

19 Minutes with Luther

52 Lessons Based on Martin Luther's Small Catechism

by

Tim H. Gumm

The Knowledge of God	1st Article (The Fall into Sin)	Baptism (Part 2)
Law and Gospel	2nd Article (Christ's Person)	Holy Communion (Part 1)
Introduction to the Law	2nd Article (Christ's Office)	Holy Communion (Part 2)
1st Commandment	2nd Article (Christ's Work)	Keys & Confession (Part 1)
2nd Commandment	2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)	Keys & Confession (Part 2)
3rd Commandment	2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)	Keys & Confession (Part 3)
4th Commandment	2nd Article (Christian Life)	Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
5th Commandment	2nd Article (Saved by Faith)	The Address
6th Commandment	3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)	1st Petition
7th Commandment	3rd Article (Calls)	2nd Petition
8th Commandment	3rd Article (Enlightens)	3rd Petition
9th & 10th Commandments	3rd Article (Sanctifies)	4th Petition
The Conclusion	3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)	5th Petition
The Gospel & the Nature of God	3rd Article (Invisible Church)	6th Petition
The Apostles' Creed (Faith)	3rd Article (Visible Church)	7th Petition
1st Article (Creation)	3rd Article (Forgiveness)	The Doxology
1st Article (Preservation)	3rd Article (Eternal Life)	
1st Article (Protection)	Baptism (Part 1)	

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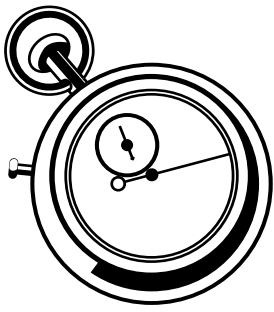
19 Minutes with Luther

To the Leader

These Bible studies were originally written to be used as Bible study material for the summer months. After the Sunday morning service, Pastor Tim Gumm would invite people to remain for 19 minutes, during which they would study a portion of Luther's Small Catechism. The leader used a timer to stop the class at 19 minutes. Questions not covered in the allotted time were left for members to work on at home.

Members are encouraged to memorize the catechism as they proceed through the lessons. Church leaders will be able to find additional uses for these studies. They can serve as general devotions for various groups in the congregation, even church councils and voters meetings.

However, their main purpose is to foster Bible study during the summer months. There are 52 studies, enough studies for four summers. We pray that these studies help your congregation members grow in their understanding of and faith in God's grace in Christ.



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The Knowledge of God

► The Knowledge of God

Law and Gospel
Introduction to the Law
1st Commandment
2nd Commandment
3rd Commandment
4th Commandment
5th Commandment
6th Commandment
7th Commandment
8th Commandment
9th & 10th Commandments
The Conclusion
The Gospel & the Nature of God
The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
1st Article (Creation)
1st Article (Preservation)
1st Article (Protection)
1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
2nd Article (Christ's Person)
2nd Article (Christ's Office)
2nd Article (Christ's Work)
2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
2nd Article (Christian Life)
2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
3rd Article (Calls)
3rd Article (Enlightens)
3rd Article (Sanctifies)
3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
3rd Article (Invisible Church)
3rd Article (Visible Church)
3rd Article (Forgiveness)
3rd Article (Eternal Life)
Baptism (Part 1)
Baptism (Part 2)
Holy Communion (Part 1)
Holy Communion (Part 2)
Keys & Confession (Part 1)
Keys & Confession (Part 2)
Keys & Confession (Part 3)
Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
The Address
1st Petition
2nd Petition
3rd Petition
4th Petition
5th Petition
6th Petition
7th Petition
The Doxology

"Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."
Romans 1:20

1. All people have a natural knowledge of the existence of God. According to the following passages, where do people receive this knowledge?

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Psalm 19:1).

"When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them" (Romans 2:14,15).

2. What do we understand about God the Creator by looking at an apple tree? at the Himalayas? at the human body? What do we know about God from our consciences?

3. According to 1 Corinthians 2:9, *"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him,"* what can we never know about God from his creation or our consciences?

4. Evaluate: Every time the Gallup Organization polls Americans, it finds that the high majority of people in the United States believe in God.

5. God also reveals himself to people through the Bible. According to the following passage, what is the special value of this revelation?

"From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

6. The Bible has two parts: the Old Testament, which was written before the time of Christ, and the New Testament, which was written after Christ came. Fill in the following chart.

	Old Testament	New Testament
Writers	_____	_____
# of Books	_____	_____
Language	_____	_____
Time	_____	_____

7. What do the following three passages tell us about the Bible?

“When you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

“Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

“All Scripture is God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16).

8. Of what can we be assured by the fact that the Bible is the Word of God?

9. Evaluate: Many churches today deny the doctrines of verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of Scripture. They claim that many of the events recorded in the Bible (for example, many of the miracles) never really happened, but that this fact shouldn't matter to Christians.

Luther said:

“God is everywhere. However, He does not want you to reach out for Him everywhere but only in the Word. Reach out for it, and you will grasp Him aright. Otherwise you are tempting God and setting up idolatry. That is why He has established a certain method for us. This teaches us how and where we are to look for Him and find Him, namely, in the Word.” (*What Luther Says: An Anthology*, Vol. 2, compiled by Ewald M. Plass, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959, p. 545.)

Closing Prayer

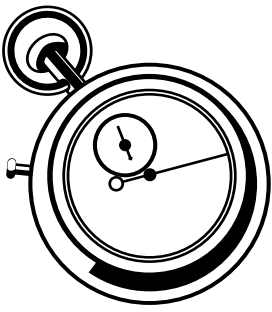
Without you, Lord, we would surely be lost forever. We praise you for making yourself known, and we praise you especially for the revelation of your Son, Jesus, found in the pages of Scripture. In him we live today, tomorrow, and forever, and in his name we pray. Amen.

At home

Memorize in order the books of the Bible.

Helps

(1) All people have a natural knowledge of God from creation and from their consciences. (2) From the things that he created, we understand that God is wise, kind, almighty, divine, and eternal. Our consciences tell us that God is just and holy and that he punishes sin. (3) Creation and our consciences will never tell us who the true God is or what he has done for our salvation. (4) What the Gallup polls reveal is not surprising since all people have a natural knowledge of God. This natural knowledge, however, is not enough for salvation. (5) The Bible alone reveals God fully and tells us what he has done for our salvation. (6) Moses and the prophets wrote the 39 books of the Old Testament in Hebrew sometime between 1500 and 400 B.C. The apostles and evangelists wrote the 27 books of the New Testament in Greek sometime between A.D. 40 and 100. (7) The Bible is the *Word of God*. It was verbally inspired, that is, God the Holy Spirit “breathed into” the human writers the very thoughts and words they wrote. (8) Because the Bible is God's Word, we can trust what it says, being confident that it is true throughout and that it contains no errors. (9) Some time should be spent on this point: A denial of these doctrines is not only sinful, in that it dishonors God and his Word, but it is dangerous as well. In denying these doctrines, a person is claiming that the Bible is a human writing and, as such, is subject to the whims and interpretation of men. Most important, perhaps, a denial of these doctrines means that we can not trust what the Bible says, including what it says about salvation through Jesus Christ alone.



19 Minutes with Luther

Law and Gospel

The Knowledge of God

► **Law and Gospel**

Introduction to the Law

1st Commandment

2nd Commandment

3rd Commandment

4th Commandment

5th Commandment

6th Commandment

7th Commandment

8th Commandment

9th & 10th Commandments

The Conclusion

The Gospel & the Nature of God

The Apostles' Creed (Faith)

1st Article (Creation)

1st Article (Preservation)

1st Article (Protection)

1st Article (The Fall into Sin)

2nd Article (Christ's Person)

2nd Article (Christ's Office)

2nd Article (Christ's Work)

2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)

2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)

2nd Article (Christian Life)

2nd Article (Saved by Faith)

3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)

3rd Article (Calls)

3rd Article (Enlightens)

3rd Article (Sanctifies)

3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)

3rd Article (Invisible Church)

3rd Article (Visible Church)

3rd Article (Forgiveness)

3rd Article (Eternal Life)

Baptism (Part 1)

Baptism (Part 2)

Holy Communion (Part 1)

Holy Communion (Part 2)

Keys & Confession (Part 1)

Keys & Confession (Part 2)

Keys & Confession (Part 3)

Introduction to the Lord's Prayer

The Address

1st Petition

2nd Petition

3rd Petition

4th Petition

5th Petition

6th Petition

7th Petition

The Doxology

"The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

John 1:17

1. The two main doctrines in the Bible are the law and the gospel. These two doctrines differ fundamentally from each other and, in some sense, might even be called opposites. According to the following sets of passages, how do law and gospel differ?

"If you want to enter life, obey the commandments. . . 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 19:17-19).

"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16).

The law tells us _____.

The gospel tells us _____.

"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The law _____ righteousness.

The gospel _____ righteousness.

"Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin" (Romans 3:20).

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).

The law shows us _____.

The gospel shows us _____.

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

The law _____ us.

The gospel _____ us.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105).

"Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

After conversion, the law _____ us in thankful living.

After conversion, the gospel _____ thankful living.

2. Why will the message of the gospel seem of little value to us if we do not first hear the message of God's law?

3. What will happen when people hear the message of the law but not the message of the gospel?

4. Comment on the following:

I would rather attend a church that doesn't preach God's law; it just makes me sad and depressed.

The law afflicts the comfortable. The gospel comforts the afflicted.

A minister once said, "This is the order I use when I preach a sermon: law, gospel, and then law again."

Luther said:

"Before receiving the comfort of forgiveness, sin must be recognized and the fear of God's wrath must be experienced through the preaching or apprehension of the Law, that man may be driven to sigh for grace and may be prepared to receive the comfort of the Gospel. . . . On the other hand, where there are hearts in which the Law has performed its office, so that they are frightened by the knowledge of their sin, are timid and fugitive, no Law should be preached and proclaimed any more, but pure Gospel and comfort." (Plass, Vol. 2, page 738.)

Closing Prayer

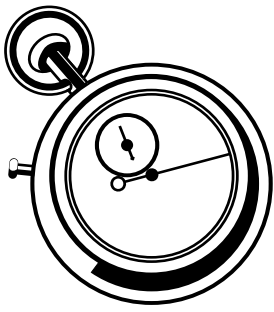
Lord God, thank you for leading us to see clearly our damning sins, our hopelessness, and our need for a Savior. And thank you for comforting our hearts with the sweet, good news of salvation in Jesus Christ alone. May we live our lives to his glory and yours. Amen.

At home

- Memorize John 1:17.
- Read your favorite Bible passages. Determine whether they are law passages or gospel passages.

Helps

(1) The law tells us what to do and what not to do; the gospel tells us what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. The law demands righteousness; the gospel gives righteousness. The law shows us our sin and our need for a Savior; the gospel shows us our Savior. The law condemns us; the gospel saves us. The law guides us in thankful living; the gospel inspires thankful living. (2) If we do not understand that we are eternally condemned because of our sins, we will never fully appreciate a Savior from sin. (3) The message of the law without the message of salvation in Jesus Christ results only in despair and hopelessness. (4) It is true that the law is not a pleasant message to hear. However, it is entirely necessary. Before we can be as glad as God wants to make us through the preaching of the gospel, we must first be made sad through the preaching of the law. This, in fact, is the purpose of the law—to afflict the hearts of those who find spiritual security in themselves and their works, and to convince them that, by themselves, they are lost. The purpose of the gospel, on the other hand, is to comfort those whose hearts are despairing and afflicted by assuring them that Jesus has saved them. Ministers who rightly handle law and gospel will use God's law as a mirror, convicting people of their sin and leading them to despise their own righteousness. The gospel, then, will gladden hearts with the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. The law, finally, will be used again, not as a mirror but to guide Christian hearts, compelled by Christ's love for them, in thankful living.



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Introduction to the Law

The Knowledge of God
Law and Gospel

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1st Commandment
2nd Commandment
3rd Commandment
4th Commandment
5th Commandment
6th Commandment
7th Commandment
8th Commandment
9th & 10th Commandments
The Conclusion
The Gospel & the Nature of God
The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
1st Article (Creation)
1st Article (Preservation)
1st Article (Protection)
1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
2nd Article (Christ's Person)
2nd Article (Christ's Office)
2nd Article (Christ's Work)
2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
2nd Article (Christian Life)
2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
3rd Article (Calls)
3rd Article (Enlightens)
3rd Article (Sanctifies)
3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
3rd Article (Invisible Church)
3rd Article (Visible Church)
3rd Article (Forgiveness)
3rd Article (Eternal Life)
Baptism (Part 1)
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Holy Communion (Part 1)
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Keys & Confession (Part 1)
Keys & Confession (Part 2)
Keys & Confession (Part 3)
Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
The Address
1st Petition
2nd Petition
3rd Petition
4th Petition
5th Petition
6th Petition
7th Petition
The Doxology

"And God spoke all these words: 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall . . .'" Exodus 20:1-3

1. Romans 2:14,15 reads: *"When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, . . . they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them."* According to that, how does God give his law to all people?
2. In what two ways will a person's conscience err and show itself to be undependable?
3. Because a person's conscience is not always dependable, God gave his law a second way—written in the Bible in the form of the Ten Commandments—so that we might know exactly what his will is. In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus summarized the commandments: *"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"* How did Jesus summarize the first table of God's law (Commandments 1-3)?

How did he summarize the second table (Commandments 4-10)?

With which word did he summarize the entire law?

4. Define the following:

sin

sin of omission

sin of commission

transgression

iniquity

5. Since God demands that we keep the commandments perfectly, it is impossible for the commandments to save us. Saint Paul wrote: *“No one will be declared righteous in [God’s] sight by observing the law”* (Romans 3:20). Nonetheless, God’s law still serves several good purposes. What, according to each of the following passages, is the purpose of God’s law?

“We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels” (1 Timothy 1:9).

“Through the law we become conscious of sin” (Romans 3:20).

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105).

6. First John 4:19 reads: *“We love because he first loved us.”* What does this verse tell us about the power to obey God’s commandments?
7. Why did God introduce the commandments as he did (see Exodus 20:1-3)?

8. Evaluate the following statements:

Let your conscience be your guide.

When I want my kids to behave, I just lay down the law.

Obeying God’s commandments takes all the fun out of life.

Luther said:

“Before receiving the comfort of forgiveness, sin must be recognized and the fear of God’s wrath must be experienced through the preaching or apprehension of the Law, that man may be driven to sigh for grace and may be prepared to receive the comfort of the Gospel.” (Plass, Vol. 2, page 738.)

Closing Prayer

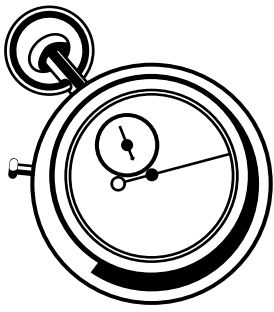
Lord God, thank you for your law. Move us, by your love, to live according to your law to your glory and for our welfare. In our Savior’s name we pray. Amen.

At home

Memorize Romans 3:20 and Psalm 119:105.

Helps

(1) God gives his law to all people by writing it on their hearts. The conscience is the voice within a person that bears witness to God’s law. (2) A person’s conscience may become so hardened that it no longer bothers him when he sins, or it may tell him something is sinful when it is not. (3) Jesus summarized the first table with “Love God!” and the second with “Love your neighbor!” The entire law can be summarized with the word *Love!* (4) Sin means to “miss the mark” of perfection that God demands we hit. A sin of omission is failing to do what God demands us to do. A sin of commission is doing what God forbids. Transgression is “crossing the line” into what God forbids. Iniquity is “failing to measure up” to God’s standard of perfection. (5) The law serves as a curb, preserving order in this world by keeping the wicked actions of all people within bounds. The law serves as a mirror, showing all people their sin and their need for a Savior. The law also serves as a guide, showing Christians the way of life that is pleasing to God. (6) The law does not give us the strength to obey the commandments. Only the gospel of God’s love for us in Christ inspires and empowers us to obey the commandments. (7) God introduced the commandments as he did to remind us that he is our loving Maker and Savior so that we are willing and glad to obey what he commands. (8) Sin has made our consciences unreliable; we cannot depend on conscience alone to tell us God’s will. The law can only curb sinful behavior; it cannot motivate our children or any of us to joyfully obey God’s commandments. Our sinful nature thinks that, but Christians who know God’s love find their enjoyment in serving him.



19 Minutes with Luther

The First Commandment

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- **1st Commandment**
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

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

1. What does it mean to "have a god"?

2. In the context of this commandment, what does it mean to "fear"?

3. What does it mean to "love"? How do we demonstrate love to God?

4. What does it mean to "trust"? How does worry demonstrate a lack of trust?

5. Idolatry is the worship of a false god. "Open idolatry" happens when people openly worship someone or something other than the triune God. Give examples of people who practice open idolatry today, and, if possible, explain what those people confess.

6. "Secret idolatry" takes place in a person's heart—when a person secretly gives someone or something, rather than God, first place in his heart. Give examples of things that might lead a person to commit secret idolatry?

7. At times people may think that it's allowable to love something in this world as much as they love God. Jesus said: "*No one can serve two masters*" (Matthew 6:24). Apply his words to your money, the members of your family, your job, your possessions.

8. Agree or disagree: If we could keep the First Commandment, we would be sinless.

9. In his Large Catechism, Martin Luther called work-righteousness (also called self-righteousness) the height of idolatry. Explain Luther's words.

10. Evaluate: Jeff left the Lutheran church and became a member of the Jewish faith because his fiancée was of that religion. He said that he thought it was better that they both belong to the same church. He also mentioned that his fiancée did not want to become a Lutheran.

11. Explain why a Christian might say this: "The First Commandment is my favorite. It convicts me of so much sin that I just have to love my Savior all the more."

Luther said:

"Mammon is the world's favorite idol. One who has money and property has a sense of security and feels as happy and fearless as if he were sitting in the middle of paradise. On the other hand, one who has nothing is as insecure and anxiety-ridden as if he had never heard of God. . . . The desire for riches sticks, glued to our nature right up to the grave." (Large Catechism, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959, pp. 365,366.)

(Location references are to *The Book of Concord*. Translation is the author's own.)

Closing Prayer

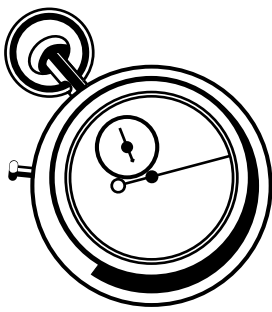
Lord God, give us the strength to avoid every form of idolatry. Lead us to worship you alone and, with our whole hearts and entire lives, to give you glory. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the First Commandment and its meaning.
- Analyze the appearance of your home. Does it reflect your faith and the fact that God is #1 in your life? What could be changed?

Helps

(1) Martin Luther said it well: "A god is that to which we look for all good and in which we find refuge in every need." (2) To fear God means to honor and respect him above anyone or anything else. (3) To love God above all things means to consider him as our dearest treasure. We demonstrate our love for God through our service and obedience. (4) To trust God means to have complete reliance in him and his Word. Worry indicates a lack of faith in God and his promises. (5) Open idolatry takes two forms: when people worship an idol (for example, Buddhists), or when people worship a god other than the true God. There are numerous examples of the latter: Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, who deny the deity of Jesus Christ as presented in the Scriptures; Unitarians, who believe in a singular-personed god; Jews, who deny that Jesus is the Son of God. (6) Many people love and trust money more than they love and trust God. Others give their job, possessions, pleasure, and people first place in their hearts. (7) It is sinful to love anything as much as we love God or to let anyone or anything share the first place in our hearts with God. (8) Agree: If we could truly love God above all else, we would keep all his commandments. (9) When people look to themselves and their own works for salvation, they are committing the height of idolatry: trusting in weak, feeble, sinful flesh rather than in the almighty and gracious God. (10) Jeff is committing both secret and open idolatry: showing greater love for his fiancée than for God and joining a church that openly worships a false god. Jeff has sacrificed peace with God for peace within his home. (11) Every sin is a sin against the First Commandment. The enormity of our sins will lead us to see, more and more, the grace of God in Christ.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Second Commandment

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- ▶ **2nd Commandment**
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
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- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
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- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

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

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not use his name to curse, swear, lie, or deceive, or use witchcraft, but call upon God's name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

1. What two meanings does the word *name* have in this commandment, and what, therefore, is God protecting in this commandment?
2. What does it mean to "curse by God's name"? What does it mean to "swear"?
3. When is swearing a sinful misuse of God's name? When is swearing permitted?
4. How do people use God's name to "lie"? What are such people called?
5. How do people use God's name to "deceive"? What are such people called?
6. What does God forbid in the following passages? How does this apply to us today?

"Let no one be found among you . . . who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD" (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

"Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:31).
7. What are the four ways in which God wants us to use his name? Give examples from the Bible when God's name was used in these ways.

8. First Peter 2:9 reads: *“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”* What light does this verse shed on the meaning of the word *praise*?

9. Evaluate the following:

Reading your horoscope isn't wrong if you really don't believe in it.

A TV evangelist promises that all who pray to Jesus will be healed of their illnesses.

It's okay not to share your faith with others if you don't feel comfortable doing so.

10. Second Corinthians 5:21 reads: *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”* What does this verse say Jesus did to save us from our sins against the Second Commandment? What does that truth move us to do with regard to this commandment?

Luther said:

“Children should be constantly urged and incited to honor God's name and to have it always upon their lips in everything that may happen to them or come to their notice. For that is the true honor of his name, to look to it and implore it for all consolation, so that first the heart by faith gives God the honor due him and afterwards the lips by confession. This is also a blessed and useful habit and very effectual against the devil, who cannot remain long where God's name is uttered and called upon from the heart.” (Tappert, p. 374.)

Closing Prayer

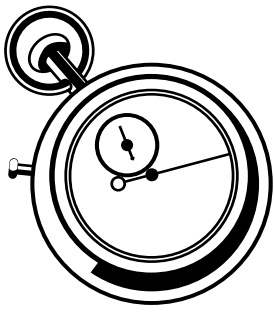
Lord God, we thank and praise you. Lead us to respond to your mercy and goodness by sharing the message of your salvation with others and by using your name in ways that please you. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Second Commandment and its meaning.
- Share God with an unchurched person this week.

Helps

(1) God is protecting the use of his titles as well as his reputation (that is, everything he reveals to us about himself in the Bible). (2) To curse is to call down God's wrath on (damn) someone or something. To swear is to take an oath. (3) God forbids needless swearing, false swearing (called perjury in a court of law), and swearing in uncertain things. God allows us to use his name to swear when the government demands that we do so (for example, in court) and when our swearing glorifies him (a confirmation vow) or benefits others (a marriage vow, the president's oath). (4) False prophets and teachers use God's name to lie and to cover up their false teachings. (5) Hypocrites use God's name to deceive others, leading them to think that they are actually believers. (6) God forbids that we be involved in the occult arts (even something as “innocent” as a Ouija board), or that we seek the help of someone involved in the superstitious arts (psychics, those who write horoscopes). (7) God wants us to use his name to call on him in trouble, to pray, praise, and give thanks. Examples from the Bible will vary. (8) Praise means to use his name to tell others of his blessings and gift of salvation. (9) Even playing with something that God forbids (Ouija boards, horoscopes) is sinful. While it is true that God wants us to pray to him in faith, it is wrong to claim something from God that he does not promise. It is also wrong and sinful to neglect our responsibility to tell others about their Savior. (10) Jesus took our sins upon himself and suffered and died for them, paying the penalty God demands for sin. He also lived perfectly in our place, keeping the Second Commandment for us, so that we might be righteous before God. Jesus' work in our behalf moves us to respond with obedience.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Third Commandment

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- ▶ **3rd Commandment**
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
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- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
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- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
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- Baptism (Part 2)
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- Holy Communion (Part 2)
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- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

1. Leviticus 23:3 reads: *"There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly."* What was God's special will for his Old Testament people according to the Third Commandment?
2. Colossians 2:16,17 reads: *"Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however is found in Christ."* Why are God's laws for Old Testament believers no longer in effect for us today?
3. Colossians 3:16 reads: *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."* The writer to the Hebrews said, *"Let us not give up meeting together [that is, going to church], as some are in the habit of doing" (10:25).* What is God's will for us today according to the Third Commandment?
4. The early Christian church chose Sunday as its day of worship as "a remembrance." Explain.
5. The catechism mentions a number of things we might do that would make us guilty of despising God's Word. Explain/expound on each of the following:
 - (a) refuse to hear and learn the Word
 - (b) let the Word get crowded out of our lives
 - (c) refuse to believe and obey the Word

6. The seasons of the church year allow Christians opportunities to review the events in the life of Christ as well as to reflect on living our Christian faith. List the seasons of the church year and the time of year and focus of each.

Season	Time of year	Focus
ADVENT	_____	_____
_____	_____	The birth of Jesus Christ
_____	Begins 1/6; 4-9 weeks	_____
LENT	_____	_____
_____	Spring; 7 weeks	The resurrection
_____	40 days after Easter	_____
_____	50 days after Easter	The coming and work of the Holy Spirit
_____	Begins 1 week after Pentecost; 22-27 weeks	_____

7. Agree or disagree: If we are in church every Sunday, we are obeying the Third Commandment.

8. Luke 4:16 reads: *“On the Sabbath day [Jesus] went into the synagogue, as was his custom.”* Apply this verse to your salvation.

Luther said:

“As God at first gives faith through the Word, so He thereafter also exercises, increases, confirms, and perfects it through the Word. Therefore the worship of God at its best and the finest keeping of the Sabbath consist in exercising oneself in piety and in dealing with the Word and hearing it. On the other hand, nothing is more dangerous than a dislike of the Word.” (Plass, Vol. 3, p. 1545.)

Closing Prayer

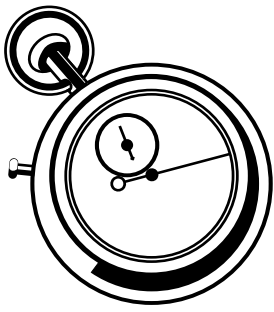
Gracious Lord, forgive us for despising and neglecting your Word. Fill us with such a love for your Word that we will always regard it as holy and true, gladly hear and learn it, believe and obey it, and share its saving truths with others. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Third Commandment and its meaning.
- Prepare a family worship service (with hymns, prayers, Bible readings, and discussion questions) for the next time your family vacations in an area where you are unable to attend a church.

Helps

(1) God's will was that his people receive rest on the Sabbath (Saturday): rest for their bodies and rest for their souls through worship. (2) God's Old Testament worship laws are no longer in effect because Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament Sabbath. The Sabbath was merely a shadow or type of the true rest Jesus would give, namely, the forgiveness of sins. (3) God wants us to worship and receive his Word eagerly. (4) New Testament Christians are free to worship on any day they want. Sunday was chosen because it marked several great events: the beginning of creation, the sending of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and, above all, Jesus' resurrection. (5) Answers will vary: a) refusing to take (or making excuses for not taking) every opportunity that presents itself to hear and study God's Word; b) allowing family, pleasure, busyness, jobs, and such, to keep us away from worship and the Word; c) hearing the Word but refusing to take it to heart or to do what it says. (6) ADVENT—December: 4 weeks—Christ's coming. CHRISTMAS—Begins 12/25; 12 days—The birth of Jesus Christ. EPIPHANY—Begins 1/6; 4-9 weeks—Jesus is the Savior of all people. LENT—Begins Ash Wed.; 40 days, not including Sundays—Christ's passion. EASTER—Spring; 7 weeks—The resurrection. ASCENSION—40 days after Easter—Jesus' return to heaven. PENTECOST—50 days after Easter—The coming and work of the Holy Spirit. TRINITY or PENTECOST—Begins 1 week after Pentecost, 22-27 weeks—The life of the Christian. (7) Agreement with the statement can lead to work-righteousness. God wants to bless us through our hearing and learning, believing and obeying of his Word. (8) Jesus saved us from our sins against this commandment by obeying it perfectly in our place; he also died as the payment for our sins.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Fourth Commandment

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- **4th Commandment**
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
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- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not dishonor or anger our parents and others in authority, but honor, serve, and obey them, and give them love and respect.

1. What are the three main areas in which God has placed his representatives over us? What blessings do we receive through each?
 - (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)
2. How does a child honor his parents by his attitude? by his speech? by his conduct?
3. When this commandment is scorned by children, what harm or sadness is brought upon parents? upon the children themselves? upon society?
4. Proverbs 13:24 reads, "*He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.*" What does God want his representatives to do with those who sin against this commandment? How can this be a blessing?
5. What happens when parents openly disagree about discipline?

6. What is the significance of this commandment for employees and employers? for citizens and government authorities?

7. Acts 5:29 reads, *"We must obey God rather than men!"* What does this verse tell us about obedience to parents, employers, and others in authority?

8. In his Large Catechism, Martin Luther reminds us that the Fourth Commandment also has something to say to those in authority. What sinful attitudes do parents sometimes have toward their children? What, however, are the blessings from God for parents and superiors who carry out their responsibilities?

9. How does the Fourth Commandment serve as a mirror for us?

10. What two things did Jesus do to save us from our sins against this commandment?

Luther said:

"Children should bear in mind that, however humble, poor, infirm, or eccentric their parents may be, our fathers and mothers are nevertheless God's gifts to us. They are not to be robbed of their honor because of any peculiarities or failings. We are not to be influenced by their persons, whatever these may be, but rather by the will of God, who has created and ordained their parental relationship to us." (Tappert, pp. 379,380.)

Closing Prayer

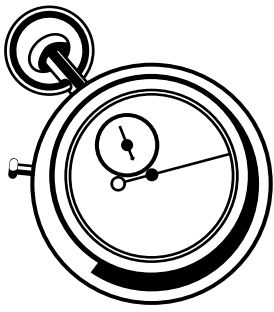
Lord, our sinful nature wants to rebel against you and all your representatives. Forgive us for Jesus' sake. Lead us to respond to your salvation by honoring those whom you, in love, have placed in authority over us. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Fourth Commandment and its meaning.
- Write a prayer asking God to bless those in the home, the church, and the state whom God has placed in authority over you. Use the prayer daily.

Helps

(1) (a) God blesses us physically through his representatives in the government. (b) He blesses us spiritually through his representatives in the church. (c) And he blesses us both physically and spiritually through his representatives in the home. (2) A child will honor his parents with an attitude of respect. This will be reflected in his speech, both when he is in and out of his parents' presence. A child will love his parents and demonstrate his love through service and obedience. (3) Children who scorn this commandment not only harm themselves spiritually but can bring physical harm and embarrassment both on themselves and their families. Society also has to deal with a rebellious citizen. (4) God wants his representatives to rebuke and patiently instruct those who sin against this commandment and to punish them when necessary. Such discipline is an important training for life and can prevent a person from falling under the terrible judgment of God. (5) When parents disagree about discipline, their authority is eroded; soon their ability to discipline effectively is lost. The result is a rebellious child. (6) Employees and citizens owe their employers and the government the same thing that children owe their parents: honor, respect, and obedience. (7) God does not want us to obey those in authority if they tell us to do something contrary to his Word. (8) At times, parents will fail to see that God has honored them by making them his representatives in the home. They may see their responsibility as a burden and their children as a nuisance. However, God promises both physical and spiritual blessings to parents (the security of family and grandchildren). (9) The Fourth Commandment shows us our damning sins against God's representatives and our need for a Savior. (10) Jesus saved us by keeping the Fourth Commandment perfectly in our place and by offering his life on the cross of Calvary as the payment for our sins.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Fifth Commandment

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- **5th Commandment**
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
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- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
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- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
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- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
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- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
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- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
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- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

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 befriend him in every bodily need.

1. God protects human life in the Fifth Commandment. Why, according to Isaiah 55:6, "*Seek the LORD while he may be found,*" is the time of a person's life so important?

2. Who alone has the right to take life? Give specific examples of the kinds of taking life that violate this commandment.

3. Give specific examples of the kinds of taking life that do not violate this commandment.

4. In the Fifth Commandment, God forbids suicide. In what sense is suicide worse than murder? Give examples of present-day reasons by which people defend the act of suicide.

5. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that the Fifth Commandment can be broken without the actual taking of life. What are the ways in which this commandment might be violated without the taking of life?

6. What are some sins of omission against the Fifth Commandment?

7. State your reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the following statements:

The theory of evolution makes a person's body and life a cheap thing.

A person who commits suicide is automatically damned.

We commit more sins of omission than commission against the Fifth Commandment.

8. Evaluate: The Smiths call their pastor for help. Grandpa has had a stroke. He is unconscious. His brain damage is extensive. He is having trouble breathing. The family asks their pastor if they should request that Grandpa not be placed on a respirator.

9. What did Jesus do to save us from our sins against this commandment?

Luther said:

"Under this commandment not only is a person guilty who does evil to his neighbor, but he is also who can do him good—prevent or resist evil, defend and save him, so that no bodily harm or hurt happens to him—and yet does not do it." (Tappert, pp. 390,391.)

Closing Prayer

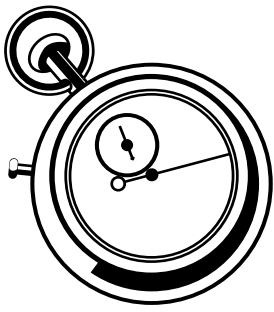
Heavenly Father, be patient with us. Forgive our sins of omission and commission: the times we've neglected others and the times when our thoughts, words, or actions have been hurtful or hate-filled. Lead us always to see life as a gracious gift from you, and move us to share your love with others. In Jesus our Savior's name we pray. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Fifth Commandment and its meaning.
- Identify and "adopt" a shut-in from church, an elderly person, or someone in need. Be a friend to that person, and help him or her with his or her needs.

Helps

(1) A person's lifetime is important because it is a time of grace—his or her only opportunity to come to know Jesus Christ and be saved. (2) God gives life, and he alone has the right to take it. Abortion (the killing of the unborn), euthanasia (mercy killing of the elderly), infanticide (mercy killing of the young), murder, and causing another's death through carelessness violate God's will. (3) God allows the government to take the life of a murderer (capital punishment). God also allows individuals to take life in self-defense or in a just war. (4) Those who commit suicide do not have an opportunity to repent. Suicide is defended by claiming that it is an individual's right, that it allows one to die with dignity, and that it puts an end to suffering and poor quality of life. (5) Hatredful thoughts, words, and actions that harm one's own or another's body also violate the Fifth Commandment. (6) God demands that we be patient, kind, forgiving, helpful, and friendly to all others. Failing to do these things are sins against the Fifth Commandment. (7) The theory of evolution cheapens human life by denying that God is the giver of life and that he created people for a divine purpose and with an immortal soul. Although both men in the Bible who committed suicide went to hell, Scripture does not tell us that those who commit suicide are automatically damned. God is the Judge. It is unbelief that damns. Mentally ill people may commit sinful acts, even suicide, without having fallen from faith. Answers regarding omission and commission will vary. (8) Answers will vary. Remember that God is the Giver of life. He is also the one who determines the end of one's life. At times God may make it clear that a person's life is coming to an end. (9) Jesus saved us by keeping the Fifth Commandment perfectly in our place and by offering his life on the cross of Calvary as the payment for our sins against this commandment.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Sixth Commandment

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- **6th Commandment**
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
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- 2nd Petition
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- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we lead a pure and decent life in words and actions, and that husband and wife love and honor each other.

1. In this commandment, God protects his gifts of sex and marriage. Using Genesis 2:24 as a guide (*"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh"*), define marriage.
2. In addition to enjoying God-pleasing sexual union, what are the other two blessings that God gives to those who are married?

3. Which sins against the Sixth Commandment does God condemn in the following verses?

"Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9,10).

"I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

"I hate divorce," says the LORD God" (Malachi 2:16).

4. What are the only scriptural grounds for divorce?
5. What are the results of viewing marriage as an evolutionary development of mankind rather than as an institution of a gracious and almighty God?

6. Agree or disagree:

Homosexuality is not always sinful because some people are born that way.

The church should have nothing to do with homosexuals.

It's all right for engaged couples to have sexual relations because, in God's eyes, engagement is the same as marriage.

7. In Ephesians 5:21-25, the apostle Paul outlines the roles of husbands and wives. Paul writes: *“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”* What is the God-appointed role of wives? of husbands? How will fulfilling one's role affect a marriage?
8. Hebrews 7:26 reads: *“Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners.”* According to this verse, how did Jesus save us from our sins against the Sixth Commandment?

Luther said:

“Whoever intends to enter married life should do so in faith and in God's name. He should pray God that it may prosper according to His will and that marriage may not be treated as a matter of fun and folly. It is a hazardous matter and as serious as anything on earth can be. Therefore we should not rush into it as the world does, in keeping with its frivolousness and wantonness and in pursuit of its pleasure; but before taking this step we should consult God, so that we may lead our married life to His glory. Those who do not go about it in this way may certainly thank God if it turns out well. If it turns out badly, they should not be surprised; for they did not begin it in the name of God and did not ask for His blessing.” (Plass, Vol. 2, p. 891.)

Closing Prayer

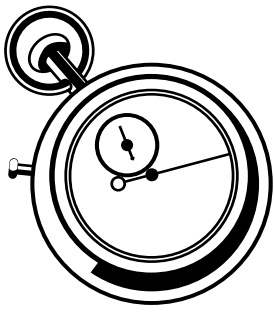
Gracious Lord, thank you for your gifts of sex and marriage. Lead us to glorify you through these gifts by using them in ways that please you. May we live as the people who have been redeemed and made holy by the blood of your Son. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Sixth Commandment and its meaning.
- Evaluate the television programs viewed in your home with regard to their views of sex and marriage.

Helps

(1) The marriage union is established when a man and a woman freely choose to leave father and mother and enter a lifelong union with each other as husband and wife. In this union husband and wife express their love through God-pleasing sexual relations. (2) God also blesses husbands and wives with loving companionship and with children. (3) God condemns any misuse of his gifts of sex and marriage, including adultery, engaging in sexual relations outside of marriage, homosexuality, impure thoughts and words, and wrongfully seeking a divorce. (4) Sexual unfaithfulness and malicious desertion. (5) This point is key. If marriage is simply a human ordinance, then it is regulated by mankind's changing values and whims; it is not subject to God's will (regarding divorce, the use of sex, roles of husbands and wives) as recorded in Scripture. (6) God condemns all natural sinful inclinations and desires. The church will want to reach out to all people with the truth that sin damns, as well as with the message of forgiveness in Christ and his power to change lives. Although engagement, in God's eyes, is the same as marriage (because consent constitutes marriage), a couple will not want to violate the laws of the government, disobey their parents, or offend others by having sexual relations before marriage. (7) Paul shares advice for a strong and successful marriage: In this marriage the wife will be submissive to her husband (as the church willingly submits to Christ), and the husband will love his wife with the same selfless, self-sacrificing love with which Christ loves the church. As husbands and wives fulfill their roles, the marriage will be blessed. (8) Jesus kept this commandment perfectly in our place—he was pure. As our high priest, Jesus then sacrificed his pure and holy life on the cross of Calvary as the payment for our sins against this commandment.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Seventh Commandment

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- **7th Commandment**
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

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, or get it by dishonest dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and means of income.

1. In this commandment, God protects the money and possessions with which he blesses us. How (through what means) does God give us these blessings?
2. According to the following passages, what responsibilities does God place on us regarding the use of our money and possessions?

"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver"
(2 Corinthians 9:7).

"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever"
(1 Timothy 5:8).

"If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" (1 John 3:17).

"If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue" (Romans 13:7).

3. What are some of the principles which God gives us to help us determine how much we will give back to him in offerings?
4. Does God demand that we tithe? How should Christians today regard the tithe? React to the following: The tithe: impossible for some, insufficient for others.

5. Define and/or give an example of each of the following violations of this commandment.

theft

robbery

waste

cheating

fraud

greed

6. Evaluate the following:

The Joneses use all the deductions they possibly can, so that they can get by with paying as little in taxes as possible.

Ann feels guilty when she goes out to eat or to a movie; she realizes that that money could have been given to the poor or to the church instead.

Tim and Kay won't support charities anymore. The last time they did, they later learned that their donation had been misspent.

7. What two things did Jesus do to save us from our sins of omission and commission against the Seventh Commandment.

Luther said:

"God is pleased when I worship and honor Him with all my heart. Abel's offering was pleasing and acceptable because he offered it in the fear of God and in faith and because he strove to show his grateful heart by his gift. For when the heart is offered, this is a gift that is very gratifying indeed to God." (Plass, Vol. 1, pp. 534,535.)

Closing Prayer

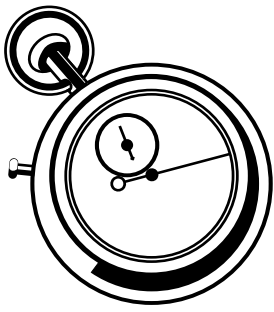
Everything we have comes from you, Lord. Help us use our money and possessions in ways that please you, to the glory of your saving name. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Seventh Commandment and its meaning.
- Compare the percentage of your income spent on luxuries (extra shoes and clothing, electronics, and entertainment) to the percentage used to help the poor and to support the church.

Helps

(1) God blesses us through finding, inheriting, receiving as gifts, trading, working, and purchasing. (2) God wants us to support the church, ourselves, our families, the poor and needy, and the government. (3) God asks us to give in response to the gospel, to give firstfruits, to give regularly, proportionately (that is, percentage giving), and generously, from a willing, thankful, and cheerful heart, as part of our worship. (4) Although God does not demand that we tithe, Christians will use the tithe as a guide. Depending on God's blessings and personal responsibilities, the tithe, for some Christians, will be impossible; for others it will not be nearly enough. (5) Theft is stealing in secret. Robbery is stealing openly and by force. Waste is to use God's blessings carelessly or inefficiently. Cheating takes different forms: it may be withholding something that belongs to another (for example, taxes) or deceiving another in order to receive something in return (cheating on a test). Fraud is to get something by a deception or lie. Greed is a strong desire to have more and more wealth. (6) If the Joneses have a proper attitude toward the government and taxes, it is not wrong to take advantage of any deductions the government allows. If Ann has met her responsibilities, it is not wrong for her to use her extra money for entertainment; money is a blessing from God to enjoy. Tim and Kay should not stop supporting the poor and needy. They should, however, make intelligent and informed donations. (7) Jesus kept the Seventh Commandment perfectly in our place, doing what God demands in this commandment and refraining from what he forbids. Jesus also gave his life on the cross of Calvary as the payment for our damning sins.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Eighth Commandment

The Knowledge of God
Law and Gospel
Introduction to the Law
1st Commandment
2nd Commandment
3rd Commandment
4th Commandment
5th Commandment
6th Commandment
7th Commandment
▶ **8th Commandment**
9th & 10th Commandments
The Conclusion
The Gospel & the Nature of God
The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
1st Article (Creation)
1st Article (Preservation)
1st Article (Protection)
1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
2nd Article (Christ's Person)
2nd Article (Christ's Office)
2nd Article (Christ's Work)
2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
2nd Article (Christian Life)
2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
3rd Article (Calls)
3rd Article (Enlightens)
3rd Article (Sanctifies)
3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
3rd Article (Invisible Church)
3rd Article (Visible Church)
3rd Article (Forgiveness)
3rd Article (Eternal Life)
Baptism (Part 1)
Baptism (Part 2)
Holy Communion (Part 1)
Holy Communion (Part 2)
Keys & Confession (Part 1)
Keys & Confession (Part 2)
Keys & Confession (Part 3)
Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
The Address
1st Petition
2nd Petition
3rd Petition
4th Petition
5th Petition
6th Petition
7th Petition
The Doxology

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, or give him a bad name, but defend him, speak well of him, and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.

1. What is God protecting with this commandment? Why is this so important?

gossip

slander

defend

take words and actions in the kindest possible way
2. Define and/or give an example of each of the following, keeping in mind the sense of the Eighth Commandment.
3. According to the following passages, what does God want us to do, and not to do, when we learn of another person's sin?

"Do not betray another man's confidence" (Proverbs 25:9).

"When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself" (Ezekiel 3:18,19).

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over” (Matthew 18:15).

“If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him” (Luke 17:3).

4. In Matthew 18:15 (above), Jesus states the first of four steps to be followed when disciplining a fellow Christian. What are the other three?
5. Explain the following passages. Give an example of the first. Why is it so difficult to keep one’s “whole body in check,” as mentioned in the second passage?

“[Speak] the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15).

“If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check” (James 3:2).

6. Evaluate: Jane feels that, in Christian love and for the sake of relationships, she should listen sympathetically when her friend complains to her about others.
7. According to 1 Peter 2:22,23: *“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly,”* what did Jesus do to save us from our sins against the Eighth Commandment?

Luther said:

“When I want to harm my neighbor by lying—in body, possessions, honor, or name—this is telling real lies.” (Plass, Vol. 2, p. 870.)

Closing Prayer

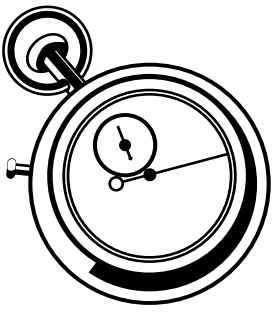
Lord, keep us from sins of the tongue into which we so easily fall. Where we have failed, forgive us. Empower us to use the gift of speech in ways that glorify you and benefit others. In our Savior’s name we ask this. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Eighth Commandment and its meaning.
- Read James 3:2-12 (the tremendous power of the tongue).

Helps

(1) God is protecting the gift of a good name. A person’s reputation is important because it determines whether or not others will respect and trust him. (2) Gossip: any nasty speech, true or untrue, which hurts another’s reputation; slander: to defame another by unfounded verbal attack; defend: to protect another with one’s speech; take words and actions in the kindest possible way: to be nonjudgmental and to give others the benefit of the doubt. (3) Proverbs 25:9: do not gossip the truth to others. Ezekiel 3:18, 19: do not keep silent and allow a person to continue in sin. Matthew 18:15: speak to a person in an attempt to lead him to repentance. Luke 17:3: forgive the penitent. (4) If a fellow Christian continues in impenitence, Jesus instructs us to (Step 2) take one or two others along. (Step 3) tell the church. (Step 4) excommunicate the person, all in an effort to lead the person to repentance. (5) God commands us not only to speak the truth but to do so in love. Examples will vary. It is impossible to keep the whole body in check (that is, to keep from sinning) because we cannot keep our tongues in check. Sins of speech come very easily. (6) Jane is wrong and is attempting to justify and cover her sin. Not only does she allow and encourage her friends to break the Eighth Commandment by listening to them, but she becomes a party to that sin. In addition, she is committing a sin of omission by not putting a stop to gossip and defending others. (7) Jesus saved us by keeping the commandment perfectly in our place—doing what God demands and refraining from what God forbids—and by suffering and dying for our sins of speech.



19 Minutes with Luther

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 scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or obtain it by a show of right, but do all we can to help him keep it.

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, workers, animals, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not force or entice away our neighbor's spouse, workers, or animals, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

1. Complete the following definition of coveting: Evil _____; wanting something that doesn't _____ to you; never being _____ with what you have; having a never-ending _____ for more.
2. What is the difference between the Ninth and Tenth Commandments? What truth about the "weight" of sinful thoughts does God stress by giving us two commandments that address coveting? Why is this truth difficult for people to accept?
3. What is sometimes our attitude when our neighbor prospers and succeeds in finding happiness in his family life or in his work? To what can this attitude lead? What does God want our attitude to be?
4. Is it a moral requirement, that is, is it God's will that we take positive action to help our neighbor in matters of money and property, as well as in his business and family life? Or is it optional? Give a biblical example of when such help was freely given.

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- **9th & 10th Commandments**
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

5. Agree or disagree: It is wrong to offer a person more money so that he will leave his present employer and come to work for you.

6. According to the following passages, why can Christians always be content?

“Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you” (Psalm 73:25).

“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

7. Romans 7:18 reads: *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.”* Why, even though we want to obey God, do we still have so many sinful desires? Where do these come from? Offer three proofs that this is so.

(a) The _____ says so.

(b) Some _____ die.

(c) Nobody teaches us how to _____.

8. How did Jesus save us from our sins of coveting and from all other sins?

Luther said:

“He is a rich man who is content.”

Closing Prayer

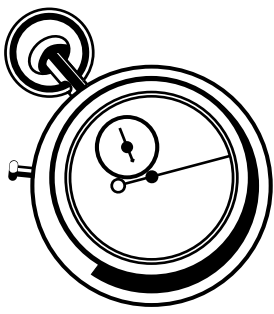
Lord God, every day we battle sinful and covetous thoughts. Strengthen us by your Word so that our thoughts, as well as our words and actions, might be pleasing to you. Help us live as people who have been truly redeemed by the blood of your Son. In his name we ask this. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Ninth and Tenth Commandments and their meanings.
- Make a list of 15 spiritual blessings and 15 physical blessings that you enjoy—reasons for you to be content.

Helps

(1) Evil lust (craving): wanting something that doesn't belong to you; never being satisfied with what you have; having a never-ending desire (craving) for more. (2) The Ninth Commandment focuses on inanimate, nonliving things: the Tenth, on animate, living things. Sinful thoughts are just as damning as sinful words and actions. This is difficult to accept, because, humanly speaking, sinful thoughts don't harm anyone; there is no law of the land against sinful thoughts. (3) Sometimes our neighbor's prosperity will lead us to jealousy, envy, and coveting. This attitude can lead to sinful actions. God wants us to be happy over our neighbor's prosperity and to be content with what we have. (4) God demands that we help our neighbor. To refuse to do so would be a sin of omission. Paul's encouragement to Onesimus (book of Philemon) is a good example. (5) Answers will vary. Motive is an important factor. While attempting to improve their own businesses, Christians will be careful not to harm another's. Christians will be content and will be on their guard against coveting. (6) Christians already possess the greatest treasure of all, the Lord; and with the Lord comes the promise of everything we truly need. (7) We have so many sinful desires because we have a sinful nature. We were conceived and born this way—in original sin. The Bible says so. Some babies die (proving that they must be sinful). Nobody teaches us how to sin. It is part of our nature. (8) Jesus lived perfectly in our place, keeping the Ten Commandments for us. He also died in our place, offering his life on the cross of Calvary as the payment for our damning sins.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Conclusion

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- **The Conclusion**
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

What does God say about all these commandments?

He says, "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments."

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. Therefore we should fear his anger and not disobey what he commands.

But he promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore we should love and trust in him and gladly obey what he commands.

1. Explain the following phrases:

a jealous God

punishing the children for the sin of the fathers

2. According to the following verses, with what does God threaten to punish those who break his commandments?

"There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21).

"The soul who sins is the one who will die" (Ezekiel 18:4).

3. Why do we Christians need to remember God's threat to punish sinners? What should God's threat lead us to do?

4. Complete the three parts of the following statement, and discuss the importance of each. Many churches today deny the reality of hell and look upon it as a religious "scarecrow." We, however, teach the doctrine of eternal damnation in hell because . . .

. . . many people _____ this truth.

. . . it demonstrates what a terrible thing it is to _____ against God.

. . . it demonstrates the enormity of God's _____.

5. What does God promise to those who love him and keep his commandments?

What should this lead us to do?

6. What do the following verses teach us about God's promise to bless our obedience?

"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" (Romans 11:35).

"So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty'" (Luke 17:10).

7. Agree or disagree:

Trouble in someone's life is always a sign that God is punishing that person for sin.

God's threat is the most powerful reason we have for avoiding sin.

Belief in purgatory relieves people of a certain amount of fear.

8. What must we all confess about our ability to keep the Ten Commandments? Where alone can we turn for help?

Luther said:

"We are to keep [the Ten Commandments] steadily before our eyes and constantly in our memories, and we are to put them into practice in all our actions and within our personalities. Everyone is to make them his habitual concern in every circumstance and in all his doings and dealings, as if they were written everywhere he looks, yes, even wherever he walks and wherever he stands." (Tappert, p. 410.)

Closing Prayer

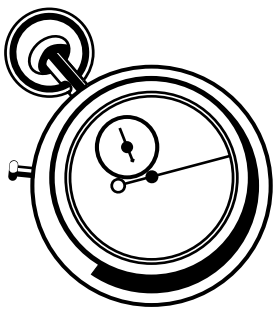
Lord God, may we always heed your threat to punish the disobedient and to bless those who obey your law. Empower us by the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ alone to live our lives to your glory. In our Savior's name we ask this. Amen.

At home

Review and memorize the Ten Commandments, the Conclusion, and their meanings.

Helps

(1) God is jealous, that is, serious about his claim to the highest spot in our hearts and lives and serious about wanting us to keep his commandments perfectly. He punishes those who commit the same sins as their ancestors. (2) God threatens to punish with his anger and trouble during this earthly life and with temporal and eternal death. (3) We need God's threat because our sinful nature opposes God's will and is inclined to do only evil. His threat should lead us to fear him and not disobey. (4) deny: we must never compromise the truth of God's Word; sin: if we make light of sin and its consequences, we will never fully appreciate a Savior; grace: God lovingly gives us the opposite of what we deserve. (5) God's promise of grace and every blessing should lead us to obey his commands. (6) God owes us nothing. Since it is our duty to obey, his promise to bless our obedience is really an undeserved gift. (7) Trouble may be, but is not necessarily, a sign of punishment. God may use trouble to call people to repentance or to discipline them. The gospel, not God's threat, is our strongest motivation for obedience. The false teaching of purgatory claims that the hellish punishment of sin is only temporary. (8) We cannot keep the commandments on our own. Only the Holy Spirit, through Word and sacrament, fills us with the desire and ability to obey God.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Gospel and the Nature of God

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- **The Gospel & the Nature of God**
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

I believe in God the Father almighty . . . in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord . . . in the Holy Spirit.

1. The two main doctrines in the Bible are the law and the gospel. These two doctrines differ fundamentally from each other and might even be called opposites. Fill in the missing words in the following paragraphs:

God's law makes demands on us. It tells us what ____ ____ and what not ____ ____, and _____ righteousness (or perfection). In addition, the law condemns us. It shows us our _____ teaches us that we fall far short of what God demands, and tells us that we deserve eternal _____.

With the gospel, however, God comforts our despairing hearts. The gospel shows us our _____, telling us what _____ has done for our salvation. It tells us that he made atonement for our sins and that through faith in him, we have the _____ God demands of us. Through Jesus, _____ in heaven is ours. This good news _____ us to live our lives for Christ

2. The God of the Bible is triune, that is, three distinct persons yet one God. How does each of the following passages support the doctrine of the Trinity?

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness'"
(Genesis 1:26).

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

"The LORD said to Moses, 'Tell Aaron and his sons, "This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: 'The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.'" So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them'" (Numbers 6:22-27).

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

3. Agree or disagree: Most Americans believe in God and, therefore, will go to heaven.

4. The Bible says that the true God is the triune God. It tells us that each of the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is not a part (that is, one-third) of the Godhead, but each has the whole essence of God undivided. Each is fully God. How are we to understand this? Why do we believe this?

5. What do the following passages reveal about God's characteristics? As you list each characteristic of God, explain how it serves as both a warning and a comfort to us.

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27).

"Lord, you know all things" (John 21:17).

"Nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

"'Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?' declares the LORD. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:24).

"[The LORD] passed in front of Moses, proclaiming 'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation'" (Exodus 34:6,7).

Luther said:

"How this intertrinitarian relation is carried on is something we must believe; for even to the angels, who unceasingly behold it with delight, it is unfathomable. And all who have wanted to comprehend it have broken their neck in the effort." (Plass, Vol. 3, p. 1385.)

Closing Prayer

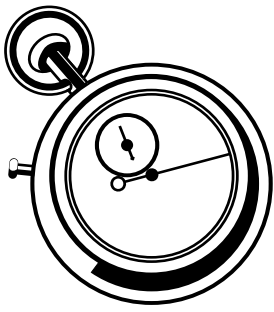
Heavenly Father, we thank you for the love you have shown us in sending your Son to be our Savior. Lord Jesus, we thank you for the love you have shown us in offering your life as full payment for our sins. Holy Spirit, we thank you for the love you have shown us in bringing us to saving faith. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we praise your holy name. Amen.

At home

- Read the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds (*Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* [CW], Northwestern Publishing House, 1993, pp. 18,19,132,133).
- Memorize Exodus 34:6,7.

Helps

(1) God's law makes demands on us. It tells us what to do and what not to do, and demands righteousness (or perfection). In addition, the law condemns us. It shows us our sins, teaches us that we fall far short of what God demands, and tells us that we deserve eternal damnation. With the gospel, however, God comforts our despairing hearts. The gospel shows us our Savior, telling us what Jesus has done for our salvation. It tells us that he made atonement for our sins and that through faith in him, we have the righteousness God demands of us. Through Jesus, eternal life in heaven is ours. This good news inspires us to live our lives for Christ. (2) In Genesis 1:26, notice the plural us and our, and the singular *image* and *likeness*, indicating a plurality of persons in the one Godhead. Deuteronomy 6:4 tells us there is only one God, not three. The final two passages speak of the name (singular) of the one God; his name is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (3) All people have a natural knowledge of God. This knowledge, however, is not enough to save. Anybody who worships a god who is not the true God worships an idol. (4) The doctrine of the trinity (that 1 + 1 + 1 = 1) is beyond human comprehension and cannot be understood. We believe it because God reveals this truth to us in the pages of Scripture. (5) The passages tell us that God is eternal, omniscient (all-knowing), omnipotent (almighty), omnipresent (present everywhere), as well as those characteristics mentioned in Exodus 34:6,7 (compassionate, gracious). Each characteristic will speak to both the new man and old Adam (for example, God's omniscience means he knows our needs as well as our sins).



19 Minutes with Luther

The Apostles' Creed

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
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- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- **The Apostles' Creed (Faith)**
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
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- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
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- Baptism (Part 2)
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- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
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- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

I *believe* in God the Father almighty. I *believe* in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
I *believe* in the Holy Spirit.

1. According to the following passages, what does it mean when Christians say, "I believe"?

"How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?"
(Romans 10:14).

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3).

"When you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God"
(1 Thessalonians 2:13).

"[Abraham] did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised" (Romans 4:20,21).

2. What do the following two passages tell us about the source of faith?

"No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

3. Agree or disagree:

No one can believe in God without having heard God's Word.

Doubting God when he promises daily care and protection is a sign of unbelief.

There are believers in hell.

An agnostic will not be damned because he does not deny the existence of God; he simply is not sure about it.

Babies should not be baptized because it is impossible for them to believe; at their young age, they simply don't have the mental ability to do so.

4. True faith not only knows the true God, accepts his Word, and trusts his promises; it also demonstrates itself in outward actions. Identify the different components in Noah's faith. How did his faith demonstrate itself? Identify these same components in the people of your congregation. How is faith demonstrated there?
5. The sole basis of our faith is God's Word. Roman Catholicism bases faith on God's Word, but also on the word of the papacy and the teachings of the church. What is the danger in doing so?
6. The sole basis of our faith is God's Word. The Reformed churches base faith on God's Word but also on human reason. What is the danger in doing so?
7. What are the everyday blessings of a strong faith?

Luther said:

"Faith is the yes of the heart, a conviction on which one stakes one's life. On what does faith rest? On Christ." (Plass, Vol. 1, p. 466.)

Closing Prayer

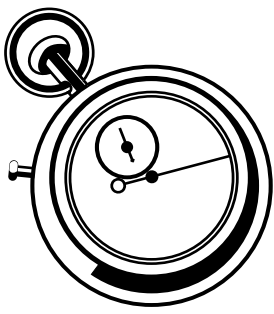
We thank you, Father, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you have granted us the faith to know you as the only true God, to accept your Word and promises, and to trust you alone for salvation and every good thing. Sustain our faith so that we may know your blessings now and forever. In our Savior's name, we ask it. Amen.

At home

Read Hebrews chapter 11.

Helps

(1) A believer has heard and knows God's revelation of himself found in the Bible, accepts God's Word and promises, and trusts God and his promises. (2) The Holy Spirit alone can work saving faith in our hearts. He does so through the gospel. (3) All people have a natural knowledge of God, but this is not enough for salvation. To believe involves all three: scriptural knowledge of the true God, acceptance of God's revelation, and trust in God and his Word. Agnostics fall far short of faith, denying God's revelation of himself in the Bible. Those in hell, like the demons, believe there is one God and shudder (James 2:19), but don't place their trust in him. Doubting God's promises of daily care and protection may indeed be a sign of unbelief, or it may be the sign that a Christian's faith is weak and needs strengthening. Intellectual understanding and faith are not synonymous. Babies can believe and should be brought to faith through the Sacrament of Baptism. (4) Discuss Noah's faith—his knowledge of God, his unquestioning acceptance of God and his promise regarding a flood, and his trust in God's message and promise of salvation. Noah believed what might be called ridiculous, and his faith moved him to obedience and action. Discuss these same components as you see them in your congregation. Examples will vary. (5) This leads people to give equal status to man's word and the Word of God and to place trust for salvation in someone or something other than Jesus Christ. (6) This subjects the message of the Bible to human reason (saying that Scripture's message is to be accepted only if it is logical), and the Bible and human reason are often at odds. (7) A strong faith enables us to deal lovingly, kindly, and gently with others, to face every situation in life with joy, to be filled with peace, and to wait patiently for our heavenly home. (See Galatians 5:22,23.)



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I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God created me and all that exists, and that he gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my mind and all my abilities.

And I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life. God also preserves me by defending me against all danger, guarding and protecting me from all evil. All this God does only because he is my good and merciful Father in heaven, and not because I have earned or deserved it. For all this I ought to thank and praise, to serve and obey him.

This is most certainly true.

1. Because God is the Creator, we call him the Father. The prophet Malachi wrote: *"Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us?"* (2:10). For what other reasons do we call God the Father?

2. Review what the Bible tells us about the instrument and the material that God used to create the universe? How long did it take God to create it?

3. Genesis 1:27 tells us, *"God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."* What does it mean that Adam and Eve were created *in the image of God*?

4. Review Luther's explanation of the First Article. In addition to creating man *in the image of God*, how did the Father show his goodness in our creation? Discuss how life would be different if God had not given us these blessings.

5. The theory of evolution opposes the creation account found in the Bible. Share what you know about this theory. What does it say about how our universe came to be? the length of time that this took? about people?

6. Agree or disagree:

It takes more faith to accept the theory of evolution than it does to believe in the Bible's creation account.

There are rocks on this earth that are six million years old.

The six days of creation mentioned in Genesis may actually be long periods of millions of years each.

"By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command"
(Hebrews 11:3).

Luther said:

"My God is the Father, who made heaven and earth. I take nothing and no one else as God except him alone, for there is simply no one else who could have made heaven and earth." (Tappert, p. 412.)

Closing Prayer

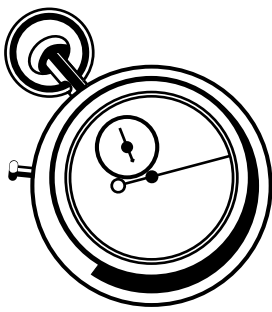
Heavenly Father, we praise you, for we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Lead us to see your power and glory in the things you have created. Fill us with your Spirit, who at creation hovered over the waters, that more and more your image might be renewed in us and that our trust in Jesus, the Living Word and Savior, might grow stronger and stronger. We ask this in his name. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the First Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.
- Read Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

Helps

(1) God is the Father of Jesus Christ and our Father through faith in Jesus. (2) In six 24-hour days, God created all things out of nothing; there was no pre-existing matter. God simply spoke; he used his almighty word to create the universe. (3) This was not a physical image, but Adam and Eve were like God in that they (a) were holy and sinless; (b) were able not to sin, that is, had a free will; (c) had an intimate relationship with God in which they shared his thoughts and wants; and (d) knew God's will perfectly. (4) God "gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears . . ." Without any one of these blessings (for example, the sense of sight or hearing), life would be entirely different. (5) The theory of evolution claims that all things came into being over billions of years by chance or accident, developing from lower to higher forms. According to this theory, people are the most highly evolved or developed animals. Share information about the big bang theory and Charles Darwin's theory on the origin of life. (6) A Christian who has been led by the Holy Spirit to trust God's Word would agree with the first statement. Even unbelievers must agree that the theory of evolution is nothing more than a hypothesis filled with inconsistencies. Christians understand that when God created the world (rocks, trees, humans), he created a world with considerable age. The statement used by theistic evolutionists, that each "day" in Genesis chapter 1 was actually a long period, robs God of his glory and is inconsistent with both the text and science. What the writer to Hebrews said is absolutely true: we accept God as the Creator, not because of scientific proof or visible evidence but because the Holy Spirit enlightened us and convinced us of this fact when he called us to faith.



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And I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life. God also preserves me by defending me against all danger, guarding and protecting me from all evil. All this God does only because he is my good and merciful Father in heaven, and not because I have earned or deserved it. For all this I ought to thank and praise, to serve and obey him.

This is most certainly true.

1. Martin Luther taught us to confess: "I believe that God . . . preserves me." What do the following passages tell us about our preservation by God?

"O LORD, you preserve both man and beast. How priceless is your unfailing love!" (Psalm 36:6,7).

"The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing" (Psalm 145:15,16).

2. What does the following passage tell us about how God preserves us?

"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease" (Genesis 8:22).

3. What is the relationship between God's preservation and a person's job? How do we understand this passage: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10)?

4. Agree or disagree: There is a relationship between worry and the confusion over what is a necessity and what is a luxury.

5. In John chapter 6, we find the account of the feeding of the five thousand. We're told that Jesus took *"five small barley loaves . . . and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. So "all had enough to eat"* (verses 9,11,12). What does this account tell us about how God preserves us?
6. What miracles has God worked in your life? In what area of earthly life, in particular, does it seem that miracles are fairly common today?
7. The Bible teaches us that God provides for all people, and yet there are many throughout the world and in our own communities who are starving or without other necessities. List at least four reasons why this is so.
- (a)
- (b)
- (c)
- (d)
8. What comfort and assurance that God will meet your daily needs do you receive from the fact that God gave his only Son, Jesus, for your salvation?

Luther said:

"We should not be full of any other care for ourselves than this: not to be full of care for ourselves and thus to rob God of His care for us." (Plass, Vol. 3, p. 1544.)

Closing Prayer

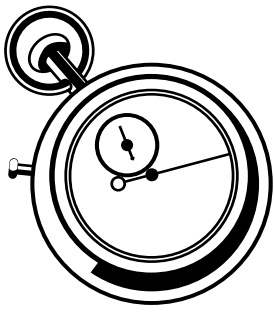
Gracious Lord God, your mercies are new every day. You richly and daily provide us with clothing and shoes, food and drink, all that we own, and all that we need for this earthly life. Above all, through your Son, our Savior Jesus, you provide all that we need for a life to come in heaven. Forgive our worry and our ingratitude. Lead us to seek first your kingdom and your righteousness, with the assurance that all things that we need will be given to us. Lord, we thank and praise you for your goodness to us. Move us to serve and obey you as well. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the First Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.
- Alone or with your family, list ten real needs that you have in this life. Of those ten needs, list any that God has not met.

Helps

(1) God, in love, provides us with all the necessities of life. (2) God provides for us through natural means (planting seeds and harvesting crops). (3) Enabling us to work and providing employment are two of the ways through which God provides us with the necessities of life. If a person refuses to (will not) work, he despises God's gifts. Such a person should not be allowed to live off others. (4) Agree. When people begin to see luxuries as necessities, they will be led to worry over not having what they need for this life. (5) God sometimes provides for us through miracles. (6) Answers will vary. The working of saving faith in each believer's heart is a great miracle of the Holy Spirit. Miracles, of course, happen in many areas of earthly life. A look at the field of medicine may supply some examples. (7) It may be the result of (a) sinful selfishness on the part of the rich, (b) a person's idolatrous religion that prevents him from using all of God's blessings (not eating cattle). (c) a punishment God may allow as a result of unbelief. (d) a call to repentance or an opportunity for a Christian to demonstrate love. (8) God has already done the greatest thing he could possibly do for us: he gave his own Son into death for our eternal salvation. Certainly he will satisfy our lesser needs as well: food, clothing, shelter.



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- 8th Commandment
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What does this mean?

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And I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life. God also preserves me by defending me against all danger, guarding and protecting me from all evil. All this God does only because he is my good and merciful Father in heaven, and not because I have earned or deserved it. For all this I ought to thank and praise, to serve and obey him.

This is most certainly true.

1. Martin Luther taught us to confess, "I believe that God . . . also preserves me by defending me against all danger, guarding and protecting me from all evil." What do the following passages tell us about God's protection? Share an example from the Bible, as well as from your own life, when God demonstrated his protection in each of these ways?

"If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the LORD, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent" (Psalm 91:9,10).

"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me" (Psalm 50:15).

2. The Bible tells us that God also protects us by having all things in our lives serve our good. Review the life of Joseph (Genesis 37–50). How did the following events serve Joseph's good or the good of others?

His brothers sold Joseph to slave traders.

Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph.

Pharaoh's cupbearer forgot about Joseph.

3. What good might God have in mind for you in the following situations?

In a matter of days, three major appliances in your home need replacement.

A close friend turns his back on you.

You experience serious health problems.

4. What does the following passage tell us about God's protection? Share an example from the Bible when God demonstrated his protection in this way.

"He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11).

5. Complete this paragraph: We know a great deal about angels from the Bible. We know that there are two kinds of angels: _____

and _____. We know when they were created, namely _____. We know that angels are not human but are _____. We know that they have names (for example, _____, _____) and different ranks (for example, _____, _____, _____). We also know that angels are very powerful and very numerous and that the ministry of God's good angels is to _____.

6. Agree or disagree: It is comforting to know that Satan is an angel.

7. According to Martin Luther's Explanation of the First Article, why has God made us so wonderfully, and why does he preserve and protect us? How does this relate to our salvation? How are we to respond?

Luther said:

"We should learn that our best and most loyal friends are invisible. They are the good angels, who by their faithfulness and benevolence and by their many services of friendship greatly excel our visible friends. . . . If anything good happens, it is brought about entirely through the good angels." (Plass, Vol. 1, 23,24.)

Closing Prayer

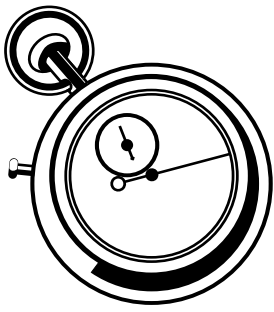
Heavenly Father, evil threatens us every day. We thank you for keeping evil away from us, for delivering us from its harm, for having all things serve our good, and for sending your mighty angels to watch over us. Above all, we thank you for the eternal safety you grant us in Jesus our Savior. Lead us to respond to your goodness and love with lives of service and obedience. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the First Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.
- Read and memorize Romans 8:28.

Helps

(1) God sometimes protects us by keeping evil away from us or by delivering us from its harm. Biblical examples might include God's deliverance of Daniel from the lions' den (Daniel 6), the deliverance of the baby Moses (Exodus 2), and the deliverance of the Israelites at the Red Sea (Exodus 14). (2) Each worked toward the achievement of God's good purpose. The brothers sold Joseph to the slave traders who took him to Egypt. There he was purchased by Potiphar. The lie of Potiphar's wife resulted in Joseph's imprisonment. In prison, Joseph met the cupbearer and interpreted his dream. The cupbearer, however, forgot about Joseph. Rather than being able to return to his homeland, Joseph remained in prison for another two years until the time when he would meet Pharaoh, rise to power, and save many people. (3) Answers will vary. God may simply want to give us greater and better blessings through experiencing loss, or he may want to make us more heavenly minded, more patient, more sympathetic or empathetic toward others who suffer. He may use adversity in our lives to deepen our trust in him. (4) God sends his good angels to protect us, as he did with Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6), the three men in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3), and the apostles in prison (Acts 5). (5) We know that there are two kinds of angels: good and evil. We know when they were created, namely on one of the six days of creation. We know that angels are not human but are spirit beings. We know that they have names (for example, Michael, Gabriel) and different ranks (for example, cherub, seraph, archangel). We also know that angels are very powerful and very numerous and that the ministry of God's good angels is to serve and protect God's people. (6) While the Bible warns us to be "self-controlled and alert" (1 Peter 5:8), we must remember that the devil is a created angel. Unlike our loving God, Satan is not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent. (7) God is moved to protect and preserve us by the same thing that moved him to save us: his grace, that is, his undeserved love for us. We respond naturally to God's grace by thanking and praising him and by serving and obeying him.



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- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- **1st Article (The Fall into Sin)**
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God created me and all that exists, and that he gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my mind and all my abilities.

And I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life. God also preserves me by defending me against all danger, guarding and protecting me from all evil. All this God does only because he is my good and merciful Father in heaven, and not because I have earned or deserved it. For all this I ought to thank and praise, to serve and obey him.

This is most certainly true.

1. What do the following passages tell us about the devil?

"God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment" (2 Peter 2:4).

"The angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day" (Jude 6).

"Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

2. Review the details of the Genesis chapter 3 account of Adam and Eve's fall into sin.

3. According to the following passage, what were some of the results of Adam and Eve's fall into sin?

"To the woman [God] said, 'I will greatly increase your pains in child-bearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.' To Adam he said, . . . 'Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return'" (Genesis 3:16-19).

4. Read the following passage. What was another result of the fall into sin?

“When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them ‘man.’ When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth” (Genesis 5:1-3).

5. Complete the chart:

Image of God	Image of Man
(a) sinless, holy	(a) _____
(b) free will; able not to sin	(b) _____
(c) perfect fellowship with God	(c) _____
(d) perfect knowledge of God’s will	(d) _____

6. The Bible’s teaching that people are born in a sinful condition may be difficult to accept. How do the following support the doctrine of original sin?

The message of Scripture

The death of a newborn

Human behavior

7. How will an understanding of the doctrine of original sin assist parents?

8. In addition to creating, preserving, and protecting us, what else, according to the following passage, has our heavenly Father done for us? Why has he done this?

“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Luther said:

“Do you not know that the prince of this world has been judged? He is no lord, no prince any more. You have a different, a stronger, Lord, Christ, who has overcome and bound him. . . . [The devil] can do no more than a bad dog on a chain. . . . Because it is tied and you avoid it, it cannot bite you.” (Plass, Vol. 1, p. 402.)

Closing Prayer

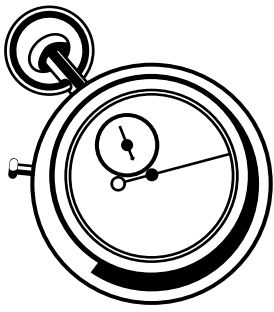
Father, we have sinned. We are not worthy of any of your blessings. Forgive us for the sake of your Son, Jesus our Savior. Day by day, by the working of your Spirit, renew in us your image to the glory of your name. Amen.

At home

Memorize the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed and Martin Luther’s explanation.

Helps

(1) The devil is an angel. He was created good, but he led a rebellion against God. He is God’s enemy, who wants to destroy the souls of all people eternally in hell. (2) If necessary, read Genesis chapter 3. The devil tempted Adam and Eve to sin against God. Adam and Eve freely chose to disobey God. (3) Adam and Eve would experience pain and sorrow as a result of sin. Worst of all, although they were once bound to live forever, they would now experience temporal death and possibly eternal death. (4) The image of God was lost. (5) (a) sinful, unholy; (b) unable to keep from sinning; (c) relationship with God is destroyed; (d) imperfect knowledge of God’s will. (6) The Bible clearly teaches the doctrine of original sin. See Psalm 51:5. “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), and sometimes even newborn babies die. Human behavior gives evidence of original sin, for nobody teaches us how to sin; we do it naturally. (7) Understanding the doctrine of original sin will lead parents to take advantage of the saving grace God offers their children in Baptism. Parents who understand this doctrine will not be shocked or surprised by the sinfulness of their children but will use law and gospel to nurture them in patience and love. (8) Out of his undeserved love for fallen mankind, God promised and sent his Son, Jesus, to be the world’s Savior.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Second Article

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- **2nd Article (Christ's Person)**
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
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What does this mean?

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He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, 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.

All this he did 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 has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

1. What do the following passages tell us about Jesus' person?

"We are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

"About the fourth watch of the night [Jesus] went out to them, walking on the lake" (Mark 6:48).

"Whatever the Father does the Son also does. That all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him" (John 5:19,23).

2. What do the following passages tell us about Jesus' person?

"There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity. . . . He had to be made like his brothers in every way" (Hebrews 2:14,17).

3. What, then, must we say about the unique person of Jesus Christ? How did Jesus, true God from eternity, also become true man?
4. God demands perfect obedience to his law as a requirement for eternal life. With this in mind, why was it necessary that Jesus, our substitute and Savior, be true man? Why was it necessary that he be true God?
5. As a requirement for eternal life, God also demands that we be without sin. With this in mind, why was it necessary that Jesus, our substitute and Savior, be true man? Why was it necessary that he be true God?
6. What comfort for your everyday life do you find in the fact that Jesus is fully human, just like you? What comfort do you find in the fact that he is God?
7. React to the following statements:

Jehovah's Witnesses read and translate John 1:1 as *"The Word [that is, Jesus] was a God,"* rather than *"The Word was God."* But it really doesn't matter.

I don't get it. How can a man walk on water? And how can God be thirsty and die?

The virgin birth is an impossibility. It's not that important anyway.

Luther said:

"I do not want a Christ who is a mere man, to believe in Him as my Savior and invoke Him in prayer; for then I would go to the devil, because mere flesh and blood could not blot out sin, reconcile God, remove His wrath, overcome and destroy death and hell, and give eternal life." (Plass, Vol. 1, p. 166.)

Closing Prayer

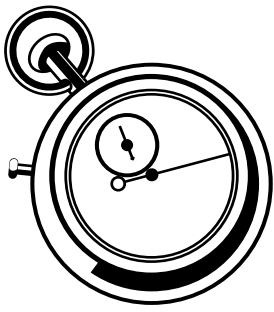
We praise you, Lord Jesus. You are the very Son of God, who for our sakes assumed human flesh and blood. You are exactly the kind of Savior we need: one who could live and die as our substitute and one whose life and death would assure us of salvation. May we live to your glory, here and hereafter. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.

Helps

(1) The Bible calls Jesus God, teaches that he has the characteristics (or attributes) of God, and shows that he does the almighty works of God. It also teaches that he is the Son of God, who receives the same honor as God the Father. (2) The Bible calls Jesus man and teaches that he has a human body and soul, human emotions, characteristics, experiences, and actions. (3) Jesus is a unique person with two natures; he is both true God and true man. Through his being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, the Son of God became true man (the incarnation). (4) It was necessary that Jesus be true man so that he could live under God's law in our place. It was necessary that he be true God so that his perfect obedience to the law might count for all people. (5) It was necessary that Jesus be true man so that he might die in our place. It was necessary that he be true God so that his self-sacrifice might be a sufficient payment for all sins. (6) Because Jesus is true man, he can sympathize and empathize with us. Because he is our loving God, he is willing and able to help us. (7) Jehovah's Witnesses deny that Jesus is true God, equal with the Father in every way. They claim that Jesus is a created individual and equate him with Michael the archangel. If Jesus is not true God in the fullest sense, he cannot be our Savior. The attributes of both Jesus' human and divine natures are ascribed to his one person. The man Jesus could walk on water because he is also God. The Son of God could die because he is also a man. The virgin birth came about through a miracle of the almighty God. Since Jesus was born, not in the natural way but in a supernatural way, he came fully qualified to be our Savior; he was not, like all other people, tainted with original sin.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Second Article

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- **2nd Article (Christ's Office)**
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
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This is most certainly true.

1. In the Old Testament, men were anointed with oil as they were commissioned to serve in the office of prophet, priest, or king for God's people. These men also served as shadows of the coming Savior. Complete the following:

The Old Testament prophets were anointed to _____ God's Word to the people. They were to focus on the good news about the coming _____.

The Old Testament priests were to be an example by leading a _____ life, to serve as mediators by _____ for the people, and to offer _____ for the people's sins.

The greatest king in Israel's history was King David. As king, David firmly established the _____, protected his people from their _____, and governed, or ruled, his people.

2. The Bible calls Jesus the Christ. *Christ* is a Greek word. The Hebrew equivalent is *Messiah*. Both *Christ* and *Messiah* mean "the Anointed One." What does the following verse tell us about Jesus?

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power" (Acts 10:38).

3. Keep in mind the Old Testament prophet. How did and does Jesus serve us as our Prophet?

4. Keep in mind the Old Testament priest. How did and does Jesus serve us as our Priest?

5. Keep in mind Israel's King David. How did and does Jesus serve us as our King?

6. One of the most important doctrines of Scripture is the vicarious atonement of Christ. This glorious gospel truth assures us that we are at one, that is, at peace, with God as a result of Jesus' work in our behalf. As our substitute Jesus obeyed all of God's laws perfectly and suffered God's horrible wrath and the damnation of hell. Read the following passages. To which part of Christ's vicarious work does each speak? According to each passage, what is the result of Christ's wonderful work?

"Just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19).

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree'" (Galatians 3:13).

7. What comfort for your everyday life do you find in the fact that Jesus serves as your Prophet? as your Priest? as your King?

Luther said:

"[Jesus] the true High Priest has completed His sacrifice. God's Son has given and sacrificed His body and life as a payment for sin. Sin is wiped out, God's wrath is appeased, death is overcome, the kingdom of heaven is won, and heaven is unlocked. Everything is fulfilled and finished, and no one need argue that something still remains to be fulfilled and perfected." (Plass, Vol. 1, p. 195.)

Closing Prayer

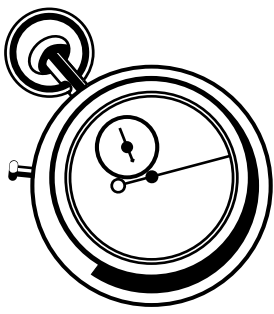
O Jesus, Shepherd, Guardian, Friend, my Prophet, Priest, and King, my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End, accept the praise I bring. Amen. (CW 358:5.)

At home

- Memorize the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.
- Read Leviticus chapter 16 (a picture of Jesus' work in our behalf).

Helps

(1) The Old Testament prophets were anointed to preach God's Word to the people. They were to focus on the good news about the coming Savior. The Old Testament priests were to be an example by leading a model life, to serve as mediators by praying for the people, and to offer sacrifices for the people's sins. The greatest king in Israel's history was King David. As king, David firmly established the kingdom, protected his people from their enemies, and governed, or ruled, his people. (2) Jesus was anointed, not with oil but "with the Holy Spirit and power" to be our Prophet, Priest, and King. (3) Jesus preached God's Word during his ministry on earth. He still carries out the office of prophet today by sharing his Word through pastors, teachers, and all Christians. (4) As Priest, Jesus led a perfect life. He then offered himself as the sacrifice who atoned for the sins of all people of all time. Today Jesus intercedes for us before the throne of God. (5) King Jesus established his spiritual kingdom. He won the victory over and protects us from our greatest enemies: sin, death, and Satan. Today he rules in our hearts by his Word and rules all things for our eternal good. (6) As our vicar (substitute), Jesus kept God's law perfectly. His perfection, or righteousness, is credited to us. Second, Jesus took our sins upon himself and paid the price God's justice demands for sin. As a result, we have been freed from the eternal curse of sin and are at peace with God. (7) Jesus our Prophet still shares his word with us today—a constant source of strength, comfort, life, and guidance. We can be confident of our relationship with God and that our prayers are heard, for Jesus our High Priest "always lives to intercede for" us (Hebrews 7:25). As our King, Jesus continues to rule in our hearts by his Word. And because he rules the universe, we can be certain that he will have all things in life work for our good.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Second Article

The Knowledge of God
Law and Gospel
Introduction to the Law
1st Commandment
2nd Commandment
3rd Commandment
4th Commandment
5th Commandment
6th Commandment
7th Commandment
8th Commandment
9th & 10th Commandments
The Conclusion
The Gospel & the Nature of God
The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
1st Article (Creation)
1st Article (Preservation)
1st Article (Protection)
1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
2nd Article (Christ's Person)
2nd Article (Christ's Office)
► **2nd Article (Christ's Work)**
2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
2nd Article (Christian Life)
2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
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3rd Article (Calls)
3rd Article (Enlightens)
3rd Article (Sanctifies)
3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
3rd Article (Invisible Church)
3rd Article (Visible Church)
3rd Article (Forgiveness)
3rd Article (Eternal Life)
Baptism (Part 1)
Baptism (Part 2)
Holy Communion (Part 1)
Holy Communion (Part 2)
Keys & Confession (Part 1)
Keys & Confession (Part 2)
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Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
The Address
1st Petition
2nd Petition
3rd Petition
4th Petition
5th Petition
6th Petition
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All this he did 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 has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

1. Define the following words according to their common usage.

redeem

ransom

2. The Bible tells us that by nature we are lost and condemned creatures—slaves of sin, death, and Satan. According to the following passages, what has Jesus done for us? With what did he do this?

"We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins"
(Ephesians 1:7).

"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

3. Martin Luther wrote: "[Christ] has redeemed me . . . with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death." Why did Luther use the following words to describe Jesus' blood and death?

holy

precious

innocent

4. Read the following passages. What does it mean that Jesus has redeemed us from sin?

"[The LORD] does not treat us as our sins deserve" (Psalm 103:10).

"You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness" (Romans 6:18).

5. Read the following passages. What does it mean that Jesus has redeemed us from death?

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2).

6. Read the following passages. What does it mean that Jesus has redeemed us from Satan?

"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8).

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

7. Agree or disagree: Today's society serves as an accurate commentary on Jesus' words, *"Everyone who sins is a slave to sin"* (John 8:34).

8. What will the doctrine of redemption mean to you when your sins trouble and terrify you? when you attend the funeral of a faithful loved one? when you are battling temptations?

Luther said:

"Let this article, then, be summarized in this way: the little word 'Lord' simply means as much as Redeemer, that is, the one who rescued us from the devil to bring us to God, from death to bring us to life, from sin to bring us to righteousness, and now keeps us safe where he has brought us." (Tappert, p. 414.)

Closing Prayer

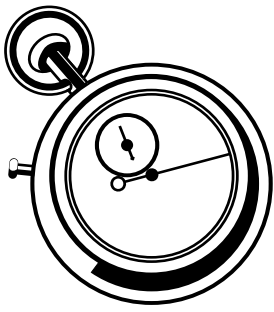
Lord Jesus, our Redeemer, you have set us free from sin, death, and the devil. Until we enjoy a perfect and eternal life with you in heaven, empower us by your Holy Spirit to use our freedom to glorify your holy name. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.

Helps

(1) Redeem means "to buy back" or "to set free," as from slavery. A ransom is the price that is paid to redeem someone or something. (2) Jesus redeemed us and set us free from sin, death, and Satan with his holy blood and his innocent life. (3) Jesus' blood is "holy" because it is the blood of the perfect Son of God. It is "precious" because it alone could pay for the sins of the world. Jesus' suffering and death were "innocent" because with them Jesus paid the price for the sins of others, not his own. (4) Jesus set us free from sin's guilt and punishment and from sin's power over our daily lives. (5) Jesus set us free from the punishment of eternal death in hell. In addition, he promises that temporal death is only a sleep from which we will awaken to live forever. (6) Jesus set us free from Satan's accusations and has given us the power to overcome his temptations. (7) Unbelievers are, indeed, slaves to sin. They cannot overcome sin's power and influence in their lives. Neither can they free themselves from and escape sin's temporal and eternal consequences. (8) Christ's redemption assures us that we have, indeed, been set free from sin's guilt and punishment, that Satan no longer controls our lives, and that we and our faithful loved ones have been set free from death. We are comforted by the promise that we will see one another again in eternity.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Second Article

The Knowledge of God
Law and Gospel
Introduction to the Law
1st Commandment
2nd Commandment
3rd Commandment
4th Commandment
5th Commandment
6th Commandment
7th Commandment
8th Commandment
9th & 10th Commandments
The Conclusion
The Gospel & the Nature of God
The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
1st Article (Creation)
1st Article (Preservation)
1st Article (Protection)
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2nd Article (Christ's Office)
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2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
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3rd Article (Calls)
3rd Article (Enlightens)
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3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
3rd Article (Invisible Church)
3rd Article (Visible Church)
3rd Article (Forgiveness)
3rd Article (Eternal Life)
Baptism (Part 1)
Baptism (Part 2)
Holy Communion (Part 1)
Holy Communion (Part 2)
Keys & Confession (Part 1)
Keys & Confession (Part 2)
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Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
The Address
1st Petition
2nd Petition
3rd Petition
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1. The Bible speaks about Christ's state of humiliation, that is, when the Son of God did not always or fully use his divine power and glory. According to the Apostles' Creed, what were the six stages of Christ's humiliation?
2. In Philippians 2:5-8, Saint Paul wrote: *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!"* According to Paul's words, why did Jesus humble himself?
3. Jesus' humiliation did not mean that during his 33-year earthly life, he ceased to be God; rather, he simply chose not to make full use of his divine nature. List several events from Jesus' earthly life that prove he did not cease to be God.

4. Jesus humbled himself so that he might be our Redeemer. Beside each of Jesus' divine characteristics listed below, state how Jesus, who is "in very nature God," humbly chose to take the "nature of a servant" instead.

Divine Characteristic	Nature of a Servant
omniscient	The boy Jesus <i>grew in wisdom</i> (Luke 2:52)
self-sustaining	_____
omnipotent	_____
holy	_____

5. Agree or disagree: Even if Jesus had not humbled himself, he could have been the Messiah.

6. Saint Paul wrote, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). What things in us and others make it difficult for us to follow Christ's example? What is the solution?

7. How will following Christ's example of humility benefit a marriage? a friendship? life in a congregation?

Luther said:

"It is an unspeakably great glory and honor for mankind to have been raised so high by [Christ], not merely to heaven among the holy angels and arch-angels, who are certainly great and excellent princes and lords, but to the level of direct equality with God Himself. How could the High Majesty become humbler than by honoring this sorry flesh and blood and exalting it through His divine honor and authority? He descends to the level of our nature and becomes a member of the human race! It is an honor which no angel in heaven shares." (Plass, Vol. 2, p. 883.)

Closing Prayer

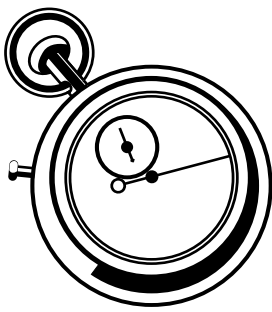
Lord Jesus, Son of God, you humbled yourself to become our Suffering Servant and Savior. Destroy our pride. By your Spirit, lead us to follow you—to love and humbly serve others—to your glory. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.
- Memorize Philippians 2:5-8.

Helps

(1) The Son of God was conceived and born, he suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. (2) Jesus humbled himself so that he might be "a servant" and, for the sake of our salvation, become "obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (3) Answers will vary. Jesus' miracles, his transfiguration, and his baptism prove that Jesus did not cease to be God. (4) Although self-sustaining, Jesus humbly became dependent on others to supply his needs. Although omnipotent, Jesus bore the weaknesses of man and allowed himself to be taken captive and crucified. Although holy, Jesus willingly took upon himself the sin and guilt of all people. (5) If Jesus had not humbled himself, the people of the world would have been amazed, but not saved. Jesus could not have been the kind of Messiah God promised: one who would redeem the world from its sins. (6) Sinful pride leads us to see ourselves as better and greater than others and keeps us from following Christ's example. Christians may overcome sinful pride through repentance and faith. Through the means of grace, the Holy Spirit works Christlike humility in Christians. (7) Examples will vary. Humility and self-sacrificing love produce peace, harmony, and cooperation.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Second Article

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
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- 1st Article (Protection)
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- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
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- (Christ's Exaltation)**
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
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- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
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- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
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I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will 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.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, 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.

All this he did 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 has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

1. The Bible speaks about Christ's state of exaltation, that is, when, according to both his divine and human natures, Jesus again made full use of his divine power and glory, just as he had used it before his humiliation. According to the Apostles' Creed, what are the five steps of Christ's exaltation?
2. In Philippians 2:9-11, Saint Paul wrote, "*God exalted [Jesus] to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*" Saint Peter said in Acts 5:31, "*God exalted [Jesus] to his own right hand as Prince and Savior.*" According to these verses, why did God exalt Jesus?
3. After coming back to life on Easter morning, Jesus physically descended into hell to proclaim his victory over death and the devil. He then "*showed himself . . . and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive*" (Acts 1:3). According to the following passages, what comfort and assurance is ours as a result of Christ's resurrection?

"[Jesus] was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

"[Jesus] was delivered over to death [because of] our sins and was raised to life [because of] our justification" (Romans 4:25).

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies" (John 11:25).

4. Many people claim that Jesus did not physically rise from the grave. If that were true, how would your life be different?

5. What do the following words of Jesus tell us about his ascension?

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:2,3).

6. The Bible tells us that Jesus now sits at God's right hand, ruling all things. Why is it such a comfort to know that he, who has all power in heaven and on earth, is our dear Savior?

7. From your knowledge of Scripture, share some details about Jesus' return to judge. For example: When will he return? Whom will he judge? On what basis will he judge? What is Scripture's advice regarding Christ's return to judge?

Luther said:

"There can be neither forgiveness of sin nor any salvation if one does not believe the article of the resurrection of Christ; for in it lies all the power of faith and eternal life, as St. Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:14,17f." (Plass, Vol. 1, p. 181.)

Closing Prayer (may be sung)

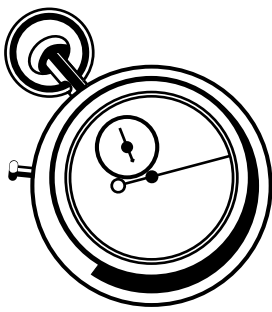
Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations, Son of God and Son of Man! Glory and honor, praise, adoration now and forevermore be thine! Amen. (CW 369:4.)

At home

Memorize the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.

Helps

(1) Jesus descended into hell, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, and will come again to judge. (2) God exalted Jesus to assure us that he is Lord and Savior. (3) Jesus' resurrection assures us that he is God, that our sins and guilt are paid for in full, that we have been justified (declared "not guilty" by God), and that we too will rise from the grave and live forever. (4) Answers will vary. As Saint Paul said, *"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins"* (1 Corinthians 15:17). In other words, if Christ has not been raised, he is not our Savior and Lord, we have not been justified, and we have no hope for a meaningful life on earth or a life to come in heaven. (5) Jesus' ascension assures us that he will return to take us to the place that he has prepared, where we will live with him forever. (6) Jesus, our Lord and Savior, rules all things for our eternal good and will have all things work together for our eternal good. (7) No one but God himself knows when Jesus will return to judge. Jesus will judge all people, the living and the dead, on the basis of their faith or unbelief. Those who believe in Jesus as Savior will receive eternal life in heaven, while unbelievers will be eternally damned. Since we do not know when Jesus will return, God tells us to watch and be ready at all times.



19 Minutes with Luther

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- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
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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.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, 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.

All this he did 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 has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

1. Martin Luther reminds us that Jesus has redeemed us "from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil . . . with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death." According to the following passages, for what glorious purposes did Christ redeem us?

"[Christ] gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:14).

"He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:15).

"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

2. Martin Luther stated that Christ redeemed us so that we might serve him in "righteousness." Why, in spite of our daily sins, can we claim that we serve our God in righteousness?
3. Luther also stated that Christ redeemed us so that we might serve him in "innocence," that is, hating sin and being filled with a new desire to live a holy life. Where does this new desire in Christians come from?

4. Luther finally stated that Christ redeemed us so that we might serve him in “blessedness,” that is, filled with a thankful joy as we gladly serve our Savior. Share examples from the Bible in which God’s people served in blessedness.

5. Agree or disagree:

It is Christ’s love for us that moves us to love him and serve him joyfully.

Being a Christian makes us nothing more than slaves to God and his laws.

We can never serve the Lord perfectly in this life, so it’s senseless even to try.

Living as God wants is an uphill climb for which there is no help.

Only in heaven will we be able to serve God as we want, that is, perfectly.

No one can be one hundred percent certain that he will someday be in heaven, where he will be able to serve the Lord perfectly.

Luther said:

“Christ rescued us poor, lost humans out of the jaws of hell, won us, freed us, and brought us back into our Father’s favor and grace. He has taken us beneath his shield and shelter to reign in us with his righteousness, wisdom, power, life, and bliss.” (Tappert, p. 414.)

Closing Prayer

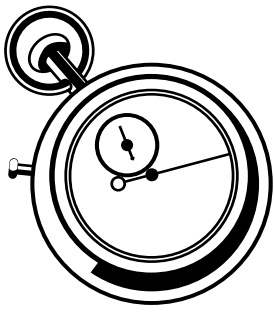
Precious Lord, you have redeemed us so that we might wake each day to a high and holy purpose. By your Spirit, empower us to glorify you more and more by our lives. We long for the day when, free from sin, we will serve you forever in perfect righteousness, innocence, and blessedness. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed and Martin Luther’s explanation.

Helps

(1) Christ redeemed us so that we might be his own, live for him and serve him now, and live with him eternally. (2) We can serve God in righteousness because he has removed our sins through the blood of his Son and has covered us with Christ’s righteousness. (3) When the Holy Spirit brings Christians to faith, he gives them a “new man” that opposes the sinful nature and desires to serve and honor God. (4) Answers will vary. Zacchaeus, who repaid those he had cheated and gave to the poor (see Luke 19), and Mary, who without hesitation anointed Jesus with very expensive perfume (see John 12), are examples of Christians who served in blessedness. (5) The gospel is the Christian’s proper motivation for service to the Lord; we serve, not to gain God’s favor but because in Christ we have God’s favor. Christians, in response to the gospel, gladly and willingly offer themselves as slaves to righteousness, not because they have to but because they want to. Even though our sinful nature keeps us from serving God perfectly in this life, our love for him moves us continually to try. The Holy Spirit, through Word and sacrament, helps us in our daily struggle to put away sin and live righteously. In heaven, where we will be freed forever from sin and its effects on our lives, we will be able to serve the Lord in perfect righteousness, innocence, and blessedness. Christ’s death and resurrection are our certain guarantee of eternal life.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Second Article

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- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
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- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
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- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
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All this he did 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 has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

1. Jesus said, *"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). According to Jesus' words, how does the salvation that he won for us become our own. Can you think of other Bible passages that confirm what Jesus says?
2. Salvation becomes ours through faith in Jesus Christ. Our natural spiritual condition, however, makes it impossible for us on our own to believe. What do the following passages tell us about our natural spiritual condition?

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins" (Ephesians 2:1).

"The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so" (Romans 8:7).

3. The Bible tells us that by nature we are spiritually like corpses in a casket. Explain.

4. By nature people are spiritual enemies of God. How do they demonstrate this in their lives and actions? in their attitudes toward God's plan of salvation?

5. What does Saint Paul tell us about faith in Jesus in the following passage?

"No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

6. Until Christians get to heaven, they will not be completely freed from the spiritual blindness in which they were born. Share some truth of the Bible that you still find difficult to accept. What is God's will for you in regard to this matter?

7. "Decision theologians" claim that people have the natural ability to make a spiritual decision for Christ, that is, to choose to believe in him as their Savior. How does this theology oppose the truth of Scripture? How does it rob God of his glory? deny his grace? endanger a person's salvation?

Luther said:

"The redemptive work has taken place and is finished. . . . But if that saving action stays hidden and no one knows about it, then it would all be for nothing, wasted. In order that this treasure might not remain buried but be taken up and enjoyed, God has let his Word go forth and be proclaimed. In the Word he has given us his Holy Spirit to lay the treasure of redemption on our hearts and make it our very own." (Tappert, p. 415.)

Closing Prayer

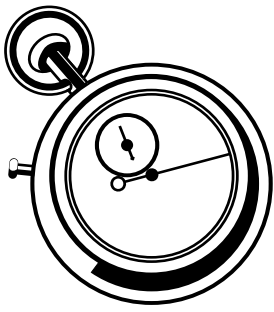
Heavenly Father, by nature we are spiritual corpses—dead! We are not inclined, we do not desire, we are not able to come to faith in Jesus our Savior. We therefore thank and praise you for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Through his work in our hearts, Jesus is ours and we are yours eternally. All glory to your name. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.
- Read Ezekiel chapter 37 (a vivid picture of the Spirit's work in dead souls).

Helps

(1) Salvation is ours by faith in Jesus Christ. See Acts 16:30,31 and Ephesians 2:8,9. (2) By nature we are spiritually blind, spiritually dead, and enemies of God. (3) By nature, we are spiritually dead. We do not have the ability or desire to bring ourselves to spiritual life, nor do we have the power to respond to and accept the message of salvation. (4) Answers will vary. People demonstrate their enmity through disobedience and rejection of God's will for their lives, as well as through a rejection of his plan for their salvation through Jesus Christ. (5) Only by the work of the Holy Spirit can we come to faith in Jesus Christ. (6) Answers will vary. God's will is that we accept his Word as truth and that we understand that his wisdom and thoughts are far superior to ours. It is also God's will that we study his Word so that, by the Spirit's power, we grow in our understanding and faith. (7) Decision theology is at odds with the Bible's teachings concerning people's natural spiritual condition. It robs God of his glory by giving at least some of the credit for salvation to people. This, in turn, denies the Bible's teaching that salvation is by God's grace alone. Finally, this false teaching, as is the case with any false teaching, endangers one's salvation by leading people to rely on themselves rather than on Jesus alone.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Third Article

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
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- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
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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 thinking or choosing 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 kept me in the true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers.

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.

1. Jesus said, *"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 28:19). What does this verse teach us about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son? How does the account of Jesus' baptism (see Matthew 3) do the same?

2. How do each of the following passages support the truth that the Holy Spirit is true God?

"Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit? . . . You have not lied to men but to God'" (Acts 5:3,4).

"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there" (Psalm 139:7,8).

"Christ . . . through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God" (Hebrews 9:14).

"The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. . . . No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10,11).

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. . . . For nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:34-37).

3. The work of God the Father is called creation. The work of God the Son is called redemption. What is the work of the Holy Spirit called? Briefly explain the Spirit’s work.

4. Respond to the following statements:

When the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit, it means the spiritual power and influence of God the Father in the world and in people’s lives.

Christians understand that there are three Gods: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

A member of another church body asks you: “Are you a Christian, or a ‘Spirit-filled’ Christian?”

5. When the Holy Spirit graciously calls a person to faith in Jesus the Savior and into the kingdom of God, he also effects a change in that person’s life and character, filling him with the fruit of the Spirit. Saint Paul mentions the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. After each “fruit” that Paul mentions, rank yourself from 1 to 10 (1 being weak, 10 being strong) in the evidence of that fruit. Who gets the credit for the fruit you see in your own life? How can Christians grow in these fruits?

“The fruit of the Spirit is love (___), joy (___), peace (___), patience (___), kindness (___), goodness (___), faithfulness (___), gentleness (___) and self-control (___).”

Luther said:

“We could never attain to a knowledge of the Father’s favor and grace except through the Lord Christ, who is a mirror of his Father’s heart. . . . But about Christ we could know nothing if the Holy Spirit had not revealed it to us.” (Tappert, p. 419.)

Closing Prayer (may be sung)

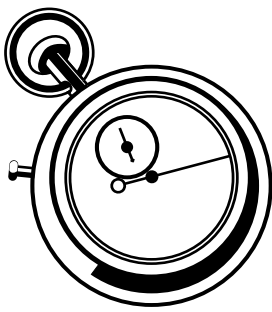
O Holy Spirit, enter in and in our hearts your work begin, your dwelling place now make us. Sun of the soul, O Light divine, around and in us brightly shine, to joy and gladness wake us that we may be truly living, to you giving prayer unceasing and in love be still increasing. Amen. (CW 184:1.)

At home

Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed and Martin Luther’s explanation.

Helps

(1) The Holy Spirit is one of the three distinct persons of the triune God. The account of Jesus’ baptism also indicates this distinction. (2) The Bible calls the Holy Spirit God, teaches that he has the characteristics of God (omnipresent, eternal, omniscient), and that he performs works that only God can do (at creation, as intercessor, in converting human hearts). (3) The Holy Spirit’s work is called sanctification, the work by which he calls people out of an unbelieving world to faith in Jesus Christ. (4) The first two statements deny the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit is not simply a force, influence, or power emanating from God the Father. Rather, he is one of the three distinct persons of the triune God. In spite of the fact that the Holy Spirit, like the Father and the Son, has the whole essence of God undivided, there are not three Gods, but one. Human reason cannot comprehend this truth. Every Christian, that is, every person who has been brought to saving faith in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit is “Spirit-filled” (see 1 Corinthians 3:16). Pentecostals and others demand outward, visible proof (speaking in tongues) that one is truly Spirit-filled. (5) The Holy Spirit alone receives that credit and the glory for producing the fruits in a Christian’s life. Christians grow in these fruits through the power of the Holy Spirit alone working in God’s Word and the sacraments.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Third Article

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- **3rd Article (Calls)**
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
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- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
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- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
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- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

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 thinking or choosing 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 kept me in the true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers.

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.

1. The work of God the Holy Spirit is called sanctification, the work by which he calls people out of an unbelieving world to faith in Jesus the Savior. Why can't people bring themselves to faith?

2. According to the following passages, what are the means (or tools) that the Holy Spirit uses to call people to saving faith?

"From the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:13,14).

"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38).

3. Martin Luther wrote: "I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel." While Luther would never deny that Jesus Christ is our only Savior, neither would he deny that we owe our salvation to God the Holy Spirit. Explain.

4. The Bible uses several pictures to describe the miracle that the Holy Spirit works in people when he calls them to faith. Explain how each of the following serves as an accurate picture of the Holy Spirit's work.

conversion (a turning around)

regeneration (being born again)

quickenning (being made alive)

5. Comment on the following:

“Faith in Christ is . . . voluntary. A person cannot be coerced, bribed, or tricked into trusting Jesus. God will not force His way into your life. The Holy Spirit will do everything possible to disturb you, draw you, love you—but finally it is your personal decision. God not only gave His Son on the cross where the plan of redemption was finished; He gave the law as expressed in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount to show you your need of forgiveness, [and] gave the Holy Spirit to convict you of your need. He gives the Holy Spirit to draw you to the cross, but even after all of this, it is your decision whether to accept God’s free pardon or to continue in your lost condition.” (Billy Graham, in his book *How to Be Born Again*, Word, 1977.)

6. The Holy Spirit uses his Word and sacraments alone to call people to faith. In light of this truth, evaluate the following strategies and practices of personal and congregational outreach and evangelism.

Allowing unchurched people to play on the congregation’s softball team.

Having an “open-door” policy at your church regarding infant baptism.

Conducting an annual vacation Bible school.

Inviting an unchurched friend or neighbor to the annual church picnic.

Luther said:

“The Holy Spirit reveals and proclaims the Word; he uses it to shed light into human hearts and set them aglow; he empowers them to grasp the Word, accept it, cling to it, and faithfully stay with it.” (Tappert, p. 416.)

Closing Prayer

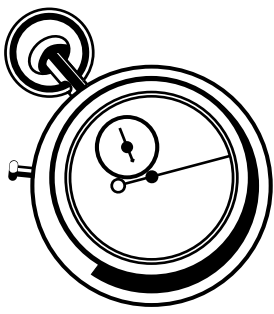
Spirit of God, we praise you for bringing us from death to life and from the darkness of unbelief to faith in Jesus our Savior. Through the Word we have just studied, strengthen our faith. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed and Martin Luther’s explanation.
- Read Acts chapter 2.

Helps

(1) Make the comparison to a physical corpse. People, by nature, are spiritual corpses. They cannot bring themselves to spiritual life, that is, to faith in Jesus the Savior. Neither can they desire or make a decision to do so. (2) The Holy Spirit brings people to faith through the Word of God or the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. (3) Faith is the hand that receives the eternal blessings of Christ (forgiveness, salvation, eternal life). Without the Holy Spirit working faith in our hearts, we could not receive these blessings. Thus, we owe our salvation to the Holy Spirit. (4) The Holy Spirit convicts us, that is, he turns us from the darkness of unbelief to faith in Jesus. When the Holy Spirit does so, we are born again, that is, we experience a second birth—a spiritual birth—that follows our physical birth. This birth quickens us, raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life. (5) This statement is a denial of the Bible’s doctrine concerning a person’s natural spiritual condition. It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that a person can trust in Jesus as the Savior (see 1 Corinthians 12:3). A denial of this truth robs God of the glory that is his for saving us. It is also a subtle form of work-righteousness, and therefore is a danger to immortal souls. (6) All of the strategies and practices mentioned may have a place in a person’s or a congregation’s outreach and evangelism program. It is important to remember, however, that the Holy Spirit works through the Word and the sacraments alone. Some of the practices listed, therefore, will simply serve as bridges to the gospel, or side-door entrances into congregational life, which eventually will bring a person into contact with the gospel.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Third Article

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
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- 1st Article (Creation)
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- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
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- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
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- 2nd Petition
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In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers.

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.

1. When the Holy Spirit calls people to saving faith, he enlightens them, that is, he brings them out of the darkness of unbelief into the light of faith, where they see all of God's gifts. The Holy Spirit gives believers more than an intellectual knowledge of God's gifts; he leads them to accept and trust in God's Word and promises. According to the following passage, why is the Holy Spirit's work of enlightenment necessary?

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

2. The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is a free gift of God's grace and that it becomes ours through faith in Jesus Christ alone. How will unbelievers, living in spiritual darkness, respond to this teaching of Scripture? What might they offer in its place? What are the eternal implications?
3. While those living in spiritual darkness may be able to grasp the meaning of Scripture's words (an intellectual knowledge), they do not accept or place their trust in God's Word. What have unbelievers (and even some within Christian churches) said about each of the following teachings of Scripture? What are the eternal implications of doing so?

The creation of the world

The virgin birth of Christ

The bodily resurrection of Christ

4. Read the following passage. What tool does the Spirit use to enlighten? What happens as we use this tool more and more? Share an example from your life.

“Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts” (Psalm 119:98-100).

5. Read the following passages. What are some of God’s wonderful gifts that the Holy Spirit enables us to see by faith?

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

6. At times, Christians may not feel that they are forgiven, at peace with God, or objects of his love. What comfort and assurance does the Holy Spirit give in the following words?

“Whenever our hearts condemn us . . . God is greater than our hearts, and knows everything” (1 John 3:20).

Luther said:

“We were totally unable to come to a recognition of the Father’s favor and grace except through the Lord Christ, who is the mirroring image of the Father’s heart. Without Christ we see nothing in God but an angry and terrible Judge. But we could know nothing of Christ either, if it were not revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.” (Tappert, p. 419.)

Closing Prayer

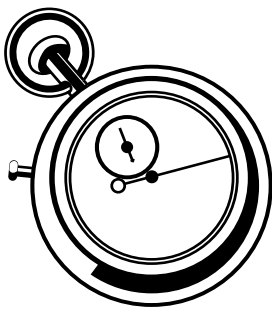
Holy Spirit, God of love, who our darkness brightens, poured on us from heaven above, and our faith enlightens, in your light we gather here; show us that Christ’s promise clear is Amen forever. Amen. (CW 180.)

At home

- Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed and Martin Luther’s explanation.
- Read 1 Corinthians chapter 12 (the gifts of the Holy Spirit).

Helps

(1) The Holy Spirit’s work of enlightenment is necessary because by nature all people are spiritually blind. They cannot accept or trust God’s Word and promises. (2) Unbelievers see the gospel as foolishness. They will naturally substitute work-righteousness for the gospel, trusting in their own works and merit to earn salvation. This only leads to eternal damnation. (3) Any denial of God’s Word is a denial of God and places one’s soul in eternal jeopardy. Darkened unbelievers will replace the creation account with the theory of evolution, denying the existence of the Creator and the immortality of the soul. They will deny the virgin birth, claiming that Jesus’ conception came about in a natural way. In doing so, they deny the truth that Jesus was born without original sin and that he was fully qualified to be our Savior. Unbelievers will also explain away the physical resurrection of Christ and, in doing so, will reject the truth that he is our Savior from sin and death. (4) The Holy Spirit uses God’s Word to enlighten believers. The more we use the Word—read, study, and meditate on its truths—the more our spiritual eyes are opened to understand and trust in those truths. (5) The Holy Spirit enables us to see God’s forgiveness, the peace we have with him in Christ, the joy that is ours, and the sure hope of eternal life. (6) In spite of what we might feel, the Holy Spirit convinces us that we are forgiven, at peace with God, and the objects of his love. Regardless of our subjective feelings, these are objective facts.



19 Minutes with Luther

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- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
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- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
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- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
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This is most certainly true.

1. The word *sanctification*, used in its broad sense, refers to all of the work that the Spirit does when he calls people out of the unbelieving world to be holy, which he does by bringing them to faith in the Savior and by keeping them in the faith. *Sanctification* is also used in a narrow sense. According to the following passages, to what special work of the Holy Spirit does *sanctification* refer?

"[Jesus] gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:14).

"It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

2. Saint Paul says that Christians are "*eager to do what is good*" (Titus 2:14). Which of the following statements best explains why Christians are eager to do what is good? Explain your answer.

Christians know that God has promised to reward their good deeds.

Christians gladly do good works as an expression of their love and thanks to God.

Christians know that good works are necessary for salvation.

3. The Bible provides God's people with guidelines for doing good works. Read the following passages and then fill in the blanks in the paragraph that follows.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6).

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105).

"Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

"As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people" (Galatians 6:10).

A good work in God's sight is everything a _____ does, speaks, or thinks in faith, according to the _____, to the _____ of God, and for the _____ of his or her neighbor.

4. One system of ethics (moral principles and values) is called teleological ethics. It claims that the end always justifies the means. Give an example. Compare this ethic and what we learned in question 3.
5. Another system of ethics might be called feel-good ethics. In other words, if something feels good and doesn't hurt anybody, then we are free to do it. Give an example of feel-good ethics. Make a comparison between feel-good ethics and what we learned in question 3.
6. Respond to the following statements:

I want to do what is right, but I just can't do it. I can't possibly be a Christian. (Read Philippians 2:13.)

I'm not a Christian, but I live the same kind of life, doing the same sort of good things as my Christian neighbor. If there is a God, I'm sure I'm just as acceptable to him as my neighbor.

Luther said:

"The former teaching, that of the Ten Commandments, does not by itself make anyone a Christian; for the wrath and displeasure of God still remains upon us because what he requires of us we are unable to do. But this other teaching, that of the Creed, brings us sheer grace; and it makes us upright and pleasing to God because through this knowledge we get to love and delight in all the commandments of God." (Tappert, p. 420.)

Closing Prayer

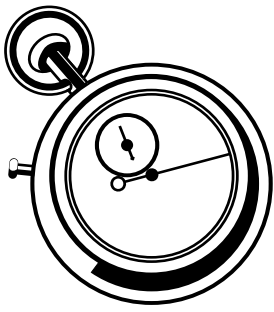
Spirit of God, our Sanctifier, work in us through the Word and the sacraments. Strengthen our faith. Enable us to overcome our sinful flesh and to live our lives more and more to the glory of our Savior-God. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.

Helps

(1) When the Holy Spirit brings us to faith, he also leads us to hate sin, fills us with the desire to do what is God-pleasing, and enables us to live a life filled with good works. (2) Christians gladly do good works to express their love and thanks to God for all his goodness. Although God has promised to reward their good deeds, this is not the Christian's motivation for doing them, for even the reward is one of grace. Good works are necessary, not because they earn God's favor, but because they are the evidence that saving faith is present. (3) A good work in God's sight is everything a Christian (believer) does, speaks, or thinks in faith, according to the Ten Commandments, to the glory of God, and for the welfare of his or her neighbor. (4) Examples will vary; stealing food in order to feed the poor, telling lies in order to spare someone's feelings. Such acts do not glorify God, nor are they in agreement with God's law. (5) Example: consensual sex between unmarried persons. Such acts do not glorify God, nor are they in agreement with his law. Contrary to the idea that such actions do not hurt anybody, Scripture tells us that any violation of God's law is always harmful and does not serve the welfare of one's neighbor. (6) Even the desire to do what is God-pleasing is evidence of Spirit-given faith, albeit a weak faith that needs strengthening. The unbeliever may perform acts that appear good and praiseworthy in the eyes of others, but because they do not proceed from faith and from the proper motivation, they are not pleasing in the eyes of God.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Third Article

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
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This is most certainly true.

1. The Holy Spirit calls people to saving faith, enlightens them to see all the gifts God gives them in Christ, and fills them with the ability to live as redeemed children of God. There are spiritual enemies, however, who want to destroy the faith of Christians. According to the following passages, who are these enemies? Give an example of what each might do to destroy faith?

"I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3).

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

"The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want" (Galatians 5:17).

2. According to the following passages, what does the Holy Spirit do for us in addition to calling us to faith?

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being" (Ephesians 3:16).

"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

3. Read the following passage. By what means does the Holy Spirit strengthen and keep us in the faith?

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk [that is, God’s Word], so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” (1 Peter 2:2).

4. Respond to the following statements:

A lot of churches today teach “Once saved, always saved.”

I don’t have to go to church to be a Christian.

Sometimes I wonder if, some day, I won’t fall into spiritual apathy and simply drift away from Jesus.

I don’t let my kids have friends who don’t belong to our church. This way they’ll never be tempted.

I pray every day. I don’t see a need to read the Bible or go to church.

5. What is the next step that you could take to grow in your faith? What is the next step your family could take? What could your congregation do to help you take these next steps? What sorts of additional Bible classes (topics, formats) might your congregation consider offering?

Luther said:

“The Holy Spirit must continue to do his work in us through the Word, daily applying forgiveness until we reach that life where forgiveness will no more be needed.” (Tappert, p. 418.)

Closing Prayer

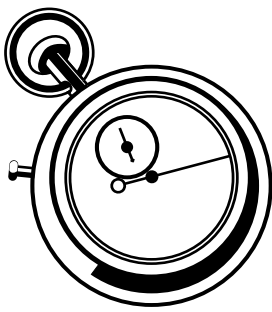
Holy Spirit, it was by your doing alone that we came to saving faith in Christ. But now there are so many enemies who want to destroy our faith, and we confess that we do not always guard and value your precious gift as we should. For Jesus’ sake, forgive us. Fill us with a love for God’s Word and, through it, strengthen our faith daily. Make us even more certain of our salvation in Jesus Christ. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed and Martin Luther’s explanation.

Helps

(1) The devil will use lies and half-truths to lead us to doubt or forsake our God. The sinful world will place one temptation after another before us. And even our sinful flesh, inclined to do only what is evil, will lead us astray. (2) The Holy Spirit strengthens our faith and keeps us in the faith. (3) The Holy Spirit keeps us in the faith through the same means with which he calls us to faith, namely, the gospel in Word and sacrament. (4) “Once saved, always saved” is not a scriptural teaching; the Bible shares examples of men who fell from saving faith and teaches us to guard and protect our faith, lest it be lost. While it might be true that a person doesn’t have to go to church to be a Christian, a Christian will want to go to church to obey Christ and to strengthen his faith. Christians who are concerned for their faith have God’s sure promise that he will strengthen and keep them in the faith through the means of grace so that they will never fall away. While choosing our children’s friends may be desirable at times, it does not mean that our children no longer have a sinful nature or that Satan will no longer be present with his temptations; Satan pays special attention to Christian homes. An active prayer life is commendable and is a sign that saving faith is present; however, the act of prayer is not a means of grace and does not strengthen faith. (5) Answers might include adding personal devotions or family devotions, attending Bible class and Sunday school regularly, attending the Lord’s Supper and worship regularly, and reading the Bible in a year.



19 Minutes with Luther

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The Knowledge of God
Law and Gospel
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1st Commandment
2nd Commandment
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4th Commandment
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6th Commandment
7th Commandment
8th Commandment
9th & 10th Commandments
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Baptism (Part 1)
Baptism (Part 2)
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Holy Communion (Part 2)
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Keys & Confession (Part 2)
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Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
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1st Petition
2nd Petition
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But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers.

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.

1. We believe in the holy Christian church, the communion of saints. According to the following passages, what is the holy Christian church? What other meanings (definitions) might there be for the word *church*?

"To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:2).

"Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior" (Ephesians 5:23).

2. Why are the following words used to describe the holy Christian church?

holy, saints

Christian

communion (or union)

3. The holy Christian church is called the invisible church. According to the following passages, what does it mean that this church is invisible?

"The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20,21).

"The Lord knows those who are his" (2 Timothy 2:19).

4. Although invisible, the communion of saints can be located. Read the following passages. Where will believers, that is, the church, always be found?

“Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word” (Ephesians 5:25,26).

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, . . . so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10,11).

5. What comfort do you find in the following passage?

“Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion [that is, the holy Christian church], which cannot be shaken but endures forever” (Psalm 125:1).

6. Comment on the following statements:

Only people like Peter and Paul can properly be called saints.

The holy Christian church is all believers in heaven and on earth, whether Lutheran, Catholic, Jew, Mormon, or Baptist.

In spite of doctrinal differences, all Christians enjoy a wonderful unity.

I can see that some in our church aren't really believers by the way they live.

The Spirit uses us to share the Word and bring others into the communion of saints.

Luther said:

“In this communion of saints we are all brothers and sisters so closely united that a closer relationship cannot be conceived.” (Plass, Vol. 1, p. 275.)

Closing Prayer

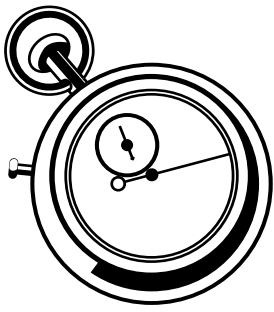
Holy Spirit, preserve your church on earth. Strengthen us through the Word. Move us to rejoice over the tie that binds us to Christ and to one another, and lead us to share the message of his love with the world. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.

Helps

(1) The holy Christian church, the communion of saints, is all people everywhere who believe in Jesus as their Savior. The word *church* might also refer to a Christian congregation, a denomination, a building, or even a worship service. (2) The words *holy* and *saints* are used because by faith in Jesus, believers have had their sins washed away. The word *Christian* is used because the believer's hope is built on Christ alone. The word *communion* is used because by faith, believers are joined to Christ and to one another. (3) Faith is a matter of the heart, not of buildings or external organizations. We trust that a person's confession of faith is sincere. Yet in an absolute sense, God alone knows who is truly a member of his church. (4) The holy Christian church, that is, believers, will be found wherever the gospel is preached and the sacraments are used. (5) The holy Christian church is imperishable; there will always be people along with us who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior. (6) Contrary to how sainthood is established in the Roman Catholic Church, the Bible teaches that all believers in Christ have had their sins removed and are properly called saints. The holy Christian church is all people in heaven and on earth who believe that Jesus Christ is true God and their Savior. That would exclude Jews, Mormons, and all those who deny that Jesus is true God. While we cannot ignore or condone the false teachings in many Christian churches today, we rejoice over the fact that the Holy Spirit continues to call many into the church by the gospel so that they enjoy a blessed fellowship with Christ and us. Saving faith is invisible; we must be very careful about judging those who confess Christ but whose faith and faith-life is weak or immature. The Holy Spirit continues to bring people into the holy Christian church through the gospel in Word and sacrament, and according to Christ's Great Commission in Matthew chapter 28, he is sending us to be the agents by which the gospel is spread.



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- Law and Gospel
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- 1st Commandment
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- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
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This is most certainly true.

1. The word *church* is used when referring to the holy Christian church, that is, all people everywhere, in heaven and on earth, who believe in Jesus as the Savior. Why is the word *church* also used when referring to a local congregation? What is the key difference between membership in the holy Christian church and in that of a local congregation?
2. Saint John wrote, "*Test the spirits to see whether they are from God*" (1 John 4:1). Why will we want to examine a congregation's doctrinal statements before joining it? Why will we also want to examine a congregation's practices?
3. When we find a congregation that is faithful to God's Word in doctrine and practice (that is, an orthodox church), God wants us to join in fellowship with it. According to the following passages, how do like-minded Christians express their fellowship with one another?

"[The early Christians] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, [the church in Antioch] placed their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:2,3).

“Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs’” (John 21:15).

4. Saint Paul warned: “Watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them” (Romans 16:17). According to Paul, what causes divisions in the Christian church? How does separation from those who adhere to false doctrine (that is, heterodox churches) demonstrate a love for God and his Word? a love for our own souls? a love for the souls of those in heterodox churches?

5. Refusing to fellowship with heterodox churches is not only a doctrinal issue but a confessionally practical one as well. Why would it be confessionally impractical to engage in joint worship services with a heterodox church? to jointly support the Christian education of our children? to support mission work together?

6. Agree or disagree:

People in heterodox churches will still go to heaven.

The WELS causes divisions in the Christian church by refusing to fellowship with churches that are not in doctrinal agreement with it.

It is better to join a heterodox church than none at all.

Luther said:

“You hear that St. Paul would not mix even a small quantity of yeast [that is, false doctrine] with the good dough. God had forbidden it. For it works its way through and through and corrupts everything. Where in one point we mingle the correct, pure doctrine with human additions, the injury is done; the truth is thereby obscured, and souls are led astray.” (Plass, Vol. 3, pp. 1369,1370.)

Closing Prayer

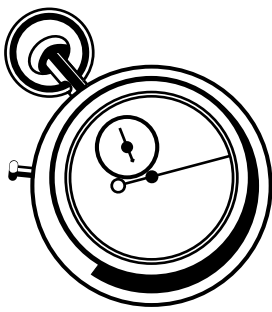
Lord God, spare us from false teachings and teachers. In your mercy, bless our church and synod so that they may ever be guardians and messengers of your truth for the salvation of many souls. In our Savior Jesus’ name, we ask this. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed and Martin Luther’s explanation.
- Read *This We Believe* (the doctrinal statement of the WELS).

Helps

(1) Local congregations are called churches because the Holy Spirit will use the gospel to call people in those assemblies to faith, that is, into the holy Christian church. Within local congregations there may also be hypocrites. (2) We will want to be certain that a congregation’s doctrinal statements, as well as its practices that flow from these statements, are in complete agreement with the Word of God. (3) Christians express fellowship with one another by worshipping, studying God’s Word, communing, and praying together. They also express their oneness by working together to support mission work and the Christian education of their youth. (4) False doctrine causes divisions in the church. Separation from false doctrine demonstrates a love for God and his Word, which is so great it will not tolerate any false teachings. It also demonstrates a love for one’s own soul, understanding that false doctrine can weaken or destroy faith. It will also serve to warn those who adhere to false doctrine about the danger to their souls. (5) Engaging in such activities and work will always involve the compromise of God’s truth and one’s confession. (For example, will missionaries be sent with the truth or with man-made doctrines? Will children receive the instruction of the Lord or that of man?) At best, churches that engage in these joint activities can do so only by agreeing that they disagree with one another. (6) We are to avoid false doctrine. Yet even in heterodox churches, it is possible for people to be saved because the Holy Spirit can use God’s Word in those places to work faith in people’s hearts. It is important to remember that orthodox churches that adhere to the truth of God’s Word do not cause divisions in the church; false doctrine and those who adhere to it cause divisions. God tells us to avoid heterodox churches. God often uses faithful Christians in search of orthodoxy as instruments in starting new congregations. This has happened often in the WELS.



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- 6th Commandment
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In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers.

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This is most certainly true.

1. God is perfectly just and demands that all sins be paid for and punished. According to the following passages, with what does God threaten to punish sin?

"There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21).

"The soul who sins is the one who will die" (Ezekiel 18:4).

2. Saint Paul wrote: *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:23-26).* In spite of sin, God has justified the world (*"all have sinned . . . and are justified"*), that is, he has declared all people "righteous," or "not guilty" (objective justification). What was God's motive in doing so?

On what basis did God make this declaration?

Has God's justice, nonetheless, been satisfied? If so, how?

How does an individual receive the eternal benefits of God's declaration (subjective justification)?

3. In spite of the fact that God has justified the world, many people will look elsewhere for their assurance of salvation. What reasons will people give for why they feel they are going to heaven?

4. Agree or disagree:

Christians will never be punished by God for anything they do wrong.

The certainty of forgiveness not only assures us of eternal life in heaven, but it is also a great comfort for our everyday lives.

If I am sorry for my sins, God will forgive me.

A loving God would never send anyone to hell.

It is Spirit-given faith alone that receives the eternal blessings that Christ won for us through his work of redemption.

Luther said:

"This doctrine [of justification] is the head and the cornerstone. It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the church of God; and without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour. . . . This is the heel of the Seed that opposes the old serpent and crushes its head. That is why Satan, in turn, cannot but persecute it." (Plass, Vol. 2, p. 704.)

Closing Prayer

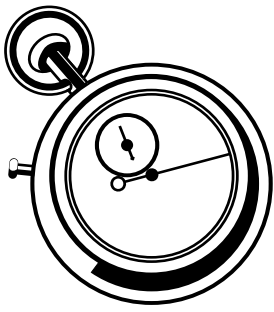
Heavenly Father, we confess that our lives are sinful; we have nothing to offer that could earn your favor. Forgive us, and lead us to rejoice daily in the fact that we have been justified freely by your grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. In his name we pray. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanation.
- Read Romans chapter 3.

Helps

(1) God threatens to punish sin with his anger and with troubles during this life and with temporal and eternal death. (2) By his grace alone, that is, his undeserved love for fallen mankind, God has justified all people. He did this on the basis of Christ's redemptive work. Christ our substitute's sacrifice on the cross of Calvary paid for the sins of the world, satisfying God's justice. By faith alone, and not by works, we receive the eternal benefits of Christ's work in our behalf. (3) Rather than trust God, people will base their hope of salvation on their works, the sincerity of their faith, the depth of their repentance, their history in the church, or their intentions. Such a foundation for salvation is not firm, because it depends on weak, sinful humans rather than on the words and promises of a gracious God. (4) While Christians may undergo the loving discipline of the Lord and suffer natural consequences of their sins, Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice for their sins assures them that they will never be punished, because the punishment for their sins was already paid at Calvary. The assurance of forgiveness is a great comfort for our everyday lives, because we constantly sin and deserve God's punishment. God's forgiveness does not depend on our sorrow over sin or on any other work or human effort, but on Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Repentant, Spirit-worked faith is simply the hand that receives forgiveness. God is both loving and just. In his undeserved love, he has provided salvation for all people. Those who in unbelief reject God's salvation will suffer his just and eternal punishment.



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This is most certainly true.

1. According to the following passages, what happens to a person's body and soul when he dies?

"The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side" (Luke 16:22,23).

2. Read the following passages. What will happen to people when Jesus returns on the Last Day? On what basis will these things happen?

"A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned" (John 5:28,29).

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

3. When they are raised on the Last Day, the bodies of believers will be transformed; *“they will be like [Christ’s] glorious body”* (Philippians 3:21). Not so with the bodies of unbelievers. Use the underlined words in the following passage to explain the difference between the bodies in which believers live on earth and those in which they will live for eternity. In addition, list at least six problems or frailties common to our bodies that will no longer be present in eternity.

“The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

4. Because sin and its effects will be gone forever in heaven, *“there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain”* (Revelation 21:4). List at least six other sin-caused troubles (perhaps from your own life) that will not be found in heaven.
5. Why can we be absolutely certain that we will be raised and will live eternally? Why do each of the three persons of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—deserve our praise for this blessing?

Luther said:

“St. Paul makes death and the grave signify nothing but the taking off, and the flinging away, of an old, torn coat, and the resurrection the putting on of a beautiful, new coat called immortality, wrought and woven for us by the victory of Christ” (Plass, Vol. 3, p. 1218.)

Closing Prayer

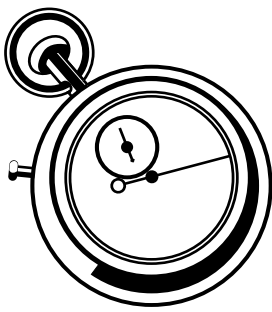
Holy Spirit, it is because of your work alone that we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and are certain that, like him, we too will rise and live forever. Through your Word and sacrament, preserve our faith. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed and Martin Luther’s explanation.
- Jot down what you would like for your own funeral service (hymns, Scripture readings, text for the sermon), keeping in mind the sure hope of the resurrection that you would like shared with the people present.

Helps

(1) When a person dies, his body goes into the grave and his soul goes either to heaven or hell. (2) When Jesus returns, all the dead will be raised. Unbelievers, whose lives were marked by evil, will be eternally condemned in hell. Believers, whose good works gave evidence of their faith, will live eternally in heaven. (3) Our present bodies, without exception, perish. They are weak (especially in our declining years) and are very dishonorable at the time of and following death. After the resurrection, our bodies will no longer be subject to death. In addition, they will be similar in glory and power to Christ’s resurrected body. Our resurrected bodies will no longer need hearing aids, eyeglasses, dentures, and wheelchairs. (4) Answers will vary. Possible answers are quarrels, wars, sickness, depression, and irritations. (5) We can be absolutely sure of our salvation because it does not depend on anything we do but depends entirely on what Christ our Savior has done. The Father deserves our praise because in eternity he planned our salvation, and in time he promised and sent his Son to redeem all people. The Son deserves our praise because he carried out the Father’s plan. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life in our place and suffered for sin as our substitute. The Holy Spirit deserves our praise because he has called us to faith in Christ. By faith we receive the eternal benefits of Jesus’ work.



19 Minutes with Luther

Baptism

The Institution of Baptism

First: What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is water used by God's command and connected with God's Word.

Which is that word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

The Blessings of Baptism

Second: What does Baptism do for us?

Baptism works forgiveness of sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

What are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

1. The means by which the Holy Spirit offers and gives God's grace to us is the gospel. The gospel is found in God's Word as well as in two sacred acts called sacraments. The sacraments have three basic characteristics. They (1) were instituted by Christ; (2) use earthly elements connected with God's Word; and (3) offer the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

The two sacraments are _____ and the _____.

2. Jesus instituted Baptism when he commanded, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). To whom did Jesus give the command to baptize (and who, therefore, has the right to baptize)? What earthly element is found in Baptism? What is the Word of God connected with this earthly element? For whom is Baptism intended?

3. Jesus commanded that we baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." According to the following passage, what special comfort and assurance do we receive from being baptized in the name of the triune God?

"You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household" (Ephesians 2:19).

4. According to the following passages, what blessings does God give in Baptism?

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- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38).

"[God] saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

"In [Noah's ark] only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also" (1 Peter 3:20,21).

5. The Bible teaches that all adults need Baptism and are to be instructed before receiving this sacrament. It also teaches that all children are to be baptized. According to the following passages, why do we baptize children?

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them" (Matthew 28:19).

"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5).

"If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

6. Discuss the following:

The duties of sponsors

The appropriate period to wait before baptizing a child

The administration of the sacrament by the pastor and by laypeople

Luther said:

"The way to regard and use Baptism rightly is to draw strength and comfort from it when our sins or consciences trouble us. We then must say, 'See here, I am baptized. And since I am baptized, I have the assurance that I shall be saved in soul and body and have eternal life.'" (Tappert, p. 442.)

Closing Prayer

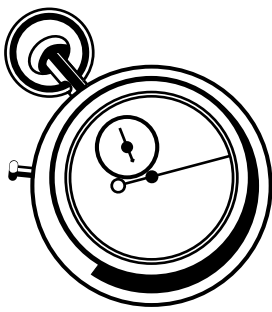
Heavenly Father, we have been baptized. We are your children. By your grace and power, we belong to you. Help us to live each day in the joy of our baptisms and to the glory of you, our Father. In Jesus' name we ask this. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Institution of Baptism and the Blessings of Baptism
- Locate and read your baptismal certificate.

Helps

(1) The two sacraments are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (2) Jesus commanded his disciples to baptize. Therefore, all Christians have the right to administer the sacrament. The two necessary things in the sacrament are the earthly element, water, and God's Word: "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Jesus commanded that "all nations," that is, all people, be baptized. (3) Baptism in the name of the triune God assures us that we have become members of God's family. (4) In Baptism, God gives us the blessings of the forgiveness of sins, a new birth (rebirth), and eternal salvation. (5) We baptize children because they are included in Jesus' command to baptize "all nations," because they are sinful from birth and need the forgiveness Baptism offers, and because they too can believe in Jesus as their Savior. (6) Having sponsors is not commanded by God but is a fine custom. We ask sponsors to serve as witnesses to the baptism, to pray for the child and to help with the child's spiritual training. Sponsors, then, should believe as the parents do. Since children by nature are sinful and under the wrath of God, we will want to have them baptized and receive the blessings God offers in Baptism as quickly as possible. Although God has given the right to administer the Sacrament of Holy Baptism to all members of the church, congregations will normally, for the sake of good order, ask their pastors to administer this sacrament. In the case of emergencies, however, when a pastor is not present, any Christian may baptize.



19 Minutes with Luther

Baptism

The Power of Baptism

Third: How can water do such great things?

It is certainly not the water that does such things, but God's Word which is in and with the water and faith which trusts this Word used with the water.

For without God's Word the water is just plain water and not Baptism. But with this Word it is Baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of rebirth by the Holy Spirit.

Where is this written?

Saint Paul says in Titus, chapter 3, "[God] saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying."

The Meaning of Baptism for Our Daily Life

Fourth: What does baptizing with water mean?

Baptism means that the old Adam in us should be drowned by daily contrition and repentance, and that all its evil deeds and desires be put to death. It also means that a new person should daily arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

Saint Paul says in Romans, chapter 6, "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, we too may live a new life."

1. According to the words of the Power of Baptism and the Scripture passage quoted there, who is working in Baptism so that its simple water offers the incredible blessings of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life? Through what means or instrument are these blessings offered in Baptism?
2. Since Baptism's power is in the Word of God, what would we say about the type of water that must be used? about the method of baptizing?
3. According to the following passages, what does the Holy Spirit do through the Word of God in Baptism?

"[God] saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
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- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- **Baptism (Part 2)**
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

“Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:38,39).

4. Baptism makes us mindful of the conflict that exists within every Christian between the old Adam and the new man. Fill in the following chart.

Old Adam	New Man
_____ from birth,	holy by _____,
inclined toward _____, and	inclined toward _____, and
hates _____ and his will.	_____ God and his will.

5. The water of our baptisms reminds us that we belong to the Lord and are daily to drown the old Adam through contrition and repentance. According to the following passage, what are contrition and repentance?

“Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. . . . A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Psalm 51:4,17).

6. In the Meaning of Baptism for Our Daily Life, Martin Luther quotes Romans 6:4, reminding us that, as baptized children of God, we are to live new and holy lives. How does Baptism itself fill us with a desire to live such lives?

7. Comment on the following statements:

A person who has not been baptized can still be saved.

It is possible for a child to lose the faith that was given to him in Baptism.

Luther said:

“These two parts of the rite, the dipping beneath the water and the emerging again, point to Baptism’s power and effect, which are simply the slaying of the old Adam and the resurrection of the new man. Both of these actions are to keep happening in us throughout our life on earth. A Christian life is thus nothing more than an ongoing daily Baptism, once begun and always continuing.” (Tappert, pp. 444,445.)

Closing Prayer

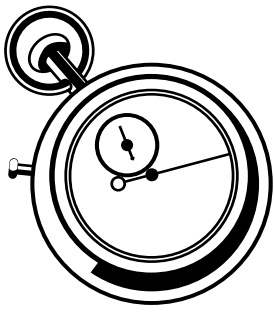
Holy Spirit, remind us daily that we have been sanctified by the Word of God and washed clean through the water of Baptism. Help and empower us to live each moment of our lives as redeemed children of God in Christ. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Power of Baptism and the Meaning of Baptism for Our Daily Life.

Helps

(1) The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God in Baptism to bring us the blessings of the sacrament. (2) Contrary to the claims of some, it does not matter what type of water is used, since the power of Baptism is in the Word of God. Neither is there an advantage in one method of baptizing over another (immersion over against sprinkling or pouring). This too is contrary to the claims of some. (3) Through the Word of God in Baptism, the Holy Spirit either creates saving faith (washing of rebirth), as is the case with little children, or he strengthens faith, as was the case with the Ethiopian eunuch, who after his baptism went on his way rejoicing. (4) The old Adam is sinful from birth, inclined toward evil, and hates God and his will. The new man is holy by faith, inclined toward good, and loves God and his will. There is a conflict. (5) Contrition and repentance mean acknowledging and having a deep and sincere sorrow over our sins and trusting that God forgives those sins for Jesus’ sake. (6) Baptism reminds us of the eternal blessings Jesus our Savior gives us through this sacrament and then fills us with the desire to respond to his love by living our lives to his glory. (7) Jesus said, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16). Unbaptized persons can be saved if he has not despised Baptism. A child may tragically lose the God-given faith received through Baptism if that faith is not nurtured and fed with the Word of God. It is the parents’ responsibility to see to the spiritual training of their children.



19 Minutes with Luther

Holy Communion

The Institution of Holy Communion

First: What is the Sacrament of Holy Communion?

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

Where is this written?

The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the apostle Paul tell us: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

The Blessings of Holy Communion

Second: What blessing do we receive through this eating and drinking?

That is shown us by these words: “Given” and “poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins.”

Through these words we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in this sacrament.

For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

1. Holy Communion is also called the Lord’s Supper. During what festival meal did Jesus institute the Lord’s Supper? Why was this a fitting occasion for the institution of this sacrament?
2. What is present in the Lord’s Supper together with the bread and the wine? Explain how this can be so.
3. What blessings are offered and given through the eating and drinking of the Lord’s Supper? What will this promise of blessings in the Lord’s Supper lead us to do?
4. Reformed Christian churches claim that the bread and the wine in the Lord’s Supper merely represent Christ’s body and blood. Explain how this claim . . .
. . . changes Jesus’ words of institution of this sacrament.

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
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- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
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- 2nd Article (Christ’s Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ’s Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ’s Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ’s Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ’s Exaltation)
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- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
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- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- **Holy Communion (Part 1)**
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord’s Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

. . . empties the Lord's Supper of its blessings.

. . . robs Christians of the comfort that God intends they receive through this sacrament.

5. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that, as the priest consecrates the bread and the wine, the earthly elements are changed into the actual body and blood of Christ and no longer exist as bread and wine. This teaching is called transubstantiation. Furthermore, the Catholic Church teaches that at each Mass, Jesus is offered, again and again, as a "bloodless" sacrifice for sin. Explain how these teachings contradict the teaching of the Bible.

6. In Holy Communion what three co-unions exist . . .

. . . between the bread and the _____ and the wine and the _____?

. . . between God and each _____?

. . . between the believer and other _____?

7. Respond to the following statements:

It's all right to use grape juice instead of grape wine in the Lord's Supper.

It is important that a person receive the Lord's Supper as shortly before his death as possible.

Luther said:

"Though a hundred thousand devils, plus all fanatics, come rushing up to question how bread and wine can be Christ's body and blood, still I know that all the fanatic spirits and all the scholars heaped together cannot match the wisdom that the divine Majesty has in his little finger. Here stands Christ with the Word, 'Take eat; this is my body.' 'Drink of it, all of you, this is the new covenant in my blood.' That is where we shall take our stand and watch the futile attempts of those who would play schoolmaster with God and try to alter what he has spoken." (Tappert, p. 448.)

Closing Prayer

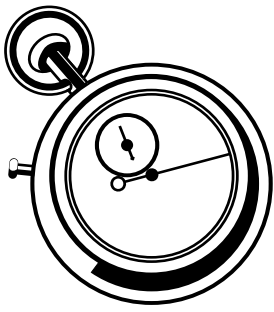
For your consoling supper, Lord, be praised throughout all ages! Preserve it, for in every place the world against it rages. Grant that this sacrament may be a blessed comfort unto me when living and when dying. Amen. (CW 312:8.)

At home

Memorize the Institution of Holy Communion and the Blessings of Holy Communion.

Helps

(1) Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper during the Passover meal. The subject of both of these meals is deliverance through the blood of a lamb. (2) The true body and blood of Christ are present in, with, and under the bread and wine. We cannot explain how this can be so. We know it is true simply because Christ has told us this in the Bible. (3) Because the true body and blood of Christ are present in the Lord's Supper, this sacrament offers the forgiveness of sins. And where there is forgiveness, there is also eternal life and salvation. This truth will lead Christians to partake of the sacrament as often as possible. (4) Jesus said that his body and blood are truly present in the Lord's Supper (This is my body . . . my blood), not merely represented. If his body and blood were not present, but merely represented, then the Lord's Supper could not offer the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation Jesus has secured for us through his body and blood; Christians, then, would receive no comfort and assurance of forgiveness through the partaking of this meal. (5) There is no biblical support for the doctrine of transubstantiation. In fact, the Bible clearly teaches that there are four things present in the sacrament: body and blood and bread and wine. The idea of a bloodless sacrifice, made again and again for sin, contradicts the teaching of Scripture that "this priest [Jesus] . . . offered for all time one sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:12). (6) In Holy Communion there is co-union between the bread and the body and the wine and the blood. (7) In certain circumstances it may be all right to use grape juice between God and each believer, and between the believer and other believers. (8) In certain circumstances it may be all right to use grape juice instead of grape wine. Jesus, however, used wine. It may be of special comfort to the Christian to receive the Lord's Supper shortly before death. However, we should be aware of the mistaken ideas that the Lord's Supper can or will heal physical illnesses or that sins committed after the reception of the sacrament remain unforgiven until the time when the sacrament is received again.



19 Minutes with Luther

Holy Communion

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
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- 1st Article (Protection)
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- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- **Holy Communion (Part 2)**
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
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- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

The Power of Holy Communion

Third: How can eating and drinking do such great things?

It is certainly not the eating and drinking that does such things, but the words “Given” and “poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins.”

These words are the main thing in this sacrament, along with the eating and drinking. And whoever believes these words has what they plainly say, the forgiveness of sins.

The Reception of Holy Communion

Fourth: Who, then, is properly prepared to receive this sacrament?

Fasting and other outward preparations may serve a good purpose, but he is properly prepared who believes these words: “Given” and “poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins.”

But whoever does not believe these words or doubts them is not prepared, because the words “for you” require nothing but hearts that believe.

1. It is because God's powerful Word is connected with the eating and drinking in the sacrament that the Lord's Supper is able to offer and give the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation. According to the following passage, what additional blessing does Jesus give us through the Word in this sacrament?

“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

2. Our Savior intends that the Lord's Supper be a blessing. Nonetheless, according to the following passage, why should we be careful about whom we invite to receive this sacrament and how we receive it ourselves?

“Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. . . . Anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Corinthians 11:27,29).

3. What do the following passages tell us about those who commune with us?

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, [God] . . . will forgive our sins” (1 John 1:8,9).

“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup” (1 Corinthians 11:28).

“Do this in remembrance of me.’ . . . For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:24,26).

“Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Corinthians 10:17).

4. Our church (and many other Christian churches) practices “close communion,” admitting only qualified communicants to the Lord’s Supper. At times people have criticized this practice and labeled it “unloving.” Explain how close communion, however, actually demonstrates a loving concern for . . .

. . . God’s Word.

. . . souls redeemed by Christ.

5. Luther wrote that, prior to receiving the Lord’s Supper, “fasting and other outward preparations may serve a good purpose.” What good purpose might these serve? List other practices that might serve the same good purpose(s).

6. Agree or disagree:

A person with a weak faith shouldn’t receive the Lord’s Supper.

We gain God’s favor when we partake of the Lord’s Supper.

Luther said:

“If you are heavy laden and feel your weakness, go joyfully to the Lord’s Table and let it refresh, comfort, and strengthen you. If you wait until your burden disappears and you are pure and worthy of the sacrament, then you will stay away forever, for in that event the Lord’s verdict will be, ‘Since you are so pure and good, you do not need me, nor I you.’” (Tappert, p. 455.)

Closing Prayer

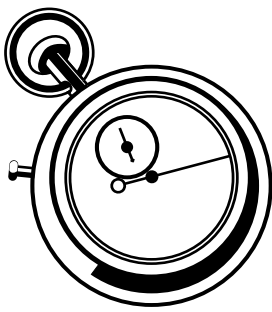
Lord, we praise you for the blessings you offer in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. May we always come to this meal in humble repentance and leave it with stronger faith and renewed resolve to live to your glory. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Power of Holy Communion and the Reception of Holy Communion.
- Read (and begin using regularly) Personal Preparation for Holy Communion (CW, page 156).

Helps

(1) Through the Word in the Lord’s Supper, Jesus also strengthens our faith in him as our Savior. (2) We should be careful because it is possible to receive the body and blood of Christ in an unworthy manner. Those who do so bring God’s judgment on themselves. (3) Those who commune with us should be penitent sinners who are able to examine themselves and are able to remember the Lord’s death, that is, they have been instructed properly so that they understand the significance of Christ’s sacrifice. Since partaking of the Lord’s Supper together is an expression of unity in faith, those who commune with us should be one with us in faith and doctrine. (4) Close communion demonstrates a love for God’s Word, for it leads us to faithfully adhere to the directives found in Scripture regarding the reception of the Lord’s Supper. This practice also demonstrates a love for souls by protecting communicants from receiving the sacrament improperly or foolishly. (5) These practices may help a person center his thoughts on the meaning of the Lord’s Supper or may be a way of showing respect for the Lord Jesus who invites us to dine at his table. The practice of registration prior to receiving the sacrament may serve these same good purposes. (6) A person with a weak faith should, indeed, receive the Lord’s Supper, since God promises to strengthen faith through this sacrament. In a sense, we can say we gain God’s favor when we partake of the Lord’s Supper, not at all because we are doing a good work (sacrifice) but because of what God offers in Holy Communion (sacrament).



19 Minutes with Luther

The Keys and Confession

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
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- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
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- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
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- The Doxology

The Keys

First: What is the use of the keys?

The use of the keys is that special power and right which Christ gave to his church on earth: to forgive the sins of penitent sinners but refuse forgiveness to the impenitent as long as they do not repent.

Where is this written?

The holy evangelist John writes in chapter 20, “[Jesus] breathed on [his disciples] and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’”

1. Jesus spoke of the keys when he said, *“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven”* (Matthew 16:19). He also spoke of the keys in John 20:23 (see above). To whom did Jesus give the keys? What did he mean by the words *bind* and *loose*? What did Jesus say about the validity of the use of the keys on earth?

2. *Jesus said: “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault. . . . If he refuses to listen . . . treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector”* (Matthew 18:15,17). According to Jesus’ words, with whom are we to use the binding key? Why are we to use the binding key in this situation (in other words, what is the desired outcome)? What may be the result of not using the binding key in this situation?

3. Saint Paul wrote, *“You ought to forgive and comfort [the penitent sinner], so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow”* (2 Corinthians 2:7). According to Paul’s words, with whom are we to use the loosing key? Why are we to use the loosing key in this situation (in other words, what is the desired outcome)? What may be the result of not using the loosing key in this situation?

4. Why are Christians sometimes reluctant to use the keys?

5. What do the following passages tell us about the use of the keys?

“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently” (Galatians 6:1).

“In the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Matthew 7:2).

6. Agree or disagree:

It is unloving to tell someone that he or she is going to hell.

Since people may lie about their repentance, the use of the keys is not always valid.

“The power of forgiving and retaining sins was communicated to the apostles and their lawful successors,” that is, the pope, priests, and such (The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent).

It is judgmental to tell someone that he or she is going to hell.

Luther said:

“[Christ] says: ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’ This power is given to him who has the Holy Ghost, that is, to him who is a Christian. But who is a Christian? He who believes. He who believes has the Holy Ghost. Therefore every Christian has the power . . . to retain or to remit sins. (Plass, Vol. 1, page. 5.)

Closing Prayer

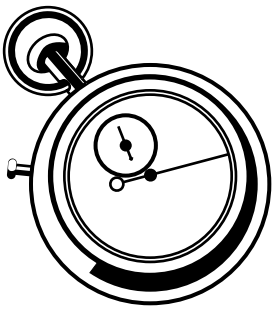
Lord Jesus, you have placed into our hands the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Empower us, by your Spirit, to use them courageously and responsibly for the sake of immortal souls and to the glory of your name. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Keys.

Helps

(1) Jesus gave the keys to all believers—to all who have received the Holy Spirit. When Jesus used the word *bind*, he meant the refusal to forgive sins. When he used the word *loose*, he meant pronouncing that a person's sins are forgiven. When believers use the keys, their use is as valid in heaven as if Christ were dealing with us himself. (2) We are to use the binding key with the impenitent in an attempt to have them see God's terrible judgment and repent. Allowing the impenitent to continue in their sin may lead them to a false security and to damnation. (3) We are to use the loosing key with penitent sinners in order to comfort them and lead them to see God's forgiveness and salvation in Christ. Neglecting or refusing to use the loosing key may lead the penitent to despair. (4) Answers may vary. Some reasons may be fear of rejection, a sense of inadequacy, or apathy. (5) As we use the keys, and in particular the binding key, we must deal gently, humbly, and lovingly with others. We must also be careful not to judge one's motives or heart. (6) The most loving thing that we can do for people in danger is to alert them to that danger. This is especially true if they are in danger of eternal damnation because of impenitence. This does not mean that we are judging people's hearts or motives; we are simply sharing the truth of God's Word. The truth that there is forgiveness for the penitent (loosing key) is objective, and therefore true for all: a person may, by his hypocrisy, reject this forgiveness. Jesus did not reserve the use of the keys for the clergy but gave it to all believers, that is, to all who have received the Holy Spirit.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Keys and Confession

The Knowledge of God
Law and Gospel
Introduction to the Law
1st Commandment
2nd Commandment
3rd Commandment
4th Commandment
5th Commandment
6th Commandment
7th Commandment
8th Commandment
9th & 10th Commandments
The Conclusion
The Gospel & the Nature of God
The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
1st Article (Creation)
1st Article (Preservation)
1st Article (Protection)
1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
2nd Article (Christ's Person)
2nd Article (Christ's Office)
2nd Article (Christ's Work)
2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
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2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
3rd Article (Calls)
3rd Article (Enlightens)
3rd Article (Sanctifies)
3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
3rd Article (Invisible Church)
3rd Article (Visible Church)
3rd Article (Forgiveness)
3rd Article (Eternal Life)
Baptism (Part 1)
Baptism (Part 2)
Holy Communion (Part 1)
Holy Communion (Part 2)
Keys & Confession (Part 1)
► **Keys & Confession (Part 2)**
Keys & Confession (Part 3)
Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
The Address
1st Petition
2nd Petition
3rd Petition
4th Petition
5th Petition
6th Petition
7th Petition
The Doxology

The Public Use of the Keys

Second: How does a Christian congregation use the keys?

A Christian congregation with its called servant of Christ uses the keys in accordance with Christ's command by forgiving those who repent of their sin and are willing to amend, and by excluding from the congregation those who are plainly impenitent that they may repent. I believe that when this is done, it is as valid and certain in heaven also, as if Christ, our dear Lord, dealt with us himself.

Where is this written?

Jesus says in Matthew, chapter 18, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

1. "The use of the keys is that special power and right which Christ gave to his church on earth: to forgive the sins of penitent sinners but refuse forgiveness to the impenitent as long as they do not repent" (Small Catechism). The keys are administered publicly in a congregation through its pastor. According to the following passages, who only may serve as pastors in our congregations?

"An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient . . . not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (Titus 1:6-9).

"A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1 Timothy 2:11-13).

"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers" (Acts 20:28).

2. Which of the following best completes the statement? Explain why you made your choice. We do not have women pastors because . . .

. . . women are not as qualified as men to serve as pastors.

. . . God prohibits them from serving in the public ministry.

. . . God says that they are not to have authority over men.

3. A Christian congregation calls a pastor to preach and teach God's Word publicly, to administer the sacraments (so that everything in the church may "be done in a fitting and orderly way" [1 Corinthians 14:40]), and to use the keys publicly. According to the following passages, how will a congregation with its called pastor use the binding key? the loosing key? Why will a congregation with its pastor use each of these keys (in other words, what is the desired outcome)?

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault. . . . If he refuses to listen . . . tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector" (Matthew 18:15,17).

"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her . . . that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins" (Isaiah 40:1,2).

4. Discuss the following:

Other forms of the public ministry (in addition to the office of pastor) and the responsibilities of each.

On what things the pastor's ministry and work should focus.

How we may encourage our young people to consider the public ministry.

How the practice of excommunication demonstrates love for all of a congregation's members.

Luther said:

"If anybody does not go to confession willingly and for the sake of absolution, let him just forget about it. Yes, and if anybody goes about relying on the purity of his confession, let him just stay away from it. We urge you, however, to confess and express your needs, not for the purpose of performing a work but to hear what God wishes to say to you." (Tappert, p. 459.)

Closing Prayer

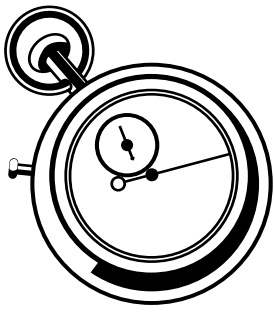
Bless the leaders whom you have given to our church, dear Lord. Give them strength. Instill in their hearts your love for souls. Fill them with the courage to boldly share your truth without compromise. And move us to support, honor, and obey them as our God-given overseers. In Jesus' name we ask this. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Public Use of the Keys.

Helps

(1) Only men who have all the qualifications established by God and who have been properly called by a congregation may serve as pastors. (2) We do not have women pastors, not because they are less qualified than men or because God forbids them to serve in the public ministry (consider other forms of public ministry where women do serve), but because, at creation, God established an order in which he forbids women to have authority over men. The office of the pastor is one of authority. (3) A congregation with its pastor will use the binding key to exclude from the congregation (excommunicate) those who are plainly impenitent so that they may repent. The congregation and pastor will use the loosing key to forgive and welcome back the excommunicated who repent so that they are not led to despair, but may experience the joy of salvation. God's forgiveness is also announced publicly in worship services and privately to individuals. (4) God gave the church the freedom to establish, according to its needs, various offices of public ministry in addition to that of pastor: missionary, professor, family minister, youth minister, teacher, and such. The pastor's work should focus on "the ministry of the word of God" rather than "waiting on tables" (see Acts 6:1-7). We can encourage our young people to consider the public ministry by speaking pointedly to them about it, by supporting those who are attending our worker training schools, by familiarizing our young people with our worker training system, by conducting recruitment Sundays, and so on. Excommunication not only demonstrates a deep love for impenitent sinners by attempting to lead them to repentance through seeing God's wrath; it also demonstrates a love for the entire congregation by making a clear testimony to God's Word.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Keys and Confession

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- **Keys & Confession (Part 3)**
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

Confession

First: What is confession?

Confession has two parts. The one is that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution or forgiveness from the pastor as from God himself, not doubting but firmly believing that our sins are thus forgiven before God in heaven.

Second: What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer.

But before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Third: How can we recognize these sins?

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments. Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, employer, or employee? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you hurt anyone by word or deed? Have you been dishonest, careless, wasteful, or done other wrong?

Fourth: How will the pastor assure a penitent sinner of forgiveness?

He will say, "By the authority of Christ, I forgive you your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

1. The first part of confession is that we admit that we are sinners who deserve God's punishment. According to the following passages, why will we confess our sins?

"Confess your sins to each other" (James 5:16).

"If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

2. King David wrote: *"Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin. My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly. I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning. I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin"* (Psalm 38:3-6,18). What does God use to lead people to confess their sins? What others effects will God's use of this instrument have on people?

3. The second part of confession is hearing the comforting message that our sins are forgiven. Identify the two parts of confession as they appear in a typical worship service.

4. Read again King David's words from Psalm 38. When and why might we want to make a private confession to our pastor?

5. When will we want to confess a sin to another person?

6. How will confessing our sins help with our relationships with others?

7. Explain: There can never be true confession without a desire to put away sin.

8. Many people are reluctant to confess their sins. Instead, they will try to justify their sins or transfer the guilt of their sin to others (to their parents, coworkers, or situations in which they find themselves). Why are people reluctant to confess their sins? What is the result of refusing to do so?

Luther said:

"If the needs that ought to move and induce us to make confession were pointed out, then one would need little urging or coercion. Everyone's conscience would so drive and disturb him that he would be glad to do what a poor and miserable beggar does when he hears that a rich gift of money or clothing is being handed out at a certain place; so as not to miss it, he would run there as fast as he can and would need no bailiff to beat and drive him on. . . . If you were a Christian, then you ought to be happy to run more than a hundred miles to confess and not let yourselves be urged to come; you should rather come and compel us to give you the opportunity." (Tappert, pp. 459,460.)

Closing Prayer

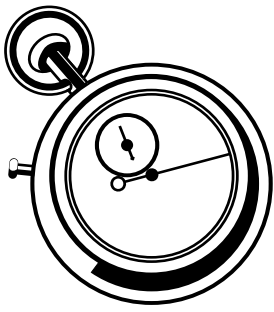
I, a sinner, come to you with a penitent confession. Savior, show me mercy, too; grant for all my sins remission. Let these words my soul relieve—Jesus sinners does receive. Amen. (CW 304:5.)

At home

- Memorize Confession.
- Read Private Confession (CW, pages 154,155).

Helps

(1) We will confess our sins because God demands that we do so and because we want to be assured of his forgiveness. (2) God uses his Law, the Ten Commandments, to lead us to confess our sins. God's law convicts and crushes the sinner so that he feels God's wrath, is filled with despair over his own righteousness, and pleads for God's mercy. (3) A typical worship service will include a time of formal confession and absolution. Elements of confession and absolution, however, may be found throughout the service (in the hymns, prayers, or sermon). (4) We might want to confess privately to our pastor when we are troubled by a particular sin in our lives so that we might be assured of God's forgiveness. (5) God wants us to confess to others when we have sinned against them. (6) Sin threatens any relationship, be it with God or others. Confessing sin and being assured that it is forgiven will foster a relationship. (7) True confession includes sorrow over the sin that has been committed and a sincere desire never to offend God again by repeating that sin. (8) A proud and self-righteous person, whose heart has been hardened to the message of God's law, will refuse to make confession. Such a person forfeits the assurance of God's forgiveness.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Lord's Prayer

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
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- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- **Introduction to the Lord's Prayer**
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

1. Prayer is an act of worship. It is a heart-to-heart talk, spoken or unspoken, with the one true God. According to the following passage, whose prayers does God hear? What comfort do you gain from this passage?

"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil" (1 Peter 3:12).

2. What do the following passages tell us about the content of prayer, when we should pray, and where we should pray?

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone" (1 Timothy 2:1).

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6).

"Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

"Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Ephesians 6:18).

"When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen" (Matthew 6:6).

"I want all men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer" (1 Timothy 2:8).

3. Although God encourages us to pray anytime and anyplace, it is helpful to discipline ourselves in such a way that we have set times for prayer. At what times during the day might a Christian always want to pray?

4. Fill in the blanks. A believer may pray using . . .

. . . his _____ words.

. . . the words of another _____.

. . . the words of the prayer which Jesus himself gave us:

the _____.

5. Using a book of prayers can be helpful to one's prayer life. Share an example of a prayer or book of prayers that you have found meaningful.

6. God does not demand that we use any certain posture as we pray. Postures of prayer, however, can be helpful; they can reflect what is in our hearts and serve as a practical aid in prayer as well. List several postures of prayer. How might each be a reflection of what is in our hearts or serve as a practical aid?

7. Evaluate the following statements:

In prayer, it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

Prayer strengthens faith.

Before I go to bed at night, I always pray for my grandma in heaven.

We should always pray as Jesus did: "If it is your will, God."

Luther said:

"Let this be said as an exhortation to pray that we may form the habit of praying with all diligence and earnestness. For next to the preaching of the Gospel (whereby God speaks with us and offers to give us all His grace and blessings) the highest and foremost work is indeed that we, in turn, speak with Him through prayer and receive from Him." (Plass, Vol. 2, p. 1093.)

Closing Prayer

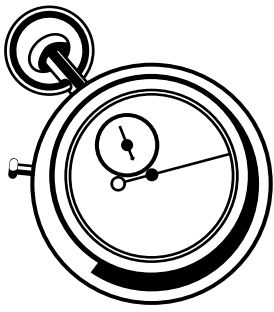
Lord, lead us, often and always, to take advantage of the privilege we have in Christ to speak to you from the heart. Amen.

At home

Write a prayer that contains intercession and thanksgiving.

Helps

(1) God only hears the prayers of the "righteous," that is, the prayers of Christians who are righteous in God's eyes through faith in Christ. We can be certain that when we pray, God hears us. (2) We are to pray at all times and on all occasions. We are to pray in all places, in private and in public worship with other believers. We are to use prayer to thank God and to make requests for ourselves and others. (3) Examples may vary (mealtime, when we wake, when we go to bed, during daily devotions). (4) A believer may pray using his own words, the words of another person, or the words of the prayer Jesus himself gave us: the Lord's Prayer. (5) Examples will vary. (6) Examples will vary (kneeling during prayer expresses our humility and honors God; closing our eyes may keep us focused on the content of our prayer; folding our hands may express our helplessness and dependence on God and may also keep us focused on the content of our prayer). (7) Jesus condemned the mechanical recitation of words but promised that God will listen to and answer the prayers of all believers. The act of prayer is a fruit of faith; it is not a means of grace and, in and of itself, does not strengthen faith. We are not to pray for the dead. Our prayers do not help those in hell, and those in heaven do not need our prayers. According to his promises in Word and sacrament, we may demand spiritual blessings from God. When seeking physical and earthly blessings, we should pray that God's will be done.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Address

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
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- 1st Article (Protection)
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- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
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- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- **The Address**
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

Our Father in heaven.

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that he is our true Father and that we are his true children, so that we may pray to him as boldly and confidently as dear children ask their dear father.

1. With the words of the Address, Jesus sets the mood for the Lord's Prayer by reminding us of our relationship with God. What do the following passages tell us about our relationship with God and how this relationship came about?

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1).

"When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons" (Galatians 4:4,5).

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26).

2. What assurance do we have in prayer from knowing that God is our Father? What other assurances do we gain from this fact?
3. Evaluate: In no other religion on earth is there such a warm relationship between the God worshiped and the worshiper as there is in the Christian religion.
4. Many people in our society have a poor concept of fatherhood. How would you use Scripture's message about our Father in heaven to teach someone about fatherhood? How would you use this message to comfort someone who has never known the love of an earthly father?

5. The words *in heaven* remind us that God is almighty. What added assurance does this give you as you pray?

6. Saint James wrote: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord"* (1:5-7). What things cause us to lack confidence when we pray? How does this hinder our prayer life?

7. Use an **X** on the scale below to rate the boldness and confidence with which you pray (1 being weak; 10 being strong). Use a circle to indicate the frequency with which you pray (1 being infrequently; 10 being often). What will God use to improve both of these aspects of your prayer life?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Luther said:

"God in his Word testifies that our prayers heartily please him and will definitely be heard and granted. This he does so that we may not disdain his promise or cast it to the wind or pray in uncertainty." (Tappert, p. 423.)

Closing Prayer

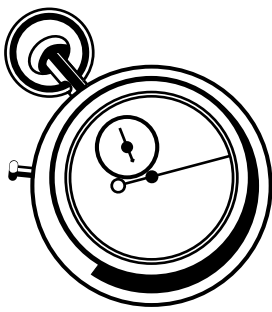
Dear Father, by the sacrifice of your Son, Jesus, you have reconciled all people to yourself. By the working of your Spirit, you have called us to faith and have made us your children. We rejoice over this relationship. We thank you for your continual presence. We praise you for your tender care and for the privilege of praying to you as boldly and as confidently as any dear children come to their dear fathers. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Address and its meaning.

Helps

(1) Through an act of his undeserved love, God sent his Son into the world to reconcile lost mankind to himself. All people have been redeemed through Jesus' innocent life and sacrificial death. Through Spirit-given faith, we have received the blessings Christ won for us and have become the sons and daughters of God. (2) Because God is our Father, we can go to him boldly and confidently in prayer, knowing that he will hear, listen to, and answer our prayers. This relationship with God also assures us that he will bless us eternally, that he will be with us always, that he will guard and protect us, and that all things will work together for our good. (3) The rest of the religions of the world are based on work-righteousness. The relationship between the worshiper and the god worshiped, therefore, is one of fear and uncertainty. (4) God is the ideal and perfect Father: loving, caring, dependable, faithful, compassionate, and merciful. Even those who have not known such a father in this life can be assured that they have such a Father in heaven. (5) We can pray confidently to God, knowing that he has the power to do what we ask, according to his will. (6) A lack of faith and trust in God's promises may lead us to pray without confidence and may keep us from praying as frequently as we should. (7) Prayer is a fruit of faith. God speaking to us in love leads to our speaking to him. As God the Holy Spirit strengthens our faith through Word and sacrament, we will pray with increased confidence and frequency.



19 Minutes with Luther

The First Petition

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
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- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
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- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
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- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
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- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- **1st Petition**
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

Hallowed be your name.

What does this mean?

God's name is certainly holy by itself, but we pray in this petition that we too may keep it holy.

How is God's name kept holy?

God's name is kept holy when his Word is taught in its truth and purity and we as children of God lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But whoever teaches and lives contrary to God's Word dishonors God's name among us. Keep us from doing this, dear Father in heaven!

1. With the First Petition, Jesus teaches us to pray that we might keep God's name holy. God's name is his titles. List eight different titles that God uses for himself in the Bible. Share the significance or meaning of each of these titles.

2. God's name is also his reputation—everything that he has revealed to us about himself on the pages of Scripture. What does the following passage tell us about God?

"The LORD . . . proclaimed his name, . . . 'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation'" (Exodus 34:5-7).

3. Martin Luther reminds us that God's name is kept holy when we teach God's Word in its truth and purity and when we live our lives according to that Word. Explain how these two things will serve to honor God and keep his name holy.

4. Martin Luther also reminds us that God's name is dishonored when anyone *teaches* and *lives* contrary to his Word. Explain how teaching and living contrary to God's Word serve to dishonor God and his name. Give examples.

5. How did King David's sins of adultery and murder serve to dishonor God's name?

6. Agree or disagree: If a church teaches that Jesus Christ is the Savior, we should not be overly concerned if that church also harbors false doctrine.

7. React: One of the most often-stated reasons unchurched people give for staying away from the church is because they see all the hypocrites in the church.

8. What is the relationship between the First Petition and the Second Commandment? between the First Petition and the Third Commandment?

Luther said:

"It brings shame and disgrace on an earthly father to have a child go bad and be antagonistic to him in speech and conduct, so that because of the child he must suffer contempt and ridicule. Just so also God is dishonored if we who bear the heavenly Father's name and have received all manner of blessing from him teach, speak, or live otherwise than as his godly children, with the result that he must hear people speak of us not as children of God but as children of the devil." (Tappert, pp. 425,426.)

Closing Prayer

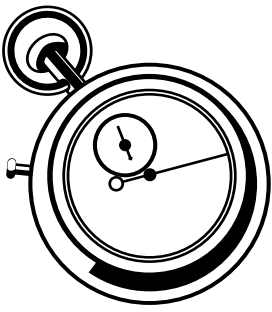
Lord, we're ashamed of the dishonor we've brought on you and your name by the way we've lived our lives. Forgive us for Jesus' sake. Empower us daily to fight the good fight, to let our light shine before others, to share the message of your Word in its truth and purity, and thus to glorify your name. Amen.

At home

Memorize the First Petition and its parts.

Helps

(1) God uses dozens of names for himself on the pages of the Bible: for example, Jesus (meaning Savior), Immanuel (meaning "God with us"), and Shepherd (emphasizing his love and protection). (2) God reveals himself as a just and holy God who demands perfection and promises to punish all sins. He is also a gracious and merciful God who, in love, exacted the payment for sin from his Son, Jesus, so that all people might be saved. (3) God is honored and glorified when we "live a life worthy of the calling [we] have received" (Ephesians 4:1). Furthermore, Jesus said that when people "see [our] good deeds," they, too, may be led to "praise [our] Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). When we teach God's Word in its truth and purity, we are protecting God's reputation and revelation of himself. This results in the salvation of souls to the glory of God. (4) When Christians live contrary to God's Word, they bring disgrace, not only upon themselves but also upon the church and their God. Likewise, when anyone teaches anything contrary to God's Word, God's reputation is dishonored. Examples abound and will vary. (5) David's sins gave public offense and were used by the enemies of God as an occasion for ridicule. (6) Any false doctrine is serious. It dishonors God since it is a denial of his Word of Truth. (7) Since this is true, Christians should recommit themselves to living for the glory of God. It should also be remembered that Christians are sinners who need the forgiveness of God as much as anyone else. (8) In the Second Commandment, God protects the use of his name—his titles and his reputation. In the Third Commandment, God protects his Word and demands that we regard it as holy and true and that we teach and share it in its truth and purity.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Second Petition

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- **2nd Petition**
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

Your kingdom come.

What does this mean?

God's kingdom certainly comes by itself even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also come to us.

How does God's kingdom come?

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives his Holy Spirit, so that by his grace we believe his holy Word and lead a godly life now on earth and forever in heaven.

1. Jesus is the Christ and as such was "*anointed . . . with the Holy Spirit and power*" (Acts 10:38) to serve as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

As King, Jesus the Christ rules over a threefold kingdom. Although these aspects of his kingdom are intertwined, we might break them down into his kingdom of power, in which he exerts his almighty power over all things, that is, over the _____; his kingdom of grace, that is, the _____ on earth, in which he graciously rules in the hearts of his people through Word and sacrament; and his kingdom of glory, that is, _____, where he rules in glory with all the saints for all eternity.

The kingdom about which we pray in the Second Petition is Christ's kingdom of _____.

2. According to the following passage, how does God's kingdom come to us? What tools (or means) are used to bring the kingdom to us?

"No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

3. According to the following passages, what are the blessed results when God's kingdom comes to us and Christ rules in our hearts?

"The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

"Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

"Your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:3,4).

Helps

(1) universe (world), church, heaven, grace (2) The Holy Spirit uses the means of grace—the gospel in Word and sacrament—to call people to saving faith and bring them into the kingdom of God. (3) When Christ rules in our hearts by faith, we are filled with the joy of our forgiveness and salvation, as well as the assurance that we are at peace with God. Furthermore, we are filled with a desire to serve our Savior and with the blessed knowledge that we will live with him eternally in heaven. (4) Christians continue to pray the Second Petition because they want Christ's rule to increase in their hearts through the strengthening of their faith and because they want many others who are not Christians to come into God's kingdom. (5) Examples will vary. Discuss the work done in the local congregation as well as the work done by the WELS Boards for Parish Services, World Missions, and Home Missions. (6) Take a moment to formulate a Personal Action Plan with a particular unchurched person in mind.

4. Use the following passages to answer the question, If Christians are already members of God's kingdom, why do they continue to pray the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer?

"Since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not . . . fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:17,18).

"[Jesus said,] 'I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd'" (John 10:16).

5. What is your synod doing to assist you so that you might "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" and also reach out to bring others into the kingdom of God? What is your congregation doing to assist you? What additional things might each do?
6. Discuss the following Personal Plan of Action, and adopt it as your own.
- Identify someone who is presently unchurched (name: _____).
 - Pray regularly that the Lord would give you the zeal and courage to share the good news with that person.
 - Share the good news through a personal testimony, a tract and follow-up conversation, or a simple invitation to worship.
 - Be persistent, and trust that the Lord will bless your work in his own time.

Luther said:

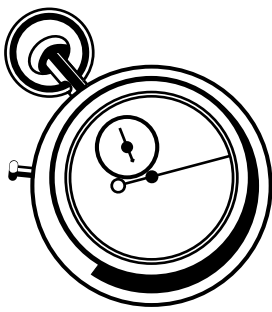
"When a Christian begins to know Christ as his Lord and Savior, who has redeemed him from death, and is brought into His dominion and heritage, his heart is thoroughly permeated by God; then he would like to help everybody attain this blessedness. For he has no greater joy than the treasured knowledge of Christ. So he begins to teach and exhort others, confesses and commends his blessedness before everybody, and sighs and prays that they, too, may come to this grace. He has a restless spirit while enjoying rest supreme, that is, God's grace and peace. Therefore he cannot be quiet or idle but is forever struggling and striving with all his powers, as one living only to spread God's honor and praise farther among man, to cause others also to receive this spirit of grace and through it also to help him pray." (Plass, Vol. 2, p. 959.)

Closing Prayer

Here we are, Lord. Send us and use us as salt and light in this sin-darkened world. Use us to take the message of your love and salvation into our neighborhoods, to work, to play, and wherever we go, so that many others might know the pleasures of your gracious rule. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Second Petition and its parts.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Third Petition

The Knowledge of God
Law and Gospel
Introduction to the Law
1st Commandment
2nd Commandment
3rd Commandment
4th Commandment
5th Commandment
6th Commandment
7th Commandment
8th Commandment
9th & 10th Commandments
The Conclusion
The Gospel & the Nature of God
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Holy Communion (Part 2)
Keys & Confession (Part 1)
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Keys & Confession (Part 3)
Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
The Address
1st Petition
2nd Petition
▶ **3rd Petition**
4th Petition
5th Petition
6th Petition
7th Petition
The Doxology

Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

What does this mean?

God's good and gracious will certainly is done without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God's will done?

God's will is done when he breaks and defeats every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, which try to prevent us from keeping God's name holy and letting his kingdom come. And God's will is done when he strengthens and keeps us firm in his Word and in the faith as long as we live. This is his good and gracious will.

1. Look at Martin Luther's explanation of the Third Petition. What is the relationship between this petition and the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer? Share a Bible passage that supports your answer.
2. Look again at Luther's explanation. What is the relationship between this petition and the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer? Share a Bible passage that supports your answer.
3. In the Third Petition, we are asking that God's will be done. What do the following passages tell us about praying that God's will be done?

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you" (John 15:7).

"In the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Romans 8:26).

4. According to the following passages, how is God's will done in heaven and on earth?

"Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word" (Psalm 103:20).

"[God] works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (Ephesians 1:11).

5. According to the following passages, who tries to prevent God's will from being done? Give examples of how each tries to do this.

"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him" (Matthew 4:1-3).

"Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

"The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit" (Galatians 5:17).

6. Choose the best ending(s) to complete the statement. Explain your choice(s). We can carry out the will of God in our lives . . .

- (a) . . . if we pray and focus on spiritual matters.
- (b) . . . if God helps us by defeating what opposes his will.
- (c) . . . if we try hard enough.
- (d) . . . if God strengthens us and keeps us firm in the faith through Word and sacrament.

7. First John 5:14 reads, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." In other words, God promises that he will listen to and answer our prayers. Explain why God's will might be such that he answers our prayers by saying,

Yes!

No.

Not yet.

Luther said:

"No one is ready to believe how much the devil opposes and obstructs their [the first two petitions'] fulfillment. He cannot stand having anyone teach or believe the right things. It torments him unspeakably to see his lies and atrocious deceptions . . . exposed. . . . Like a furiously angry foe he, therefore, rages and lashes out with all his venomous might." (Tappert, p. 428.)

Closing Prayer

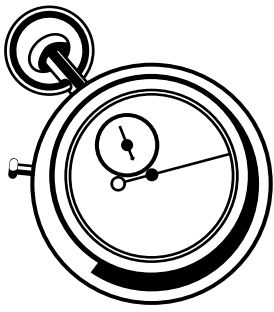
Your gracious will on earth be done just as in heaven around your throne, that patiently we may obey throughout our lives all that you say. Curb sinful flesh and every ill that sets itself against your will. Amen. (CW 410:4.)

At home

Memorize the Third Petition and its parts.

Helps

(1) God's will is that his name be kept holy (First Petition; see Jeremiah 23:27-28 and 1 Peter 2:15). (2) God's will is that his kingdom come to all people (Second Petition; see John 6:40 and 1 Timothy 2:3-4). (3) If we are going to pray that God's will be done, we need to study God's Word so that we know his will. Because of our weakness, we also need the help of the Holy Spirit as we pray. (4) In heaven, God's will is done by his angels. On earth, God's will is done as he plans, even "without our prayer." (5) The devil, the sinful world, and the sinful flesh try to prevent God's will from being done. Examples abound (for example, they lead us to doubt God's Word and promises, lead us into grievous sin, and lead us into idolatry). (6) (b) and (d) are the best answers. We cannot overcome and defeat the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh by our own power or abilities. Christ, however, has already defeated these three enemies through his life, death, and resurrection. By faith, his victory is ours! Through his Word and the sacraments, he strengthens our faith and enables us to fight the good fight. (7) God always answers our prayers according to what he, in his wisdom and love, knows is best for our spiritual and eternal welfare. At times he may, therefore, answer our prayers as we have asked. At times he may answer our prayers by saying no, knowing that what we have requested is not best for us. At times he may have us wait for our prayer to be answered so that he might give us additional blessings (patience, heavenly mindedness, and a greater dependence on him).



19 Minutes with Luther

The Fourth Petition

The Knowledge of God
Law and Gospel
Introduction to the Law
1st Commandment
2nd Commandment
3rd Commandment
4th Commandment
5th Commandment
6th Commandment
7th Commandment
8th Commandment
9th & 10th Commandments
The Conclusion
The Gospel & the Nature of God
The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
1st Article (Creation)
1st Article (Preservation)
1st Article (Protection)
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Holy Communion (Part 1)
Holy Communion (Part 2)
Keys & Confession (Part 1)
Keys & Confession (Part 2)
Keys & Confession (Part 3)
Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
The Address
1st Petition
2nd Petition
3rd Petition
▶ **4th Petition**
5th Petition
6th Petition
7th Petition
The Doxology

Give us today our daily bread.

What does this mean?

God surely gives daily bread without our asking, even to all the wicked, but we pray in this petition that he would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What, then, is meant by daily bread?

Daily bread includes everything that we need for our bodily welfare, such as food and drink, clothing and shoes, house and home, land and cattle, money and goods, a godly spouse, godly children, godly workers, godly and faithful leaders, good government, good weather, peace and order, health, a good name, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

1. Compare the subject matter of the Fourth Petition with that of the other petitions. What is unique about this petition? What might this teach us about Christian prayer in general?
2. Martin Luther reminds us that daily bread includes everything that we need for our bodily welfare. According to the following passage, to whom does God give daily bread? What does this tell us about our God?
"The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing" (Psalm 145:15,16).
3. What is the most common way through which God supplies daily bread? What are some other ways?
4. What is the connection between this petition and the Seventh Commandment?
5. God supplies our daily bread, even without our asking. Nonetheless, Jesus teaches us to ask for it? According to the following passages, why does Jesus teach us to do this?

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights" (James 1:17).

"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever" (Psalm 118:1).

6. Jesus does not want us to concern ourselves with the needs of tomorrow, next week, or next year; he simply teaches us to ask that the needs of “today” be met. According to the following words from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, why does he teach us to ask for bread only for today?

“Do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:31-34).

7. Evaluate the following statements:

Our affluence can make this prayer (that is, the Fourth Petition) nothing but a ritual.

Purchasing insurance can be a sin.

There is a relationship between worry on the one hand and the confusion over a necessity and a luxury on the other.

8. What assurance regarding daily bread do you receive from the following passage?

“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).

Luther said:

“We cannot give God anything; for everything is already His, and all we have comes from Him. We can only give Him praise, thanks, and honor.” (Plass, Vol. 3, p. 1353.)

Closing Prayer

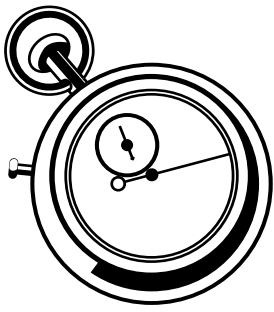
Gracious Lord, if not for you, we would have nothing. Supply our needs day by day out of your unseen treasury. Lead us to use what we have and what we are to your glory. We ask this in our Savior’s name. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Fourth Petition and its parts.
- Read Matthew 6:25-34.

Helps

(1) The Fourth Petition is the only one of the seven that focuses on earthly blessings. Christians should pray especially for spiritual blessings but also for physical needs. (2) God is gracious and, as such, gives daily bread to all people, even to unbelievers. (3) God most commonly supplies daily bread by giving people the ability to work so that they may purchase what they need. He also supplies daily bread through inheritance, gifts, finding, trading, or, at times, through miracles. (4) In the Seventh Commandment, God protects our and our neighbor’s possessions. He demands that we be good managers of the things he gives us, including our daily bread. (5) Jesus teaches us to ask for daily bread so that we do not lose our dependence on God and so that we receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. (6) Jesus wants us to trust that God will supply our needs for each day. He does not want us to worry about the future. (7) Affluence can lead us to think that we are self-sufficient rather than dependant on God. While insurance can be one of the means through which God supplies us with daily bread, the purchase of insurance can become sinful if it is done out of greed or worry. When people begin to see luxuries as necessities, they will be led to worry over their not having what they feel they need for this life. (8) Saint Paul uses an argument from the greater to the lesser. If God, in his grace, did not spare his own Son for the sake of our eternal welfare—and he didn’t!—certainly he won’t spare what is needed for our temporal welfare.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Fifth Petition

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
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- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
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- Holy Communion (Part 1)
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- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- **5th Petition**
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins or because of them deny our prayers; for we are worthy of none of the things for which we ask, neither have we deserved them, but we ask that he would give them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment.

So we too will forgive from the heart and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

1. According to the following passages, what do we know is true about our relationship with God because of our sins? What do we know is true about our prayers?

"Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

2. In the Fifth Petition, we are asking God to forgive our sins. What alone moves God to forgive us? On what basis does he forgive us? How does this forgiveness affect our relationship with God? Can you think of a passage to support your answer?

3. According to the following passages, what assurance does God's forgiveness give us concerning prayer?

"In [Jesus] and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence" (Ephesians 3:12).

"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" (Matthew 7:9-11).

4. According to the following passages, what will God's forgiveness move us to do?

"We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

“Love . . . keeps no record of wrongs” (1 Corinthians 13:4,5).

5. In the parable of the unmerciful servant, Jesus spoke about forgiving and being forgiven. Review the details of the parable. Read the following verses.

“The master called the servant in. “You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart” (Matthew 18:32-35).

In the parable, who is the master? the servant? the fellow servant? Describe the debt the servant owed his master. By comparison, describe the debt owed by the fellow servant. Why did the master turn the unmerciful servant over to the jailers. What does Jesus teach us by this parable?

6. How is a forgiving spirit cultivated within us?

7. Comment on the following statements:

The Fifth Petition is really a confession of sins.

I can forgive my sister for what she did to me, but I can’t forget.

My ego is my biggest obstacle when it comes to seeking and granting forgiveness.

Luther said:

“Not that [God] does not forgive sins without our prayer or before we ask. In fact, before we prayed for it or ever thought about it, he gave us the gospel, in which there is nothing but forgiveness. But here the point is that we should recognize and accept this forgiveness.” (Tappert, p. 432.)

Closing Prayer

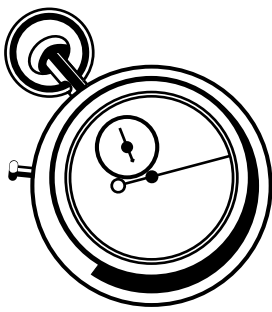
Often, Lord, we are like the unmerciful servant. Move us by your mercy to forgive others as you have forgiven us—fully, freely, without condition, and to the glory of your saving name. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Fifth Petition and its meaning.

Helps

(1) Our sins make us unworthy of any blessings from God, but worthy only of his eternal wrath and punishment. Our sins separate us from God and create a barrier so that God does not hear our prayers. (2) Moved by his grace alone, God forgives us because of the sacrifice Jesus made for sins in our behalf. Our forgiveness results in peace with God and in our being God’s own children. Saint Paul wrote, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26). (3) Because we are at peace with God, we can pray in boldness and confidence. (4) God’s forgiveness and love move and empower us to be loving and forgiving toward others. (5) The master is God. We are the servant, and the fellow servant is our fellowman. The servant’s debt, like our debt of sin, is tremendous; it can’t possibly be repaid. The fellow servant’s debt, by comparison, is small; so are the offenses of those who sin against us in comparison to our sins against God. If we are unmerciful, we are saying that we do not believe in mercy and that people should be held accountable for all their sins. (6) A forgiving spirit is cultivated at the cross of Christ, by the good news of our complete and undeserved forgiveness through Jesus. (7) This petition contains a strong element of confession. Weak humans often have the inability to forget another’s sins. The refusal to forget another’s sins, however, is an indication of an unwillingness to forgive. Sinful pride, arrogance, and self-righteousness will keep people from seeing their need for and seeking forgiveness and from granting forgiveness to others.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Sixth Petition

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- ▶ **6th Petition**
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

Lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean?

God surely tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or lead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins; and though we are tempted by them, we pray that we may overcome and win the victory.

1. Martin Luther defined temptation as any situation in which a person is led "into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins." Review the following familiar accounts from the Bible. In each account, identify the temptation, its source, and its result.

Satan through the serpent speaks to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

King David sees Bathsheba from his rooftop.

Judas Iscariot feels the guilt of betraying Jesus.

2. What common temptations, from within and without, do we encounter today? What special challenges do we face because we live in a materialistic society? a humanistic society?
3. God's Word tells us that it is the unholy trinity—the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh—that deceives us and leads us astray by temptation. What do the following passages impress on us concerning ourselves and the temptations of the unholy trinity?

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

"If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:12,13).

4. The devil, the world, and our sinful flesh are formidable enemies who can destroy our faith. God, however, fills us with comfort and peace. What comfort do you receive from the following passages?

"Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Hebrews 2:18).

"We have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

"God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

5. Evaluate the following statements:

Some of the best advice for overcoming Satan and the sinful world is simply: "Flee temptation!"

Sometimes God will allow us to deal with temptation so that our faith may be tested and exercised.

We should commend monks and nuns for voluntarily living in secluded places where they can avoid temptation.

6. Saint Paul gave the Ephesian Christians instruction for battling the devil and his temptations. Paul wrote: *"Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God"* (Ephesians 6:10,11). Among the weapons we receive from God is *"the sword of the Spirit . . . the word of God"* (Ephesians 6:17). Recall how Jesus used this weapon to battle Satan and temptation. Recall how Joseph used this weapon. How may we become more adept in using the sword of the Spirit?

Luther said:

"A mighty fortress is our God, a trusty shield and weapon; he helps us free from every need that has us now overtaken. The old evil foe now means deadly woe; deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight; on earth is not his equal. With might of ours can naught be done; soon were our loss effected. But for us fights the valiant one whom God himself elected. You ask, "Who is this?" Jesus Christ it is, the almighty Lord. And there's no other God; he holds the field forever. Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us, we tremble not, we fear no ill; they shall not overpower us. This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will, he can harm us none. He's judged; the deed is done! One little word can fell him. (CW 200:1-3.)

Closing Prayer

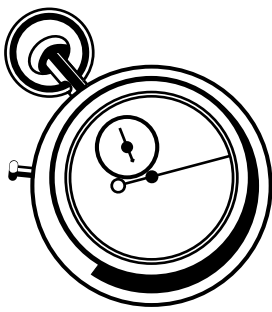
Lord Jesus, protect us from every temptation that would harm or destroy our faith in you and rob us of salvation. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Sixth Petition and its meaning.
- Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

Helps

(1) Satan tempted Eve to believe his lies rather than God's truth; the result was the fall into sin and mankind's condemnation. King David was tempted by and gave in to the sin of adultery; this led to further sins and estrangement from God. Judas was led by his sin to despair of God's forgiveness; this resulted in his suicide and eternal damnation. (2) Examples of temptations are many. Materialism and humanism can easily tempt people to seek security and happiness in their wealth and possessions or in themselves, leading them away from the Lord. (3) The Bible teaches us to be on guard and to recognize our weakness and the possibility that we can fall from faith, even if we have a desire not to fall. (4) Jesus not only knows from experience what struggles we encounter, but he is also willing and able to help us. We can count on God's guiding and helping hand to bring us safely through temptations. (5) The Bible tells us to recognize sinful situations and to flee from them. At times, God will, indeed, allow temptation to touch our lives; when he allows this, God is testing and exercising our faith in order to strengthen and bless us (remember Job). While we may be able to avoid certain of the sinful temptations of Satan and the world, we, nonetheless, can not run away from the temptations of our own sinful nature. (6) Jesus consistently and successfully battled the temptations of the devil by quoting God's Word (see Matthew 4:1). Joseph, likewise, won the victory over the temptation to commit adultery with Potiphar's wife by remembering God's will. God promises that through faithful use of and instruction in his Word, he will strengthen our faith and enable us, more and more, to overcome temptation.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Seventh Petition

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
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- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
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- 3rd Article (Calls)
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- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
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- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean?

In conclusion, we pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil that threatens body and soul, property and reputation, and finally when our last hour comes, grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven.

1. When we speak of evil, we mean all the bad things that are part of our lives on earth as a result of Adam's and Eve's fall into sin. List ten (or more) examples of evil common to our lives on earth.
2. In Psalm 31, King David wrote about the sad effects evil has on our lives. Read the following passage. Underline the words or phrases in the passage that reflect the sadness and sorrow caused by evil.

"Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors; I am a dread to my friends. . . . I have become like broken pottery. . . . There is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life" (Psalm 31:9-13).

3. According to the following passages, what does God do about the evil in this world?

"No harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent" (Psalm 91:10).

"The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast" (1 Peter 5:10).

"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28).

4. God promises that when he permits evil to touch our lives, he will have it serve our good. List six possible good things that God may have in mind when he allows someone to be hospitalized for several weeks with serious heart problems.

5. What ultimate promise regarding evil do we find in the following passage? How can we be certain that this will happen?

"The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:18).

6. Agree or disagree:

Evil in one's life is a clear sign of God's punishment.

Experiencing evil can be harmful to a Christian's faith.

Christians look forward to death.

We don't even know about all of the evil from which God delivers us.

Luther said:

"In the Greek this petition reads, 'Deliver us from or protect us against the Evil One, or the Wicked One.' It seems that the petition is speaking of the devil as the sum of all evil. . . . This short petition is nevertheless also directed against specific evils that emanate from the devil's kingdom and may befall us: poverty, dishonor, death, in short, all the wretched miseries and heartaches of which there are so innumerable many on earth." (Tappert, p. 435.)

Closing Prayer (may be sung)

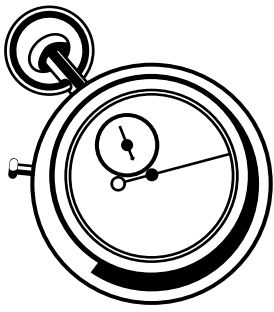
Let us gladly live with Jesus; since he's risen from the dead, death and grave must soon release us. Jesus, thou art now our head. We are truly thine own members; where thou livest, there live we. Take and own us constantly, faithful Friend, as thy dear brethren. Jesus, here I live to thee, also there eternally. Amen. (CW 452:4.)

At home

- Memorize the Seventh Petition and its meaning.
- Alone or with your family, recall instances in which God has made evil serve for your or your family's good.

Helps

(1) Answers will vary (sickness, arguments, loss, pain, divorce). (2) "Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors; I am a dread to my friends. . . . I have become like broken pottery. . . . There is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life." (3) God either takes evil away from us or, when he permits evil to come into our lives, he strengthens and supports us so that we are able to bear it, and he has it serve for our good. (4) Answers will vary (leads to repentance, makes a person more patient, deepens a person's trust, makes him be an example to others, makes a person more sympathetic, makes a person more heavenly minded). (5) Because of Jesus our Savior, we can be certain that God will finally deliver us from all evil when he takes us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven. (6) God may use evil as a way to punish the unbeliever already in this life. Christians, however, can be certain that they will never be punished for their sins; Christ has already taken the punishment in their place. The evil in this world is a tool of Satan and will be used by him in an attempt to weaken and destroy our saving faith. Christians look forward to death, knowing that God will use death to free them from all of the evil in this life. At the same time, Christians rejoice over the gift of life on earth and the blessings that come with it and are eager to use their time of grace to serve in God's kingdom. It is true that we don't know about much of the evil from which God delivers us because we simply don't encounter it. Yet we know God is working behind the scenes.



19 Minutes with Luther

The Doxology

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
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- 7th Petition

► **The Doxology**

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

What does this mean?

We can be sure that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and are heard by him, for he himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Therefore we say, "Amen. Yes, it shall be so."

1. The Doxology, most likely, was not part of the original Greek text of the New Testament but was added to the Lord's Prayer by the Christian church. Although not part of the original text, how do the words of this song of praise, nonetheless, serve as a fitting conclusion to this prayer?
2. According to the following passages, how can we know that the Lord's Prayer is acceptable to our Father in heaven?

"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven' " (Matthew 6:9).

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us" (1 John 5:14).

3. According to the following passages, how can we be certain that our Father in heaven will hear and answer the petitions of the Lord's Prayer?

"I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:13,14).

"[God] is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20).

4. In Greek, the word *amen* means "truth." In other words, we are closing the Lord's Prayer with an expression of certainty: "Yes, it shall be so." Why is it appropriate for us to close the Lord's Prayer with this word?
5. God promises to answer our prayers and, in his love, does so in one of three ways. What are the three ways in which God answers our prayers? Give possible reasons why God answers our prayers in each of these three ways.

6. Saint James shares some additional thoughts about prayer. What does he tell us in each of the following passages?

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does" (1:5-8).

"You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures" (4:2,3).

7. Agree or disagree:

Even though many adults received instructions as children, it is important that they continue to study Luther's Small Catechism throughout their lives.

We give glory to God every time we pray to him.

Luther said:

"Once Luther asked his son Hans how much he knew. Hans answered rather proudly, 'The whole catechism,' Papa, 'because I know that by heart.' 'Is that so!' Luther said. 'If you really understand that much, you are wiser than I am. I still have to study it every day.'" ("Martin Luther, the Author of the Small Catechism," *Luther's Catechism*, translated and edited by David P. Kuske, Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1982, p. 25.)

Closing Prayer

We know, Lord, that through Christ this prayer is acceptable to you. We thank you, precious Lord, for this opportunity to study your Word. Strengthen our faith daily through this means of grace. Renew us. Continue to change our hearts and lives and to fill us, more and more, with the joy of knowing that we are saved through Jesus. In his name we offer this prayer. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer and its meaning.
- Begin a daily habit of reviewing a portion of Luther's Small Catechism.

Helps

(1) It is always fitting to praise God. The words of the Doxology glorify God by ascribing to him alone the power and willingness to hear and answer all of our prayers. (2) We know that the Lord's Prayer is acceptable because Jesus himself commanded us to pray it and because in it we are praying that God's will be done. (3) We can be certain that God will hear and answer this prayer because he has the power to do so and because he promises to give us what we ask of him in our Savior's name. (4) We close this prayer with the word *amen* because we do not doubt, but firmly believe, that God will hear and answer this prayer. (5) God always answers our prayers and does so by either giving us what we ask, saying no to our prayer, or having us wait for our prayer to be answered. He does this out of his love for us and because he wants what is best for us. (6) James tells us that in prayer we must trust God. A "double-minded" person cannot decide whether or not to trust God and his promises. James also reminds us that at times we go without because we simply do not take the time to approach God in prayer or because when we do, we pray with improper and selfish motives. (7) It is God's will that we continue to grow throughout our lives in the knowledge of his Word and in our faith. Often we forget what we have learned and must relearn it. Whenever we go to God in prayer, we are honoring him as the God who alone is willing and able to answer our prayers.

19 Minutes with Luther

52 Lessons Based on Martin Luther's Small Catechism

A Bible Study Course for Adults

by

Tim H. Gumm

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Law and Gospel	2nd Article (Christ's Person)	Holy Communion (Part 1)
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