

Luther's Large Catechism

Part 2—The Creed, Prayer, Baptism, Lord's Supper

A Bible Study Course for Adults

by

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Leader's Guide

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Using the computer CD included in this Bible study kit

Thank you for purchasing an NPH Bible study kit. The computer CD included with this Bible study offers resources to help you prepare to teach God's Word to his people.

What will I find on the CD?

Each CD contains two text files, GUIDES.TXT and RESOURCE.TXT, and two directories, GUIDES and RESOURCE.

Read the short text files first. The GUIDES.TXT file tells you what is in the GUIDES directory. It lists the various formats for the student's guide copy masters. The RESOURCE.TXT file tells you what is in the RESOURCE directory. It contains a list of articles and resource material you may find helpful in preparing to teach the course.

How do I open the text files?

How do I open the text files?

There are no programs on this CD. In other words, there is nothing you need to install on your computer and run. These are simple files, such as a letter or sermon you might save on your hard drive. To use these files, simply open them as you would any other file.

Most word processors have a window in which you can navigate to various places to locate files. You will need to tell your word processor that you want to find a file on the drive in which you inserted the Bible study CD. This will usually be drive c: or d:. If you are using a Windows™ word processor, click on drive c: or d: in the Open File window. When you have selected the appropriate drive, it will list the files and directories that are on the Bible study CD.

What if no files or directories appear? Some word processors are set to show only files created by or for that program. You need to indicate that you want to see all the files on the CD. A pull-down menu in the Open File window gives you the options for the types of files you want the program to list. Choose "all files" or the equivalent. All the files and directories on your CD should appear. At this point you should be able to open the two text files. By navigating to the GUIDES and RESOURCE directories, you will be able to view the file names and open their contents as well.

How do I use the files in the GUIDES directory?

The GUIDES directory contains the student's guide copy masters and leader's guide.

The files in the GUIDES directory are provided in both RTF and PDF formats. We have made every effort to provide you with the capability of adapting this Bible study to your needs. However, some degree of reformatting may be necessary to use the RTF files on your computer.

The files included on this CD can be used on both IBM and Macintosh systems.

If you have any questions about using the CD, please call NPH at (414) 615-5773.

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Leader's Guide

The text of Luther's Catechism is an adaptation of the English translation found in the *Concordia Triglot* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1921). The page numbering in the student's guide is continued from part one.

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Into how many parts does Luther arrange the Creed? Why does he do this?

Previously people had divided the Creed into 12 parts. Luther simplified it by dividing it into three parts. This made it easy to understand and teach to children. Now it followed the normal order of the Trinity, with articles on creation, redemption, and sanctification.

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Go to the source—Read Genesis 1:1–2:1.

List God's creative work by the days of the week.

- 1) Light
- 2) Sky—atmosphere with water above it and water below it
- 3) Dry land and sea, vegetation
- 4) Heavenly bodies—sun, moon, stars, planets in their orbits
- 5) Sea creatures and creatures of the air
- 6) Land creatures and man

List some characteristics of God revealed in the account of creation.

Genesis 1 shows us a powerful God who is present everywhere. He is wise and caring. His love and goodness know no bounds. He takes joy in diversity and variety. He is a God who delights in and accepts a material world.

Can you find indications in God's activity on days one to five that he created the world for our use?

Water, with its special qualities, provides a basis for life. The atmosphere allows us to breathe. God provided vegetation in lavish abundance for us to eat. The sea and sky teem with food and appeal to our sense of beauty. The stars are there to tell time for us, and the sun and moon give us light. The creation account revolves around mankind.

What is the “image of God”?

God's image is holiness and righteousness.

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You make the call

By faith we believe what God has told us in the Bible. That is the final answer. You might review the creation account in Genesis 1 and call their attention to the flood, an event which had a great impact on the world. We can be sure God created dinosaurs sometime during the sixth day. But we don't know when these dinosaurs became extinct. Teach your child to accept the evidence scientists find but not their conclusions about time, which are based on the evolutionary model.

Luther, consistent with the Bible, believed in a God who was very active in his creation. How does this belief affect our daily lives and attitudes? Be sure to think of parents, college students, and those facing end-of-life decisions.

Everything I have and hold is from God. Those going into college will consider how they can best serve God and man through the skills God has given them. Parents will be concerned how they can raise their children to be faithful Christians. Those facing end-of-life decisions will refuse to push God aside and act as if they have the final say whether they live or die.

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Choose one word that summarizes the Second Article? Why did you choose that word?

Answers will vary. Jesus' name “Lord” is at the heart of this article.

This name means that Jesus is faithful to his covenant and has redeemed the world from sin, the devil, and death.

Religion usually portrays mankind as serving the divine. Explain how Luther's view is just the opposite—and correctly so!

God serves us! He gives us all we need through his creation. His greatest act of service was sending Jesus, who brings us every spiritual blessing by his gospel forgiveness.

How does Jesus show his servant-nature even after his resurrection?

He is making a place for us in heaven, and he guides and protects us with his Word here on earth, all to the glory of God the Father.

Go to the source—Read Philippians 2:1-13.

What attitude does Paul urge the Philippians to have?

They are to be like-minded, have the same love, be one in spirit and purpose, and look out for others.

How does Christ serve as our example?

- 1) He showed a humble attitude about himself.
- 2) He served others, which is what Paul is encouraging us to do.

Explain verse 6.

Jesus had no need for self-praise. He had no pride that drove him to cling to his position of glory in heaven. He knew he was and would always be true God, but he willingly put away his powers in order to serve us.

Even now Jesus is still true God *and* true man.

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You make the call

Explain “Lord” to both of them as you go step-by-step through the Second Article:

1) conceived by the Holy Spirit

For my sake Jesus put away his heavenly glory and power to lead a life of humility and service.

2) born of the virgin Mary

Jesus became a human being, a baby, for my salvation.

3) suffered under Pontius Pilate

For me Jesus was publicly abused. Through it all he kept God's commandments, making no threats when he was unjustly treated.

4) crucified

By his death Jesus paid for all my sins. There is nothing I must do to earn his forgiveness.

5) died

God died for me. He sank to great depths of humiliation out of his love for me.

6) buried

Jesus went into the grave, as one day I will. To all outward appearances, it was over, and God's plan for my salvation had been thwarted.

7) descended into hell

Jesus went into hell not to plunder it or to give those there a second chance. The time of grace for those human souls lost in hell had long past. He went to the devil's "capital city" to proclaim his victory over death.

8) rose again from the dead

Bodily and visibly Jesus took up his life again to prove that the sins of the world were forgiven and that he had won the victory.

9) ascended into heaven

Jesus now fills everything in every way.

10) seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty

Jesus uses his heavenly power and his Word to guide and protect his people as he prepares a place for them.

11) will come to judge the living and the dead

Jesus will come from heaven to earth on judgment day.

Jesus will judge all people by whether they had faith or not, instead of looking at the good deeds they had done.

What reason does Luther give for not explaining more about Jesus' life here?

We can hear about it in church when it comes time for the Scripture readings and the sermon.

What does this say about what you should expect to hear from the pulpit?

The wise preacher will stick to the appointed readings and preach about the life of Christ during the “festival” half of the church year. To do otherwise is failing to feed God's people as nourishing a diet as possible.

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Give a quick definition of *sanctification*.

The Holy Spirit makes us holy. He gives us faith, he creates a new heart within us, he motivates us to do good works, and he keeps us in faith through God's Word as taught in the church.

How does the Holy Spirit sanctify us?

The Holy Spirit uses his Word to sanctify us. The Word of God works on us and brings us to Christ to receive all his blessings.

You make the call

1) not deny the truths of the Bible?

The Holy Spirit is the giver of faith. We cannot decide by our own power to believe for ourselves, for when we were in unbelief, we were dead in our transgressions and sins (Ephesians 2:1).

2) not offend him?

Do not deny the man's faith and the change Jesus has obviously made in his life. Be tactful and loving as you explain the truth to him.

3) adequately explain what he obviously experienced for the good—as his membership in your church shows?

The Holy Spirit had created faith in the man's heart when he was 20 years old as the Spirit worked through the Word of God the man was hearing. The first fruit of his faith is his realization that he agreed with what God was saying; he assented to it and confessed his faith. He is now giving outward evidence of what has already taken place in him. We feel the pain first; then we say “Ouch!” We believe first; then we confess that faith.

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Where alone will the Holy Spirit work to create faith? Why?

Luther says only in connection with the church will the Holy Spirit work to create faith, for the Lord has entrusted his Word to the church.

What was going on in the medieval Roman Catholic Church that caused the people to be robbed of the working of the Holy Spirit in their hearts?

Faith in Jesus Christ was hidden and lost. Because of this, what makes us acceptable to God was lost also. Men and evil spirits promoted the teaching of works rather than Christ as the way to heaven.

What is the first thing you think of when you hear the following words?**1) *communion***

The Lord's Supper may be one of the first answers. The point of this question, however, is to discuss what it means in the Third Article. Communion means "a joining together or fellowship." This is true in regard to the Lord's Supper, but it also defines what the church is—a joining together, or fellowship, with other Christians.

2) *saints*

Some may think of the Roman Catholic definition "especially holy believers who are now in heaven." *Saints* means "holy people." But the word refers to all people who are members of the Christian church, for they have been made holy through the blood of Christ.

Riddle: When is a church not a church? *When the church is not gathered there. Explain.*

The church is not a building. The church is people. When people gather for worship and to hear the Word of God, then the church is present.

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Give Luther's definition of *communion of saints*.

The assembly of Christians, the congregation of believers.

Go to the source—Read Matthew 13:47-50.**What is the net?**

The Word of God used by the church to gather souls into God's kingdom.

Who are the good fish?

Believers.

Who are the bad fish?

Unbelievers.

What are the bad fish doing in the net?

They want to appear holy and in fellowship with God. But they are hypocrites, people who appear to be members of the church but, in reality, are unbelievers.

Who alone is able to separate the believers from the hypocrites?

Only God can separate the believers from the hypocrites on the Last Day.

How does Luther's definition of a "holy congregation" explain the fact that some of our church members may well end up in hell?

Only believers are part of the church. The church building draws others as well—hypocrites who are seeking only earthly goals by their participation with the congregation.

What must be the central message in the church? Why?

Jesus Christ crucified must remain the central message in the church, for that alone is the gospel. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the gospel alone consoles us with the forgiveness of our sins and promotes Christian living.

What are the "signs" Luther is talking about that encourage us with the message that our sins are forgiven?

The signs in the church are the promise of the gospel, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and absolution (the forgiveness of sins).

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Have you ever worried that you would die while committing a sin and go to hell—like dying in a car wreck while you were speeding, or dropping dead of a heart attack while you were losing your temper? If so, what comfort does being a member of the holy congregation give you?

In the holy Christian church there is complete and ongoing forgiveness of sins. As long as you are in faith, God is forgiving you. If you should lose your faith,