

# **ENCHIRIDION**

## **The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther**

*Translated by*  
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# Contents

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Introduction: The Reformation Story .....	1
The Primary Texts .....	9
Dr. Martin Luther's Preface to the Small Catechism .....	11
The Ten Commandments .....	15
The Creed.....	18
The Lord's Prayer .....	20
The Sacrament of Holy Baptism.....	24
The Ministry of the Keys and Confession.....	26
The Sacrament of the Altar.....	29
Morning, Evening & Table Prayers.....	31
The Table of Duties .....	33
Christian Questions.....	36



# Introduction

## *The Reformation Story*

How can sinful people hope to stand before a righteous God? And, if anyone dares to answer that question, a second one follows: How can I be certain that the answer is true?

Those were the questions that drove the Reformation of the Church, because, for Martin Luther and other conscientious Christians at the time, the answers given by the Roman Catholic Church were just not good enough.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) was a devout German Christian who initially studied to become a lawyer, but instead became a Roman Catholic monk, priest, and university professor. He asked the above questions repeatedly.

How can sinful people—how can I!—hope to stand before a righteous God? Here are some answers he was given:

- ⇒ Do better at obeying God's commandments! Stop sinning! Do more good works!
- ⇒ If you sin, do works of penance to atone for your sins!
- ⇒ Pray to Mary and the saints and ask them to share with you some of the extra favor they have earned with God!
- ⇒ Venerate the relics of the saints!
- ⇒ Pay to have a Mass said for you or for your deceased loved ones to reduce their time of suffering in purgatory!
- ⇒ Buy a papal indulgence and have all your guilt—or the guilt of your deceased loved ones—washed away by papal decree!

And how can I be certain that the answer is true?

- ⇒ The Church says so. Listen to the Church!
- ⇒ Listen to the pope!
- ⇒ Listen to the councils!
- ⇒ Listen to the Church Fathers!

Luther did listen. He studied Church history extensively. He read the writings and decrees of popes and councils. He frequented the confessional, did the works of penance, prayed to the saints, and faithfully attended Mass. He also studied the Bible. But the more he studied, the more he found that popes and councils and Church Fathers often contradicted one another and made mistakes. Worse, he found that their teachings often had no basis in the Holy Scriptures and sometimes contradicted the Holy Scriptures. How could he trust fallible men to answer his life-and-death question: *How can sinful people hope to stand before a righteous God?*

The Bible, on the other hand, he found to be completely reliable. The Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, who cannot lie and who does not make mistakes. As Jesus once prayed to His Father, "Sanctify them by the truth. Your Word is truth." (John 17:17). If Luther was to have an answer to his first question, only the Bible could be trusted to provide it.

Luther found no basis in the Bible for offering prayers to the saints or for receiving help from them. Instead, he found that "there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

Luther also found that it's all or nothing when it comes to earning God's favor by keeping His commandments. Either you keep them all perfectly and so earn God's favor, or you're a sinner, and there's nothing you can do to earn your way back into God's good graces. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). If sinful people are to stand before God, it can't be by keeping the commandments.

How *can* sinful people hope to stand before a righteous God? Luther found the answer in the Holy Scriptures:

- ✘ “The just shall live **by faith**” (Romans 1:17).
- ✘ “We know that a man is **not justified by the works** of the law **but by faith in Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be **justified by faith in Christ** and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified” (Galatians 2:16).
- ✘ “**By grace** you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is **the gift of God**, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- ✘ “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being **justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, **through faith**...that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. **Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith alone, apart from the deeds of the law**” (Romans 3:23-28).

In other words, sinners can stand before a righteous God *by grace alone, through faith alone, for the sake of Christ alone*. And a person can be certain that this is true *by the Scripture alone*.

Luther finally had answers to his two most pressing questions — answers which, he realized, were the very heart of Christian teaching, and which he had also found in the writings of many of the revered Church Fathers. He imagined at first, perhaps naively, that the Roman clergy and the Roman pope would agree with him that certain abuses and false doctrines had crept into the Roman Church over time and that it was necessary to reform the Church by addressing these corruptions of doctrine and by bringing the evangelical truth to light again.

So Luther prepared 95 Theses or statements to be discussed among the clergy, addressing primarily the sale of indulgences and questioning the pope’s jurisdiction over Christians beyond the borders

of Rome, and even over the souls in purgatory. On October 31, 1517, he posted these 95 Theses on the church door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. They were intended as a preliminary “filial correction,” not the beginning of a revolution. But some recognized just how revolutionary it was at that time even to question the pope, so they took the document, copied, printed, and disseminated it throughout Germany (at first without Luther’s knowledge), causing a stir throughout the Holy Roman Empire. Luther also began writing many volumes of theological books highlighting the abuses of Rome and setting forth the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures. Many of the Catholic churches in Germany and the surrounding countries agreed with Luther’s writings.

In 1521, Luther was summoned to a Diet (a conference) in the city of Worms, where he was ordered to denounce his own writings. When he refused to recant, he was excommunicated by the pope and declared an outlaw by Emperor Charles V.

From there, Luther was hidden away in a castle in Wartburg for about two years, where he finished translating the New Testament into German so that his people could have ready access to the Word of God. When he returned to Wittenberg, he continued his work of reformation.

But Luther’s was a careful reformation. His goal was to rid the Church of the false teachings and harmful practices that had crept in, without discarding the useful traditions that were in harmony with the Holy Scriptures. The historical faith and worship of the Catholic Church was affirmed; the abuses were removed. For this reason, Lutherans consider themselves catholics—not *Roman* Catholics, but evangelical (that is, Gospel-believing) Christians who hold to the common Christian faith.

Luther was also careful to retain a key teaching of Christianity which non-Lutheran reformers rejected: *God works through means*.

In other words, God gives the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation *by means of* the preaching of His Gospel and *by means of* the administration of His holy Sacraments—specifically, Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar. These are the instruments by which



God gives grace to sinners, works faith in their hearts, justifies and saves them, renews them in love, comforts them under the cross, and preserves them in the faith unto eternal life.

In Luther's theology, the minister who has been called and ordained by the Church has the authority of Christ to forgive sins in the stead and by the command of Christ (cf. Matthew 18:18, John 20:23). Holy Baptism actually works the forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this (cf. Acts 2:38, Titus 3:4-7, 1 Peter 3:21). And Christ's body and blood are really present with the bread and wine of Holy Communion; the bread is His body and the wine is His blood, given and shed on the cross for the forgiveness of sins, and received by all communicants—for the forgiveness of all who believe, and for judgment on all who disbelieve.

The Reformation story continued over the years. In 1529, Luther published his Small Catechism (contained in this booklet) and his Large Catechism for instructing the young in the Christian faith. In 1530, the princes of the German territories came together in the city of Augsburg in support of Luther, and on June 25<sup>th</sup> of that year, they presented to Emperor Charles V a summary of the catholic faith held by those who supported Luther. It was called the *Augsburg Confession*. It remains the foundational doctrinal statement of those who call themselves Lutherans.

Decades of debating and fighting ensued between the Roman and Lutheran territories. After Luther's death in 1546, the Lutheran churches also had to wrestle with doctrinal issues that arose in their own midst, since they were no longer united under the pope or under any single leader. Finally, in 1580 the Lutheran churches jointly compiled, published, and subscribed the Book of Concord, also known as the Lutheran Confessions, containing ten documents expressing the Christian faith as confessed by Lutherans. They are:

- ✘ The three ancient creeds of the Church catholic:
  - ✓ *The Apostles' Creed (c. 2nd Century AD)*
  - ✓ *The Nicene Creed (AD 381)*
  - ✓ *The Athanasian Creed (c. 5th Century AD)*

- ✘ The following documents written by Lutheran theologians of the sixteenth century:
  - ✓ *The Small Catechism of Martin Luther (AD 1529)*
  - ✓ *The Large Catechism of Martin Luther (AD 1529)*
  - ✓ *The Augsburg Confession (AD 1530)*
  - ✓ *The Apology (Defense) of the Augsburg Confession (AD 1531)*
  - ✓ *The Smalcald Articles (AD 1537)*
  - ✓ *The Power and Primacy of the Pope (AD 1537)*
  - ✓ *The Formula of Concord (AD 1577)*

There is so much more to the Reformation story, but let this serve for now as a brief summary of the sixteenth century Reformation and the story of Martin Luther.

The Lutherans of the sixteenth century were firmly convinced from the Holy Scriptures that their confession of faith, summarized in the Book of Concord of 1580, was pure and undefiled, and that it was the continuation of the common Christian faith handed down by Christ through His prophets and apostles, in full agreement with the confession of the historical catholic Church.

Over the five centuries since Luther first nailed his 95 Theses to that church door in Wittenberg, the doctrinal agreement expressed by Lutherans in the Book of Concord has largely deteriorated. "The Lutheran Church" is not a single, united institution, as the Roman Catholic Church is. Instead, individual churches with some degree of attachment to the Book of Concord are free to call themselves "Lutherans," often forming associations or "synods" with other churches with whom they profess to be in communion.

An honest appraisal of modern Lutheranism around the world reveals widespread deviation from the faith confessed by Luther and the Lutheran Reformers. Martin Luther would surely not recognize the doctrine and practice of the vast majority of churches that bear his name. Five hundred years after Luther first posted his 95 Theses, the churches that hold to everything confessed in the Book of Concord are few and far between.

But the Lord Christ promised that this would always be the case with His Christian Church on earth until His return, that it would constantly be troubled from without and from within, hated by the world and filled with false teachers “to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24).

I would humbly but confidently submit that genuine, “Book of Concord” Lutheranism does still exist today in small pockets around the country and around the world. These do not tend to be the large and glorious gatherings of the megachurch, but little flocks of faithful shepherds and sheep, gathering humbly and joyfully around the Word and Sacraments of Christ.

Our church, in fellowship with the Confessional Lutheran Ministerium, seeks to be such a flock. We retain the biblical doctrine and the historic practice of the Christian Church, as confessed in the Book of Concord. The Word of Christ is purely taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered among us, and we seek to grow in knowledge, in faith, and in love. We have the life of Christ and the comfort of His Gospel to give to the world. By God’s grace, we have the truth, and we would like to share it with you.

For starters, we offer you this little booklet, which includes the Small Catechism of Dr. Luther, a beautiful little summary of the common Christian faith.

To God alone be the glory—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

*“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.*

*And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

*John 8:31-32*

For the Festival of the Reformation

October, 2022

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Las Cruces, New Mexico



Martin Luther (1483 - 1546)

# The Primary Texts

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- 1<sup>st</sup> You shall have no other gods.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> You shall not misuse the name of your God.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> You shall sanctify the day of rest.
- 4<sup>th</sup> You shall honor your father and your mother.
- 5<sup>th</sup> You shall not murder.
- 6<sup>th</sup> You shall not commit adultery.
- 7<sup>th</sup> You shall not steal.
- 8<sup>th</sup> You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
- 9<sup>th</sup> You shall not covet your neighbor's house.
- 10<sup>th</sup> You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, manservant, maid-servant, animals, or anything that is his.

He says: "I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, who visits the sin of the fathers upon their children who hate Me, to the third and fourth generation; but to those who love Me and keep My commandments, I do good for a thousand generations."

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, 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 into heaven and sits 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; a holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

Go into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, so that we might be justified by His grace and become heirs of eternal life according to hope. This is most certainly true.

We were buried with Christ through Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we, too, should walk in a new life.

## THE MINISTRY OF THE KEYS

The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit! If you forgive the sins of any, to them they are forgiven, and if you retain the sins of any, to them they are retained."

## THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the

same way also He took the cup after supper, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, "Take and drink of it, all of you. This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

## **Dr. Martin Luther's Preface to the Small Catechism**

*for pastors and preachers in general*

Martin Luther, to all faithful and devout pastors and preachers: grace, mercy and peace in Jesus Christ, our Lord!

I am moved to publish this Catechism—this Christian teaching—in such a small, plain and simple form by the deplorable, miserable need I recently discovered when I, too, was engaged in a visitation. Dear God, what a shameful condition I beheld! The common man knows nothing at all of Christian teaching, especially in the villages, and, sadly, many pastors are incompetent and practically incapable of teaching. And yet they are all supposed to be called "Christians," be baptized, and benefit from the holy Sacraments, even though they can recite neither the Lord's Prayer, nor the Creed, nor the Ten Commandments. They live like animals, like irrational pigs. And now the Gospel has come! But they have learned to become masters at abusing all freedom.

Oh, you bishops! How will you ever answer to Christ for so shamefully allowing the people to get to this point and for entirely neglecting your office? May you be spared from all misfortune! You withhold the cup from the laity in the Sacrament and insist on your manmade laws, but meanwhile you don't stop to ask whether the people can recite the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, or a single word of God. May woe and a curse hang around your necks forever!

Therefore, my dear sirs and brothers who are pastors or preachers, I ask you, for God's sake: Take to heart your office! Have pity on your people who have been entrusted to your care, and help us to bring the Catechism to the people, especially to the young! And for those who cannot do any better, take

these tables and forms and set them before the people, word for word, in the following way.

In the first place, let the preacher above all avoid and beware of using various versions and forms of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Sacrament, etc. Let him rather choose for himself a single form, and then stick to it and stress it all the time, year after year. For young and simple people must be taught with a single, reliable text and form, or else they will easily go astray if they are taught one way one year, another way the next, as if the teacher were trying to improve the text. All one's toil and effort is lost in this manner.

The beloved Fathers noted this well. They all used a single form for the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. Therefore we, too, should teach these parts to young and simple people without changing a single syllable, without presenting or reciting anything differently this year than last.

Therefore, choose for yourself whichever form you desire and stick with it forever. But when you preach to those who are well-educated and intelligent, then you may demonstrate your skill and make these parts as colorful and as flashy as you like. In that situation, go ahead and turn a phrase as masterfully as you can! But with the young, stick to a single, reliable, permanent form. And teach them, first of all, these parts—the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc.—according to the text, word for word, so that they may also be able to repeat it and learn it by heart.

But if any are unwilling to learn it, then let them be told how they are denying Christ and are not Christians. Nor should they be admitted to the Sacrament, nor to the office of the catechists who attend to the baptizing of children, nor should they be allowed to use any part of Christian freedom, but should be sent away straight to the pope and his officials, and then to the devil himself. Not only that, but their parents and employers should deny them food and drink and warn them that the governor will run such crude people out of his country, etc.

For although we cannot and should not compel anyone to believe, we should, nevertheless, impress it upon the masses and insist that they know what is considered right and wrong among those with whom they wish to dwell and make a living. For whoever wants to live in a city should know and observe the laws of that city from which he hopes to benefit, whether God grants that he actually believe, or whether he remains in his heart a rascal or a scoundrel.



Secondly, if they are able to recite the text well, then teach them to understand it, so that they may know what it means. And then follow the pattern again of these tables, or another single, brief pattern—whichever you wish—and stick with it. Do not change a single syllable, as has already been said concerning the text. And take your time with it. For it is not necessary to present all the parts at once, but one after the other. If they understand the First Commandment well, then proceed to the Second, and so on. Otherwise, they will be so overwhelmed that they won't retain anything well.

Thirdly, once you have taught them this brief Catechism, then take out the Large Catechism and give them an even richer and broader understanding. Lay out each commandment, petition and part for them, each one with its various works, its benefits, its duties, its dangers and its harm, all of which you will find abundantly treated in many books. In particular, you should highly stress the commandment and part that touches on the greatest needs of your people. For example, you should strictly impress the Seventh Commandment about stealing upon workers, upon merchants, and even upon farmers and houseworkers, for among such people there is all kinds of dishonesty and thievery. Likewise, you should impress well the Fourth Commandment upon children and the common man, so that they live quiet, loyal, obedient, peaceful lives. And you should always bring in many examples from the Scriptures to show where God has both punished and blessed such people.

In this regard you should also especially impress upon rulers and parents that they should govern well and take their children to school, pointing out how it is their duty to do this and what a damnable sin they commit if they fail to do it. For in this way they topple and ruin both the kingdom of God and of the world, as the bitterest enemies of both God and men. Show them clearly what dreadful harm they do when they do not help to raise children to be pastors, preachers, clerks, etc., that God will punish them terribly for such neglect. For there is a need to preach about this. It can hardly be expressed how greatly parents and rulers sin in this matter at the present time. The devil also has great calamity in mind with such behavior.

Finally, since the tyranny of the papacy has been removed, people no longer want to go to the Sacrament. They despise it. Now, the need to go to the Sacrament should be impressed, but with this distinction: We should not compel anyone to believe or to go to the Sacrament, nor should we set up any law, time or place for it. Instead, we should preach in such a way that the people compel themselves, without our laws, and force us pastors to offer the Sacrament. This is done by telling them: If anyone does not seek or desire the

Sacrament at least once or four times a year, it is to be feared that such a person despises the Sacrament and isn't a Christian, just as the person who doesn't believe or hear the Gospel isn't a Christian. For Christ didn't say, "Leave this out!" or "Despise this!" No, He said, "This do, as often as you drink it," etc. He would have it actually done and not entirely left out and despised. "This do," He says.

But if anyone does not highly esteem the Sacrament, that is a sign that he has no sin, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no danger, no hell — that is, he doesn't believe in any of these things, even though he is stuck in them up to his ears and is doubly of the devil. Likewise, he has no need of grace, life, paradise, the kingdom of heaven, Christ, God, nor anything good. For if he believed that he had so much evil and needed so much good, he wouldn't leave out the Sacrament in this way, for in the Sacrament a person is aided against such evil and is given so much good. No, such a person cannot be compelled to the Sacrament with any law. He himself will come running and racing to it, forcing himself and insisting that you must give him the Sacrament.

Therefore, you shouldn't make any law in this regard, as the pope does. Only show them the benefit and the harm, the need and the duty, the danger and the salvation in this Sacrament. Then the people themselves will surely come without your compulsion. But if they don't come, then let them go, and tell them that, if they do not recognize or feel their great need, and if they do not take God's gracious help seriously, then they belong to the devil. But if you fail to impress this or if you turn it into a law and a poison, then it is your own fault that they despise the Sacrament. How should they not be filled with apathy, if you yourselves sleep and remain silent?

Therefore, see to it, pastors and preachers! Our office has now become a different thing than it was under the pope. It has now become serious and salutary. For this reason there is now much more toil involved, more work, more danger and trouble, and little reward and thanks in the world. But Christ Himself will be our reward, if we work faithfully. May the Father of all graces help us to do it! To Him be praise and thanks forever, through Christ our Lord! Amen.

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# The Ten Commandments

*As the father of the family should present them simply  
to the members of his household*

## THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

**You shall have no other gods.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear, love and trust in God above all things.

## THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

**You shall not misuse the name of your God.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God, that we do not curse, swear, practice witchcraft, lie or deceive by His name; but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks.

## THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

**You shall sanctify the day of rest.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God, that we do not despise preaching and His Word; but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it.

## THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

**You shall honor your father and your mother.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God, that we do not despise or anger our parents and rulers; but honor them, serve, obey, love and respect them.

**THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT****You shall not murder.***What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God, that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body; but help and support him in every bodily need.

**THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT****You shall not commit adultery.***What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God, that we lead a pure and chaste life in word and deed, and each one love and honor his spouse.

**THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT****You shall not steal.***What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God, that we do not take our neighbor's money or property, nor get them with deceitful products or dealings; but help him to improve and protect his property and livelihood.

**THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT****You shall not give false testimony against  
your neighbor.***What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God, that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him or harm his reputation; but excuse him, speak well of him, and turn everything to the best.

### THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

**You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God, that we do not plot to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way that outwardly appears to be lawful, etc.; but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

### THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

**You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, servant, maid, cattle, or anything that is his.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God, that we do not alienate or tear away from our neighbor his wife, servants or cattle, nor cause them to desert him; but urge them to stay and do their duty.

### CONCLUSION

*What does God say about all these commandments?*

He says: "I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, who visits the sin of the fathers upon their children who hate Me, to the third and fourth generation; but to those who love Me and keep My commandments, I do good for a thousand generations."

*What does this mean?*

God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments; therefore, we should fear His wrath and not disobey these commandments. But He promises grace and all good to all who keep these commandments; therefore, we should also love and trust in Him, and gladly obey His commandments.

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# The Creed

*As the father of the family should present it simply to the members of his household*

## THE FIRST ARTICLE: CREATION

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.**

*What does this mean?*

I believe that God has made me and all created things; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them; He also richly and daily provides me with clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and yard, wife and children, land, cattle, and all that I have—with all the needs and necessities of this body and life; He shields me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil; and all this He does out of pure fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all this it is my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

## THE SECOND ARTICLE: REDEMPTION

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; 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 into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.**

*What does this mean?*

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and

condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death; that I should be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from death, lives and reigns forever and ever. This is most certainly true.

### **THE THIRD ARTICLE: SANCTIFICATION**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*What does this mean?*

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; just as He calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers, and on the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

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# The Lord's Prayer

*As the father of the family should present it most simply to the members of his household*

## THE INVOCATION

**Our Father, who art in heaven.**

*What does this mean?*

With these words, God would invite us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we should ask Him, as dear children ask their dear father.

## THE FIRST PETITION

**Hallowed be Thy name.**

*What does this mean?*

God's name is certainly holy in itself; but we ask in this prayer that it may become holy among us also.

*How is this done?*

When God's Word is taught purely and correctly, and when we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But whoever teaches and lives differently than God's Word teaches, he profanes God's name among us. Keep us from this, heavenly Father!

## THE SECOND PETITION

**Thy Kingdom come.**

*What does this mean?*

God's kingdom certainly comes by itself without our prayer; but we ask in this prayer that it may come to us also.



*How is this done?*

When the heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word, and lead godly lives, here in time and there in eternity.

### **THE THIRD PETITION**

**Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

*What does this mean?*

God's good and gracious will is surely done without our prayer; but we ask in this prayer that it may be done among us also.

*How is this done?*

When God breaks and hinders every evil plan and will—like the will of the devil, the world and our flesh—that would keep us from hallowing God's name and prevent His kingdom from coming; and when He strengthens and keeps us steadfast in His Word and faith, until the end. This is His good and gracious will.

### **THE FOURTH PETITION**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

*What does this mean?*

God surely also gives daily bread to all evil people without our petition; but we ask in this prayer that He would allow us to recognize this, and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

*What is meant by daily bread?*

Everything that pertains to the needs and necessities of this life, such as food, drink, clothes, shoes, house, yard, land, cattle, money, property, a dutiful spouse, dutiful children, dutiful servants, dutiful and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, trustworthy neighbors, and the like.

### **THE FIFTH PETITION**

**Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

*What does this mean?*

We ask in this prayer that the Father in heaven would not look upon our sins or deny these petitions because of them; for we are not worthy of anything for which we ask, nor have we earned it; but we ask that He would give it all to us by grace; for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. We, in turn, will also truly forgive from the heart and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

### **THE SIXTH PETITION**

**And lead us not into temptation.**

*What does this mean?*

God surely tempts no one, but we ask in this prayer that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world and our flesh may not deceive us, nor mislead us into false belief, despair and other great shame and vice; and although we are troubled with these things, that we would, nevertheless, overcome and stand victorious in the end.

### **THE SEVENTH PETITION**

**But deliver us from evil.**

*What does this mean?*

We pray in this prayer, in summary, that the Father in heaven would deliver us from every sort of evil of body and soul, of property and honor; and finally, when our last hour comes, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

**Amen.**

*What does this mean?*

That I should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to the Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us so to pray, and has promised to hear us. Amen, Amen, which means: yes, yes, it shall be so.

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# The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

*As the father of the family should present it simply to  
the members of his household*

## FIRST

*What is Baptism?*

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and connected to God's word.

*Which word of God is that?*

Our Lord Christ says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Go into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

## SECOND

*What benefit does Baptism give?*

It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation, to all who believe this, as the word and promise of God declare.

*Which word and promise of God are these?*

Our Lord Christ says in the last chapter of Mark: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned."

## THIRD

*How can water do such great things?*

Clearly it is not the water that does it, but the word of God that is in and with the water, and the faith that trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism; but with the word of

God it is a Baptism—a water of life, rich in grace, and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says to Titus in chapter three:

“Through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, so that we might be justified by His grace, and become heirs of eternal life according to hope. This is most certainly true.”

#### **FOURTH**

*What does such baptizing with water signify?*

It signifies that the Old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned, and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a New Man should daily emerge and arise again, to live forever before God in righteousness and purity.

*Where is this written?*

St. Paul says to the Romans in chapter six: “We were buried with Christ through Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we, too, should walk in newness of life.”

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# The Ministry of the Keys and Confession

## THE MINISTRY OF THE KEYS

*What are the words that speak of the ministry of the keys?*

The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit! If you forgive the sins of any, to them they are forgiven, and if you retain the sins of any, to them they are retained."

*What does this mean?*

I believe in what the called ministers of Christ do among us, by His divine command—especially when they exclude public, impenitent sinners from the Christian congregation, and when they absolve those who repent of their sins and are willing to mend their ways—that it is all as valid and certain in heaven also, as if our dear Lord Christ did it Himself.

## HOW THE SIMPLE SHOULD BE TAUGHT TO CONFESS

Confession consists of two parts. First, that a person confesses his sins. Second, that a person receives the absolution or forgiveness from the minister, as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that his sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

*Which sins should a person confess?*

Before God, we should plead guilty of all sins, including the ones we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the minister we should only confess the sins that we know and feel in our hearts.

*Which are these?*

Consider your station according to the Ten Commandments. Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, employer, servant or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you hurt anyone, with words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent or careless, caused any harm?

*Dear sir, would you please provide me with a brief way to make confession?*

*This is what you should say to the minister:*

Dear reverend! I ask you to hear my confession and to pronounce forgiveness to me for God's sake.

*Proceed!*

I, a poor sinner, confess before God that I am guilty of all sins. In particular, I confess before you that I am a servant, maid, worker, etc. But, sadly, I do not serve my employers faithfully; for in this and that way I did not do what they told me. I angered them and caused them to curse. I was neglectful and allowed harm to come to them.

I have also acted shamelessly in words and deeds. I was angry with my peers. I grumbled against my wife and cursed, etc. I am sorry for all of this, and I ask for grace. I want to mend my ways.

*A husband, wife or employer may say as follows:*

In particular, I confess before you that I have not faithfully reared my children, servants, and wife to the honor of God. I cursed. I set a bad example with irreverent words and deeds. I did my neighbor harm and spoke evil of him. I sold goods at too high a price and gave out defective and faulty merchandise—and whatever else he has done contrary to God's commandments and his own station, etc.

But if anyone does not find himself weighed down with similar or more serious sins, he should not worry or look any further for sins, nor should he invent sins, thereby turning confession into a martyrdom. But recount one or two things that you know of, in this way:

In particular I confess that I once cursed. Likewise, I once used foul language. I once neglected this or that, etc.

*Let that be enough.*

*But if you are not aware of any sin (which hardly seems possible), then say nothing in particular. But receive forgiveness after the general confession that you make before God in the presence of the minister.*

*Then the minister should say:*

God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith! Amen.

*Furthermore:*

Do you also believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?

*Answer:* Yes, dear pastor.

*Then let him say:*

As you believe, so may it be done to you. And I, by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive you your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! Amen.

Go in peace!

*But for those whose consciences are heavily burdened or who are troubled and afflicted, a father confessor will know well how to comfort them with other passages and stir up their faith.*

*This should merely serve as a general way for the simple to make confession.*

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# The Sacrament of the Altar

*As the father of the family should present it simply to the members of his household*

*What is the Sacrament of the Altar?*

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself, for us Christians to eat and to drink.

*Where is this written?*

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and St. Paul write: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples and said: 'Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.'

"In the same way also He took the cup after supper, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, 'Take and drink of it, all of you. This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'"

*What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?*

That is shown us by these words: "Given and shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins," namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

*How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?*

Clearly it is not the eating and drinking that does it, but the words that are there: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." These words accompany the bodily eating and drinking as the chief part in the Sacrament, and whoever believes these words has what they say and as they declare, namely, forgiveness of sins.

*Who receives this Sacrament worthily?*

Fasting and bodily preparation is certainly a fine outward discipline, but he is truly worthy and well-prepared who has faith in these words: "Given and shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins." But whoever does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared. For the words "for you" require nothing but believing hearts.

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# Morning, Evening and Table Prayers

*How the father of the family should teach the members of his household to bless themselves in the morning, in the evening, and at mealtime.*

## THE MORNING BLESSING

*In the morning, when you get out of bed, you should bless yourself with the holy cross and say:*

May God grant it—Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Amen.

*Then, kneeling or standing, say the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you like, you may also say this little prayer:*

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I ask You to keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me! Amen.

*Then go off to your work with joy, perhaps after singing a hymn, such as the Ten Commandments, or whatever your devotion suggests.*

## THE EVENING BLESSING

*In the evening, when you go to bed, you should bless yourself with the holy cross and say:*

May God grant it—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! Amen.

*Then, kneeling or standing, say the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you like, you may also say this little prayer:*

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I ask You to

forgive me all my sins, where I have done wrong, and graciously to keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me! Amen.

*Then go to sleep promptly and cheerfully.*

### **BLESSING BEFORE A MEAL**

*The children and members of the household should approach the table reverently, with folded hands, and say:*

The eyes of all look to You, O Lord, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your bountiful hand and satisfy every living thing with contentment.

*Note: Contentment means that all animals receive so much to eat that they are joyful and of good cheer over it; for worry and covetousness hinder such contentment.*

*Then say the Lord's Prayer, and the following prayer:*

O Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts, which we receive from Your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord! Amen.

### **THANKSGIVING AFTER A MEAL**

*Likewise also after the meal they should reverently and with folded hands say:*

Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; and His mercy endures forever. He gives food to all flesh; He gives to the beast its fodder, to the young ravens that cry out to Him. He takes no delight in the strength of the steed, nor pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him and who wait upon His mercy.

*Then say the Lord's Prayer and the following prayer:*

We thank You, Lord God, our Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for all Your benefits, who live and reign forever and ever! Amen.

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# The Table of Duties

*Various passages for all kinds of holy orders and estates with which to admonish them, each with his own lesson, concerning their office and service*

## BISHOPS, PASTORS AND PREACHERS

A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence; not a novice; one who holds fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1).

## WHAT HEARERS OWE TO THEIR BISHOPS

The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel (1 Cor. 9:14). Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches (Gal. 6:6). Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages" (1 Tim. 5:17,18). Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you (Heb. 13:17).

## SECULAR GOVERNMENT

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil (Rom. 13.)

## WHAT SUBJECTS OWE TO THE AUTHORITIES

Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's (Matt. 22:21). Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities, etc. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor (Rom. 13:1,5 f.) I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence (1 Tim. 2:1 f.). Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, etc. (Titus 3:1). Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him (1 Pet. 2:13 f.)

### HUSBANDS

Husbands dwell with your wives with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered (1 Pet. 3). And do not be bitter toward them (Col. 3).

### WIVES

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror (1 Pet. 3; Eph. 5).

### PARENTS

Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, lest they become discouraged, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6; Col. 3).

### CHILDREN

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment

with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth" (Eph. 6).

### **SERVANTS, MAIDS, HIRED HANDS AND WORKERS**

Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free (Eph. 6).

### **HOUSEHOLD MASTERS AND MISTRESSES**

Masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him (Eph. 6).

### **YOUNGER PEOPLE IN GENERAL**

Younger people, submit yourselves to your elders, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time (1 Pet. 5).

### **WIDOWS**

Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives (1 Tim. 5)

### **ALL IN COMMON**

All the commandments are summed up in this saying, namely, you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Rom. 13). Persevere in prayer for all men (1 Tim. 2).

*Let each his lesson learn with care,  
And all the household well shall fare.*

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# Christian Questions & Answers

*for those who would go to the Sacrament*

*prepared by Dr. Martin Luther*

*After confession and instruction have taken place concerning the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, concerning the words of Baptism and the Sacrament, the pastor may ask, or a person may ask himself these questions:*

*Do you believe that you are a sinner?*

**Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.**

*How do you know that?*

**From the Ten Commandments. I have not kept them.**

*Are you also sorry for your sins?*

**Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.**

*What have you earned from God with your sins?*

**His wrath and displeasure, temporal death and eternal condemnation.**

*Do you also hope to be saved?*

**Yes, that is my hope.**

*In whom, then, do you take comfort?*

**In my dear Lord Christ.**

*Who is Christ?*

**The Son of God, true God and man.**

*How many Gods are there?*

**Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

*What did Christ do for you that you take comfort in Him?*

**He died for me and shed His blood on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.**



*Did the Father also die for you?*

**No. The Father is only God, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed His blood for me.**

*How do you know this?*

**From the holy Gospel, from the words of the Sacrament, and by His body and blood, given to me as a pledge in the Sacrament.**

*What do these words say?*

**Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread, gave thanks and broke it and gave it to His disciples and said: "Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying: "Take and drink of it, all of you; this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."**

*Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?*

**Yes, I believe it.**

*What moves you to believe this?*

**The word of Christ: "Take, eat, this is My body! Drink of it, all of you, this is My blood!"**

*What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?*

**We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: "This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."**

*Why should we remember and proclaim His death?*

**So that we may learn to believe that no creature could have made satisfaction for our sins—only Christ, true God and man, could do that; and so that we may learn to be terrified by our sins, and learn to regard them as serious; and that we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and thus be saved by this faith.**

*What moved Christ to die and make satisfaction for your sins?*

**His great love for His Father, for me and for other sinners, as it is written in John 15, Romans 6, Galatians 2.**

*Why, then, do you wish to go to the Sacrament?*

**That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sins; and then that I may also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.**

*What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament of the Altar often?*

**For God's sake, both the command and the promise of the Lord Christ should drive him to the Sacrament; then also his own need that hangs around his neck, because of which the command, invitation and promise are given.**

*But what should a person do if he can't feel this need, or if he can't find any hunger or thirst for the Sacrament in himself?*

**To such a person no better advice can be given than this: First, he should put his hand on his chest to see if he, too, has flesh and blood, and he should believe what the Scriptures say about it in Galatians 5 and Romans 6.**

**Second, he should look around to see if he is also still in the world, and he should consider that there will be no lack of sins and needs, as the Scriptures say in John 15-16 and in 1 John 2 and 5.**

**Third, he will, for this very reason, also have the devil around him, who, with his lies and murdering day and night, will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16, 1 Peter 5, Ephesians 6, and 2 Timothy 2.**

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