

# INTRODUCTION TO CONFIRMATION

## WHAT IS CONFIRMATION?

### STORY

In 1521, bookseller Johann Herrgott was beheaded in a public square in Leipzig, Germany, for bringing Luther's writings to town and selling them.

Catholic monks Heinrich Voss and Johann Esch were burned at the stake in Belgium in 1822 because they read Luther's writings and confessed the evangelical truth. They believed the Holy Bible is the absolute authority, not the pope or Church law. When told to recant or die, they responded, "We are glad that God will allow us the mercy to die for the Christian faith" (*Martyrs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Third Booklet*, by C. J. Hermann Frick, 1853, translated by Erika Bullman Flores).

One hundred years later, Pastor Woldemar Rueger was arrested while serving Lutheran congregations in Moscow and Tver, Russia. Communist authorities closed the churches in 1935, arresting Pastor Woldemar and deporting him to a concentration camp in Siberia. He died in Siberia three years later at the age of forty-seven.

His only crime was preaching the Good News of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Discuss one-on-one or in small groups the following questions.

1. What strengthened these men in the face of death? *God's love, the Sacraments, and the truth of what they believed.*
2. What is good about living in a country where you are free to practice your religion? *We don't have to fear persecution for believing in Jesus as our Savior.*
3. What gets in the way? *We sometimes take our blessings for granted and fail to thank God for them or to make full use of them.*
4. What makes people worthy in the eyes of God? *Only by the merits of Christ are we worthy in the eyes of God. We receive this worthiness through the gift of faith.*