Confirmation Work in Germany
Evangelical Church in Germany
(Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland; EKD)

20 Lutheran, Reformed or United regional Churches

15,000 parishes

great autonomy
Protestant

Roman-catholic

Undenominational/
Non-christian
Percentage of confirmands among all 14-year-old Germans

- Germany
- West
- East
Confirmation work in eastern Germany

14-year-old confirmands

„Jugendweihe“

religious ceremonies at school

0 50000 100000 150000 200000 250000

„Jugendweihe“

0 50000 100000 150000 200000 250000

Herbert Kolb – kolb.rpz-heilsbronn@elkb.de    Thomas Ebinger thomas.ebinger@elk-wue.de
Roman-Catholic equivalents

First Communion (age of 9)  
~ 100% of all baptised

Confirmation (*Firmung*) (age of 15 or 16)  
~ 70% of all baptised
In some regional Churches:
Two stages of confirmation work

Age of 9 or 10:
„Konfi-Kids“
„Konfi 3“

Age of 12 or 13:
confirmands
Average duration of confirmation classes in Germany:
15 month
## Organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confirmation classes usually meet</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
<th>2007/2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every second week</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Range (Local Churches)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meetings of the whole class</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>23 – 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of „normal“ training</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>24 – 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of placement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 – 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth work activities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0 – 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camps (duration)</td>
<td>2.9 days</td>
<td>2 - 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Confirmation Work between Tradition and Everyday life (Lebenswelt)
OR
From instruction to Confirmation Ministry

Dr. Thomas Ebinger, ptz Stuttgart
1998 EKD-Reformtext

Orientation on experience and relevance

Switch of focus: What do teenagers need?

Focus on church community and the social context
Main theses of „Glauben entdecken“ (discover belief)

4. The young people do not have much prior knowledge, but elementary religious ideas and experiences are quite present. Religious educational investigations show that religious beliefs or convictions, including a private religious practice, exist in adolescents, despite the diminishing knowledge about religion. They ask for meaning and faith. However, these "elementary experiences and approaches" (see 3.6) are less likely to be made in an ecclesiastical context with a language shaped by Christian tradition, or even in familiar forms of theology, but rather "encoded in individual experiences of everyday life, connected with biographical experiences. This requires the teachers to be curious about what the young people can yield, to listen carefully and to perceive their needs. They have to find out whether and where religion and faith still have a meaning for the young people's life and then tie more to that (dt. “anknüpfen”). (Summary theses p. 51ff, emphasis T. E.)

=> “Switch of focus/Change of perspective"
Farewell to catechism

Der Katechismus der evangelischen Kirche in Württemberg 1937
Model of a non-negative (dt. nichtdefizitär) confirmation work

Hans-Ulrich Kessler/Burkhardt Nolte
Inspiration by and cooperation with Youth Ministry

Siehe Video Konficamp Bezirk Bernhausen 2016
https://youtu.be/WCCZrKOVvB7w
Main theses of „Glauben entdecken“
(discover belief)

7. The Confirmands should get to know the church community's life and meet people who live their faith and make an account of it.

(= Church community as a field of learning)
Today, an internship / placement phase is common in many congregations.
Main theses of „Glauben entdecken“ (discover belief)

• 9. The confirmands are congregation for themselves.
• 10. Confirmation work must be linked to youth work.

Working with young volunteers, Konfi-camps
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPROPRIATION</th>
<th>OWN POSITION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children and young people learn to understand the essential content of the biblical message and to relate them to their own life.</td>
<td>Children and young people find their own point of view and learn to take responsibility in their every day life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>GET HOMELIKE („Beheimatung“)</th>
<th>COMPANY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children and young people experience that they are welcome and acknowledged as church community members.</td>
<td>Children and young people are accompanied on their way of Christian faith and encouraged to express their own forms of faith.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changes in comprehension of confirmation
Confession
blessing
community