Evaluation

These questions are only to be seen by the mentor. The mentor should answer these questions honestly and wholeheartedly. Once these questions are completed, they should be returned to Ron Huisman by January 30, 2010.

1. Are you (the mentor) convinced this individual has a personal relationship with Christ resulting in eternal life according to biblical standards? Why?
2. How have you seen visible signs of this student's desire to know Christ more deeply?
3. How are you convinced this individual desires to make Profession of Faith out of a personal motivation to experience God & not some form of pressure or compulsion? Explain.
4. Are there any questions the Elders and Deacons should discuss further with this student?

