



I Believe Statements (Handbook)

Faith has always had a tradition of students writing I Believe statements during their 9th grade year. These are 2-4 page papers where students articulate their own commitments to faith as an adult.

During 9th grade year, students will be encouraged to incorporate their **personal commitments to practicing the Baptismal Covenant**. As we go through the baptismal actions we aspire to in the world, the whole group will build a list of ways that we can engage them in our own lives. In small group and between classes students will have a chance to pick from these activities themselves and try them out to see which ones can be most authentic to them.

We will also spend time each week talking about **the relationships that help build our faith**. Whether small group leaders, mentors, church staff, grandparents, friends, or parents, faith becomes more meaningful when we have strong connections to people in our lives and can share about those relationships as part of our faith.

The final piece students will be encouraged to include are their particular beliefs. Pastor Jodi Hogue (St. Paul) talks about faith being a team sport. There are times we all have doubts, uncertainties, moments of clarity, and lifelong convictions - most of us don't believe everything Christianity has to offer all the time. But after looking at the creed, the baptismal covenant, and the work they did studying scripture in previous years, students will articulate the **meaningful, beautiful, and even difficult things that make up their own personal faith**.

All students will share their I Believe statements with their small group. I give them instructions and a form so that they receive *only* positive, meaningful feedback on what makes their faith unique and special. These highlights from the statements will be shared, without names, in the church during the confirmation service.

A one-page assignment with prompts will be given out January 14th at our first meeting.

I Believe statements are due Friday, September 26th. This gives staff time to review them before doing 1:1 conversations before the retreat.



I Believe Statements

The I Believe statement is the capstone project of Faith Lutheran's confirmation program. The goal of these statements is meant to be a holistic attempt for students to understand their own relationship to faith: past, present, and future.

Past

- **What relationships have helped build your faith?** Whether small group leaders, mentors, church staff, grandparents, friends, or parents, faith becomes more meaningful when we have strong connections to people in our lives and can share about those relationships as part of our faith.
- **What stories do you have about your experience of faith?** Camp, IGNITE small groups, VBS, Sunday Services, service projects, or personal encounters with a sense of awe and wonder at the world shape who we are. Where have you experienced God in your life, and how has that played a role in your faith?

Present

- **Which Baptismal Promises do you identify with?** In the 9th grade year, we spent time talking about each of the baptismal promises and how we have opportunities to live them out. This year we have been challenged to find ways to make commitments to live our faith, not just accept it as something we "believe". What promises of the church affect your actions day-to-day?
- **How do Jesus and the Bible impact your identity?** In 7th grade, we wrote about how the Bible helps us to answer: Who Am I? Why Am I Here? What Is The Meaning of Life? In 8th grade, we wrote about our calling, our spirituality, and our Lutheran identity. As you look back at your writing assignments, what connections do you make from what we learned to who you choose to be and what you choose to believe?

Future

- **How do you want to live out your faith in the future?** There are no more "requirements" for confirmation, no more hoops to jump through. How do you want to continue to engage in church, in community, and in faith? What kind of work do you want to do to impact the world, and how have the lessons you learned affected those goals? What commitments will you make to your faith? What kind of person do you ultimately want to strive to be?

Papers should be 2-4 typed pages. The goal is to tie all of these ideas together in a coherent essay format; although using the sections as a guide is acceptable. Please no bullet points.