

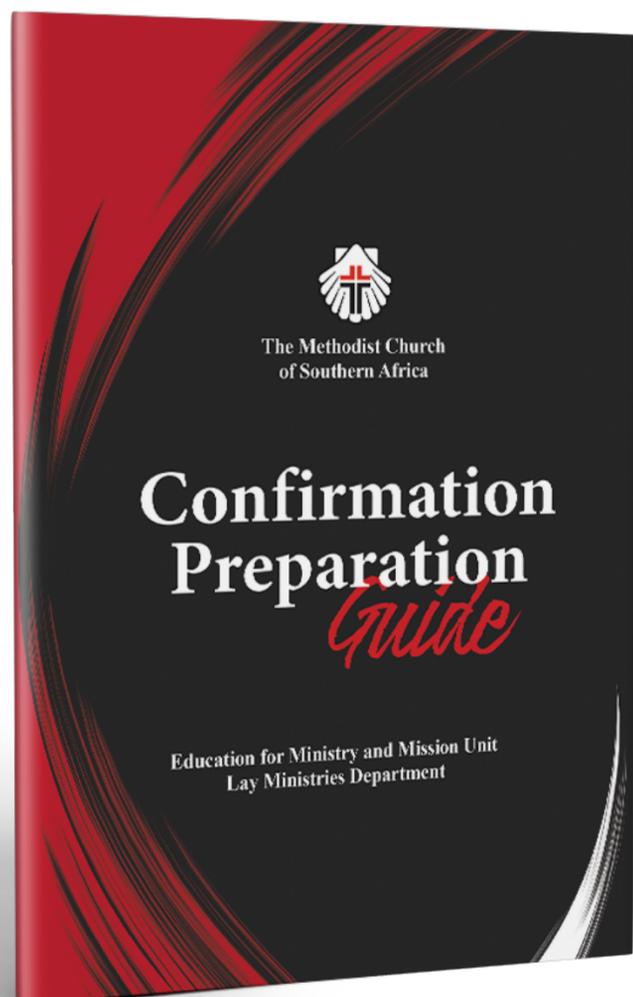


The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

MCSA Confirmation Preparation Guide

Developed by EMMU and
approved by DEWCOM in 2024

The confirmation booklet for use in confirmation classes of the MCSA.



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Chapter 1 | Conversion

Aim of the Lesson

- To understand that conversion involves an important and necessary radical change to your life.
- This is not a once-off event.
- Conversion is an ongoing process towards a deeper relationship with Jesus throughout your life.

Bible Reading

Let's read the story of Saul's (Paul's) conversion.

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light flashed around him.⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'

⁵'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked.

⁶'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. ⁶'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'

⁷The men travelling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, 'Ananias!'

¹¹'Yes, Lord,' he answered.

¹²The Lord told him, 'Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹³In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.'

¹⁴Lord, Ananias answered, 'I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁵And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.'

¹⁶But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁷I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.'

¹⁸Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord – Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here – has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁹Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptised, ²⁰and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Acts 9:1-19, NIV

Think / Discuss / Share

Spend a few minutes thinking about the story of how Paul's life changed and how he came to know Jesus. If you feel comfortable and would like to share your own story about how you came to know Jesus, share it with our group.

What is 'Conversion'?

The word 'conversion' comes from a Latin word that means 'to turn around'. It's about the change that happens in our lives when we choose to let go of being in control and instead allow God to be in charge of our lives. Sometimes people talk about 'putting God on the throne of our hearts'. This means giving up our own desires and actively seeking what God wants for us, God's will for our lives and for how we live.

Some call it a 'new birth' or 'regeneration'. Paul says it's like a miraculous change or work of grace: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!* (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV). Or, the New Living Translation says, *This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun.*

There is no fixed way conversion happens. It is different for each person, and it doesn't happen at the same speed or in the same way. For some, it's sudden and dramatic:

²⁸The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.

²⁹He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household." ³²Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their

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