



Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The First Commandment

Primary You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

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

Bible Passages

Junior Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. –Deut. 6:4

Level II There is no God but one. –1 Cor. 8:4

Level III I am the LORD; that is My Name! I will not give My glory to another or My praise to idols. –Is. 42:8

The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. –Ps. 14:1

Level IV To fear the LORD is to hate evil. –Prov. 8:13

It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. –Ps. 118:8

Family Devotion

1st Commandment

Readings

Genesis 11:1-9; Luke 16:19-31

Devotion

The people of Babel thought fame was more important than God. The rich man put good eating and fine clothes before God. Do we ever think our fame or reputation or riches are more important than God? Do you ever shy away from telling someone you are a Christian because of what they might think? Do you ever not do what God wants you to do because it might cost you too much money or people might think you are weird? What other ways might we not put God first? What other things do we put before God? We rejoice that Jesus put His Father’s will to save us first and that Christ died on the cross for our sake. We know that our sins are forgiven because He was raised from the dead. We do not need anyone else, like the rich man, to come back. Jesus has already done it all.

Prayer

Pray that God would keep and preserve us as His children and strengthen us in His love, that we may fear and trust Him above all things. Also pray for true and godly worship throughout the world.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week’s topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 53-60, questions 13-23

Large Catechism - pp. 13 - 20

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 49-57

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Second Commandment

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

What does this mean?

Level I We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

Bible Passages

Junior Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor Me. –Psalm 50:15

Level II God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” This is what you are to say to the Israelites: “I AM has sent me to you.” –Exodus 3:14

Level III The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding. To Him belongs eternal praise. –Psalm 111:10

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities. –Romans 13:1

Level IV Do not swear falsely by My name and so profane the name of your God. I am the Lord. –Leviticus 19:12

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

Family Devotion

2nd Commandment

Readings

Psalm 8, Philippians 4:9-11

Devotion

Names identify people. When we mention someone’s name, we think of their character and reputation. For example, take a moment and discuss what you know about the character and reputation of the following names: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Bill Clinton, Joseph Stalin, Adolph Hitler, St. Paul, St. Peter, Judas, Martin Luther, Billy Graham, Martin Luther King Jr., Jesus Christ. How we use a name may dishonor or honor that name. When people curse, lie, or swear falsely by God’s name, they dishonor His Holy Name. We honor God’s Name by going to Him in prayer which shows that we need Him. We honor God’s Name by telling others how God created the world and all in it and how He daily provides for all our needs by the power of His Word. We honor God’s Name when we tell others about the salvation that He has provided for all people through Jesus Christ who shed His blood for the sins of all people. Whoever repents and believes in Jesus Christ will be saved.

Prayer

God, there is no name so great and wonderful as Your Name. You are the creator of all things and by Your Name we have been given new life in Jesus Christ. We ask You to help us use Your Name in ways that glorify You. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week’s topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 60-66, questions 24-34

Large Catechism - pp. 20 - 2

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 66-77

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Third Commandment

Primary Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?

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

Bible Passages

Junior Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and obey it. -Luke 11:28

Level II He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God. -John 8:47

Level III He who listens to you listens to Me; he who rejects you rejects Me; but he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me. -Luke 10:16

I love the house where You live, O Lord, the place where Your glory dwells. -Psalm 26:8

Level IV This is the one I esteem; he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My Word. -Isaiah 66:2

Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to 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.

-Colossians 2:16-17

Family Devotion

3rd Commandment

Readings

Exodus 20:8-11

Devotion

"All right, Timmy! You need a time out!" Timmy's mother was angry with Timmy because he had forgotten to do his chores and went out to play, instead. When Timmy's mom said something to him, Timmy just ignored her, so she gave him a time out to think about his responsibilities and how to show respect for his parents.

George was beat. He had worked for 10 straight days without a day off. He was really looking forward to taking a time out and rediscovering that there was more to life than just working. George was going up to the cabin his father owned and he was going to enjoy some fishing, and swapping of fish stories around the fire.

When God created the universe, He took a time out to rest. God gives us a time out from our busy lives and gives us a time of rest, too. But do we see our time out like Timmy's: a time that we must endure each week and be told what we are supposed to do, or is it like George's, a time when we remember what has been done for us, a time to relax in the blessings God has given? God wants our Sabbath to be like George's time of rest, a time when we come to our Father's house to be restored and renewed. God gave us the Sabbath to devote our time to being refreshed by His Word and "let tomorrow worry about itself." (Mt. 6:34) This week, and every week from now on, look forward to the day of rest God gave us, and the peace we have because of Christ's work for us.

Prayer

Give thanks to God for the blessing of rest, the blessing of His Word, and the blessing of pastors to preach that Word. Ask God to guide and strengthen you against the temptations that would keep you from resting in God's Grace.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 66-72, questions 35-47

Large Catechism - pp. 25 - 29

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 87-95

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Fourth Commandment

Primary Honor your father and your mother.

What does this mean?

Level I We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

Bible Passages

Junior Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. -Colossians 3:20

Level II These should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. -1 Timothy 5:4

Level III We must obey God rather than men.-Acts 5:29
The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures. -Proverbs 30:17

Level IV Love your neighbor as yourself. -Matthew 22:39
“Honor your father and your mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” -Eph. 6:2-3

Family Devotion

4th Commandment

Readings

Romans 13:1-7

Devotion

“I ain’t gonna tell you!” That was my favorite expression growing up. No matter who asked (parent, teacher, police officer, whoever), the answer usually was, “I ain’t gonna tell you.” Even as a small child, I tried to express my independence by keeping those in authority over me at a distance. I didn’t want to admit that I needed to have the policeman to keep the crooks away. I didn’t want to admit that I needed to have teachers to instruct me in what I needed to learn. I didn’t want to admit that I needed to have parents to guard and protect me, love and care for me. We want to be independent, to be free of all obligation to others and free of our need to have them in our lives. We push away our parents, our government, and all those who can help us in our lives because we want to be out on our own. We even try to push God away because we think that we can do it without Him. But we cannot do it without Him. We would be lost in our sin were it not for what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. Because of the forgiveness we have in Christ, we are the children of God, and we receive through all of these other authorities the blessings God our Father showers upon us. Let us honor these authorities for the sake of God who have placed them over us, and let us thank Him and them for the blessings we have received.

Prayer

Give thanks for those in authority over you, including not only your parents, but also the President and Governor, the Congress and Legislature, and all the courts. Ask God to give You the patience to receive rule from them as you would Him. Also ask God that those in authority would rule in a godly manner, that we may all have peace.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week’s topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 72-74, questions 48-51

Large Catechism - pp. 29 - 40

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 100-106

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Fifth Commandment

Primary You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

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

Bible Passages

Junior Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer. -1 John 3:15

Level II Whosoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man. -Gen. 9:6

Level III Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute YOU. -Matt. 5:44
Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. -Rom. 12:19

Level IV Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy...Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. -Matt. 5:7, 9
Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. -Eph. 4:32

Family Devotion

5th Commandment

Readings

Genesis 4:6-7, Matthew 5:21-22

Devotion

Have you ever been so angry that you did something you knew was wrong? Or did something you didn't mean to do? I used to get so angry with my brother, I would start throwing things at him, sometimes breaking my toys. I didn't want to break my toys, but I wasn't really thinking because I was so angry. Jesus said that being angry with someone like that is just as bad as killing them. God gives us insight as to why this is when He tells Cain "sin is crouching at the door." Cain's anger led him to physically kill his brother. Our anger with others can lead us to mentally kill them: to treat them as if they shouldn't be alive. When we start devaluing someone's life, we begin to play God and say, "If I were God, I wouldn't waste my time on him!" Fortunately, God never said that. In His love, He sent Jesus to be killed for us. So when we see those things about others that make us angry, we should look beyond them to where these annoying things are. When we look with the eyes of faith, we see the annoying sins nailed to the cross in Christ. Christ has already killed the sin in that person, so we do not need to kill them again with our anger. As we see in our neighbor one for whom Christ already died, we by the power of the Holy Spirit, will see beyond the anger. We will see Christ in them, and Him in us.

Prayer

O God, our heavenly Father, Satan crouches in our heart, ready to leap in a moment of anger. Guard and keep us by Your Holy Spirit, that we may have a measure of Your patience and not fall victim to Satan, our foe; through Jesus Christ, Your only Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 75-78, questions 52-54

Large Catechism - pp. 40 - 44

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 107-114

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Sixth Commandment

Primary You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

Level I We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

Bible Passages

Junior Keep yourself pure. -1 Tim. 5:22

Level II Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace. -2 Tim. 2:22

Level III What God has joined together, let man not separate. -Matt. 19:6

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. -Eph. 4:29

Level IV Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. -1 Cor. 6:18-20

Family Devotion

6th Commandment

Readings

Genesis 2:18-24

Devotion

Boys and girls...men and women. God made us all different. In the last several decades, people have been trying to tell us that there is no difference between men and women, boys and girls. But that is not the way God made us. God made us different. Even though two pieces of a jigsaw puzzle are different, they fit together perfectly...that's the way they were made. God made man and woman to complement one another, to come together to form a family. That is God's gift to us in making us men and women. But sometimes people don't understand or appreciate that gift. They try to use that gift to please themselves and the way they think it should be used, rather than the way God gave it to be used. That is like plugging a toaster into a water faucet and expecting it to make toast. When we abuse that gift God gave us, when we misuse the differences with which God made us, when we sin in this way, then our families are not what God intended. But when, by God's Holy Spirit, we love and respect and honor each other the way God intended and through the forgiveness Christ has given us, then our families are models of God's love for us in Christ. Let us pray that we properly keep this gift of our differences.

Prayer

Dear God, our heavenly Father, You have made us all different. Help us to understand the blessing that You have given in making us male and female, boy and girl, man and woman. Help us to avoid abusing these differences, that we may see in our lives as family a small portion of the love and care You show us as Your children. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 79-82, questions 55-58

Large Catechism - pp. 44 - 47

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 143-151

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Seventh Commandment

Primary You shall not steal.

What does this mean?

Level I We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

Bible Passages

Junior In everything, do to others what you would have them do to YOU. -Matt. 7:12

Level II He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. -Eph: 4:28

Level III If a man will not work, he shall not eat. -2 Thess. 3:10
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

Level IV Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. -Phil. 2:4
Do not forget to do good, and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. -Heb. 13:16

Family Devotion

7th Commandment

Readings

Exodus 22:1-14; Malachi 3:6-12; Ephesians 4:17-28

Devotion

Discuss various ways in which people steal from people and from God? When someone steals, what does that reveal about that persons' relationship with others and with God? In what ways have you been a thief? It is very difficult to confess with our hearts that we have stolen from others. For example: have you ever been given back too much change and kept it? Has a store ever forgot to charge you for something and you just thought to yourself, "It's their loss and my gain?" When you were trying to sell something, did you ever lie about it to get more money? Do you ever not give back to God in accord with the way He has blessed you? Have you ever goofed off at work or taken a longer break than you were allotted? If you answer yes to any of these questions, does that make you a thief? Stealing from God or our neighbor clearly reveals that we are not trusting in God to provide for our needs as we faithfully use the skills and abilities He has given us to work. The commandments are to help us be honest with ourselves and our sinful condition and they point to the fact that we need a Savior who will cleanse us of even our stealing. Thanks be to God for sending Jesus who bore the punishment for our sin and who forgives all who confess their sin and believe in Him. Jesus says to us, "Go and do it no more."

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Your love and forgiveness in Jesus. Please help us to never steal but give generously to You and others and to trust in You to provide for our needs. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 83-84, questions 59-60

Large Catechism - pp. 47 - 53

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 152-153

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Eighth Commandment

Primary You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

Level I We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

Bible Passages

Junior Brothers, do not slander one another. –James 4:11

Level II “Do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the Lord. –Zech. 8:17

Level III A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free. –Prov. 19:5

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. –Eph. 4:25

Level IV A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret. –Prov. 11:13

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. –Prov. 31:8-9

Family Devotion

8th Commandment

Readings

Psalm 141:3-4

Devotion

Words are powerful things. They cannot be pinned down. If we speak a word in anger or in spite, we cannot take it back. And like the wisps and curls of smoke that rise from a fire, we cannot control where those words go. A man in India once spoke a lie about another villager. When he went to the local guru to see what he could do, he was given these instructions: “Take a feather pillow to the top of the highest mountain. There, rip the pillow open and scatter the feathers all around. Then come back to me.” When the man returned, the guru added, “Now go and collect all of the feathers.” The man protested that this was impossible. “Neither can you completely undo what your words have done.” Our words go far beyond where we think they go. People hear the way we speak about someone, and they begin to draw their own conclusions. Only the power of the forgiveness of God can reverse the words we speak in anger or in deceit. Only God, by the power of His Holy Spirit, can keep our words truthful and helpful. Let us pray that God guards our lips from evil speech and helps us to only speak His Holy Word.

Prayer

O God, our Creator, you created us for Your worship and ordained praise from our lips. Guard and protect us that we may never speak falsely about anyone, but constantly share Your precious Gospel. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week’s topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 85-86, questions 61-62

Large Catechism - pp. 53 - 59

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 154-156

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Ninth Commandment

Primary

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

Level I

We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

Bible Passages

Junior

You, my brothers, were called to be free. Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. -Gal. 5:13

Level II

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you." -Heb. 13:5

Level III

But godliness with contentment is great gain. -1 Tim. 6:6

Woe to those who plan iniquity...They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud a man of his home, a fellowman of his inheritance. -Micah 2:1-2

Level IV

But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. -1 Tim. 6:8-10

Family Devotion

9th Commandment

Readings

1 Timothy 6:6-12

Devotion

Pokemon. Power Rangers. Cabbage Patch Kids. These were some of the hottest toys of years past. Most children walking through a toy store would try to convince their parents that they just absolutely, positively HAD to have it. Once, I even tried to convince my parents that if they did not buy me a certain toy, I would die of shame. They didn't buy me that toy, and I didn't die of shame. God has blessed us with so many gifts... our daily bread, our home and parents, clothing and shoes, and the like... and He desires for us to be content with what we have. Is it wrong to desire to better our lives and improve our possessions and income? No, but such a desire can blind us to who it is that gives us all these blessings... such a desire can confuse the wants that we have with the needs we, and others, face. We should never be so blinded by desire that we want to deprive our neighbor of what he has ("If I can't have it, neither should he!") We should never be so blinded by desire that we seek to fulfill that desire more than we seek to fulfill all righteousness. God has granted us His Holy Spirit, washed us clean of our sin and set us to live lives of saints. That is our first priority, to live our life as one of His redeemed. God will provide the rest that we need.

Prayer

You open Your hand, O Lord, and provide for every man and every beast. Guard us in our desires, that we may never want more than we need, that our desires may never blind us from seeing Your hand providing all our needs. Make us Your instruments to help our neighbors in keeping the blessings You have bestowed on them. Help us put to death the Old Adam, that desires more than we need, that wants more than we can have. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 87-88, questions 63-65

Large Catechism - pp. 59 - 62

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 157-158

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Tenth Commandment

Primary

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean?

Level I

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

Bible Passages

Junior

Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. –Ps. 37:4

Level II

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. –Col. 3:5

Level III

Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. –Luke 12:15

Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. –James 1:14-15

Level IV

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. –Phil. 4:8

Direct me in the path of Your commands, for there I find delight. Turn my heart toward Your statutes and not toward selfish gain. –Ps. 119:35-36

Family Devotion

10th Commandment

Readings

1 Samuel 12:1-14

Devotion

David was in trouble. He had done wrong. He had seen a beautiful woman, and he wanted her to be his wife. But there was a problem... she was already married! But David's desire was so strong, he had her husband "accidentally" killed. Rather than supporting God's plan and encouraging Bathsheba to remain a faithful wife, David set himself up as knowing what was best. David thought he knew better than God. When we sin against the Tenth Commandment, that is what we are doing... setting ourselves up as though we were more important than God. The Fourth Commandment reminds us that all those in authority over us are there as God's servants. When we try to get people to come and follow us, to be our worker or spouse, when they already have an employer or spouse, we are saying that God's plan for their lives is not good enough. We are saying that God does not know what He is doing. As with all our sins, when we repent of those sins, when we turn away from those sins and back to God, there is forgiveness, for Jesus sake. Let us pray that God send His Holy Spirit and preserve us from the temptation to covet.

Prayer

God, our heavenly Father, You have given us moms and dads, employers and bosses to be authorities in our lives. Help us to fear and love You so that we see Your plan for our lives, and the lives of others, as You put us under certain authorities for a time. Help us to do Your will, and help us to encourage others to acknowledge the place You have given them under certain authorities. Guard and keep us from thinking we know what is best, and grant us the wisdom and patience to see Your will working for our good in all things. All this we ask and pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 89-90, questions 66-68

Large Catechism - pp. 59 - 62

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 159-160

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Close of the Commandments

Level I

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." (Exodus 20:5-6)

What does this mean?

Level II

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.

Bible Passages

Primary

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags. -Isaiah 64:6

Junior

There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins. -Ecclesiastes 7:20

Level III

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. -James 2:10

Clearly no one is justified before God by the Law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." -Galatians 3:11

Level IV

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us. -Galatians 3:13

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell -Matthew 10:28

Family Devotion

Close of the Commandments

Readings

Exodus 20:1-21

Devotion

God is not kidding when it comes to keeping His commandments. He demands perfect obedience. God hates sin and demands more than "just doing our best." No mistakes are allowed. The Bible states, "whoever keeps the whole Law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.." (James 2:10) It's like one link in a chain breaking. Separation takes place. Dirty, ugly, evil, filthy sin makes us unclean or unholy and always separates us from the Holy and Just God who must punish those who sin or break His Laws. That leaves all of us under His just condemnation.

Thanks be to God, He sent Jesus who took our punishment for breaking the Law and has showered us with His forgiving grace. His blood cleanses us of all sin. Though we cannot keep the commandment perfectly, we who have faith and are thankful for God's undeserved grace in Christ, strive to keep them because we love Him. We ask the Holy Spirit to help us to gladly do what God commands.

Prayer

God, we thank You for Your forgiving grace in Christ. Fill me with Your Spirit and with joy in keeping Your commandments. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 91-98, questions 69-85

Large Catechism - pp. 62 - 67

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 161-165

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The First Article of the Apostles Creed

Level I

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

What does this mean?

Level II

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all that I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.

All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

Bible Passages

Primary

Nothing is impossible with God. –Luke 1:37

Junior

[He] sustain[s] all things by His powerful Word. –Hebrews 1:3

Level III

He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our own being. –Acts 17:27-8

God is love. –1 John 4:8

Level IV

The LORD is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made. –Ps. 145:9

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. –Romans 8:28

(save for next week)

Family Devotion

Ist Article

Readings

Genesis 1; Psalm 145:15-16; Hebrews 11:3

Devotion

What do you believe about the creation of the world? Do you think it evolved or was created by the power of God's Word? Do you think you are a descendent of a monkey or that you are a special and unique creation of God? What does the Bible say? The First Article and the first two paragraphs of "What does this mean?" sums up the belief of God's people. Evolution is simply a human teaching that says there is no creating God and that we and the world are products of chance; that we are accountable to ourself and not to God; and that we are animals rather than humans who were originally created in the image of God. The Bible teaches us that God has given us everything, our body, our abilities, our jobs, our families, and the list could go on and on. Not all the people know this, therefore God's people need to tell them. They don't know because sin confuses our understanding of who God is and what He daily does for us. God wants us to pray to Him for our daily needs and to thank Him, but we don't do this very well because of our sinfulness. God loves us very much. His Son, who was involved in creation, as clearly revealed in the Gospel of John chapter 1, came into our world to save us and give us hope. In Him we have new life and forgiveness.

Prayer

God, we thank You for creating us and for giving us everything we have. Help us daily be filled with joy and thankfulness for our body, our abilities, our jobs, family, and for Jesus Christ, our Savior. You are the greatest! Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 99-115, questions 87-113

Large Catechism - pp. 67 - 70

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 186-195

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The First Article of the Apostles Creed

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

What does this mean?

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all that I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.

All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

Bible Passages

Give thanks to the LORD for He is good;
His love endures forever. -Ps. 118:1

My times are in Your hands. -Psalm 31:15

For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. -Colossians 1:16

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. -Gal. 3:26

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? -Heb. 1:14

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. -Jer. 1:5

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, Your justice like the great deep. O LORD, You preserve both man and beast. How priceless is Your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of Your wings. -Ps. 36:6-7

Family Devotion

1st Article (cont'd)

Readings

Psalm 27:1

Devotion

I know a young man who, like many six-year-olds, is frightened of storms. Whenever even a simple rainshower is brewing, his skin gets clammy and he begins to tremble in fear. I was eating in a restaurant with this young man and his family one evening when a terrible storm blew in. The emergency alert sirens were sounding, and waitresses were clearing partons away from seats near windows. My young friend was so frightened, he could hardly move. I reached over and picked him up from his seat, exposed to the world at the end of the table, and placed him on the booth bench beside me, nuzzled safely between his grandmother and myself. There, nestled safely between Grandma and Pastor, he felt some comfort, and was even able to finish eating. He still had a healthy appreciation for what was going on outside, but knew he was being protected by love. God's love protects us when Satan gives us storms in our lives: dangers and temptations that would lead us to fall away. But God sent His Son to wrap us in His loving embrace. Protected by God, our heavenly Father, who would do anything, even give His only Son to die, to protect us, we rest secure in God's arms. Not even Satan can triumph over that!

Prayer

Dear God, our loving Father, You sent Jesus Christ into this world to bear our sins and be our Savior. Help us live in that protection that You give us so that we will no longer be afraid of Satan and his work, but know that we are held in Your almighty hand. All this we pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 99-115, questions 87-113

Large Catechism - pp. 67 - 70

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 196-202

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Level II

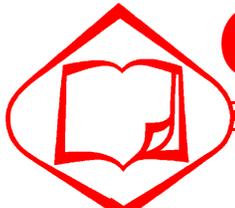
Primary

Junior

Level I

Level III

Level IV



Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The 2nd Article of the Apostles Creed

Level I

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried; *He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

(save for next week)

What does this mean?

Level II

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord,

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

(save for next week)

Bible Passages

Primary

We know that this man really is the Savior of the world.—John 4:42b

Junior

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.—1 Cor. 15:3

Level III

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.—Isaiah 53:3

Level IV

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!—Phil. 2:5-8

Family Devotion

2nd Article

Readings

Hebrews 12:2, Philippians 2:5-8

Devotion

“I am so humiliated!” When we lift ourselves up, by reputation or deed, and those deeds are cut out from underneath us, we are made low, or humiliated. Christ our Lord was in the heavens, all powerful, present everywhere, knowing all things. But for our sake, He made Himself low, did not fully use these divine attributes. Just as when we play with children we hold back some so that we play at their level, so did Christ come down to our level by holding back in the full use of His divine power. Christ did this for a purpose; He held back not just to come down to where we are, but by coming down, to lift us up to where He was and to where He has returned. Christ knew the joy that was to come by redeeming all of creation, returning it to God, its creator. Christ knew that joy, our joy, would far outweigh the pain and suffering He would have to endure, and so He endured humiliation for our sake, that we would be lifted up.

Prayer

O God, by Christ’s humiliation, His suffering and death, You bought us back from sin and made us Your own again. Help us, we pray, to treasure that sacrifice, and give us Your Holy Spirit that we may bear all burdens and hardships in patience until we reach our heavenly home, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week’s topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 115-143, questions 114-152

Large Catechism - pp. 70-72

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 203-205, 209-213, 215-232

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The 2nd Article of the Apostles Creed

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Level I

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Level II

Bible Passages

Because I live, you also will live.—John 14:19

Primary

If anybody does sin, we have One who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.—1 John 2:1

Junior

Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

Level III

—Isaiah 53:4-5

Therefore God exalted Him 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.—Phil. 2:9-11

Level IV

Family Devotion

2nd Article

Readings

Romans 6:4b-5; Philippians 2:9-11

Devotion

It was quite a sight to see. Having just won the Gold Medal at the Sydney Olympics, US cyclist Marty Nothstein starts on his victory lap. But as he begins, he pauses for a moment to bring someone with him, someone who hadn't done anything to deserve to go on the victory lap, someone who wasn't even permitted to compete. But rejoicing in his victory, Marty wanted to share that victory with someone he loved, with his son. God, our heavenly Father, won the greatest victory of all, victory over sin, death, and the devil, through the work of Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. God, in His "fatherly, divine goodness and love," gives to us His grace, our sharing in the victory of Christ, and brings us on the "victory lap," raising us to the highest heavens along with Christ Jesus, where He now sits in power and glory and where His human nature now fully shares in His divine attributes of being present everywhere, all-knowing, all-powerful. There we will worship Him, bow before Him, and confess Him as Lord, as He shares His victory with us because of His great love.

Prayer

Pray for those who are weak in the faith, those who do not believe, and those who doubt the victory God has won for them because of troubles, hardship, and persecution in their lives.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 115-143, questions 114-152

Large Catechism - pp. 70-72

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 206-208, 211, 214-215, 233-248

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Third Article of the Apostles Creed

Level I

I believe in the Holy Ghost; 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?

Level II

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and 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.

(save for next week)

In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of 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.

Bible Passages

Primary

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. -Ps. 51:10

Junior

Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. -Rom. 10:17

Level III

Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. -1 Cor. 12:3

Without faith, it is impossible to please God. -Heb. 11:6

Level IV

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. -Gal. 5:22-23

Serve one another in love. -Gal. 5:13b

Family Devotion

Third Article

Readings

Genesis 2:7

Devotion

I thought I was going to die. I was playing with some kids at a friend's house and we were going to the woods behind his house. Rather than walking around and down the path, we decided to jump over the railing on the deck. As I landed, my feet slipped on some leaves and I landed hard on my rear end. I could not move. I could not breathe. And I thought, "What a stupid way to die!" That was the first time I have ever "had the wind knocked out of me." Without the life-giving breath, I was paralyzed and could not move. In our sin, we have climbed over that deck railing and slipped on those leaves. We cannot move, we cannot scream, we cannot even cry for help. But the Holy Spirit reaches into our very being, spreads the lungs, rushes oxygen to the blood, and gives us life... new-life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit works through God's Word, the Holy Gospel, and returns us to our place as God's children, doing His will.

Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, of Your great mercy in Jesus Christ You have granted us forgiveness of sin and all things pertaining to life and godliness. Therefore send us Your Holy Spirit that He may so rule our hearts that we, being ever mindful of Your fatherly mercy, may strive to overcome the world and, serving you in holiness and pureness of living, may give You continual thanks for all Your goodness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 144-168, questions 154-192

Large Catechism - pp. 72-78

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 250-256, 257-279

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Third Article of the Apostles Creed

I believe in the Holy...

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and 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 richly forgives all my sins and the sins of 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.

Bible Passages

God wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. -1 Tim. 2:4

If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. -Rom. 8:9

God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. -2 Cor. 5:19

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. -Matt. 7:15-16
[Christ] will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body. -Phil. 3:21

I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. -Rom. 8:38-39

Family Devotion

3rd Article (Cont'd)

Readings

Isaiah 55:1-11; Romans 10:8-17; Luke 24:45-49

Devotion

Isn't it wonderful to be members of two churches? The Lutheran Church and the Invisible Church, the Communion of Saints, or the Priesthood of All Believers in Jesus Christ. For a moment discuss how you became a member of both. Also discuss, "What is the responsibility of your local congregation?" Jesus has given us the great privilege of proclaiming His Word. People need to hear the Law that they might be brought to their knees in confession of sin and they then need to hear the sweetness of Gospel which assures them of forgiveness of all sin through the gift of God's Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit always works through the Word to create faith in the hearts of people and give them new life. Without hearing the Word, people will be lost in their sin. As we teach and share the Word in its truth, people will be given new life. St. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." [Rom. 1:16] Through the Word and Sacraments in our weekly worship service, God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, enables us to grow in faith, to grow in our relationship with Him, to praise Him; to receive the assurance of forgiveness; and to live in confidence of our eternal destiny.

Prayer

Almighty and gracious God, we thank and praise You for the work the Holy Spirit does in our life and the lives of others through the Word and the Sacraments. Help us to daily be in Your Word and share it with others that they may come to know You as their God and Savior. In Jesus Name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 144-168, questions 154-192

Large Catechism - pp. 72-78

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 280-296

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Level II

Primary

Junior

Level I

Level III

Level IV



Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

Prayer at Meals

Asking a Blessing

Level I

The eyes of all look to You, [O Lord,] and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. (Ps. 145:15-16)

[Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:]

Junior

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

Bible Passages

Level II

I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness You have shown Your servant. -Gen. 32:10

Level III

As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. -Ps. 103:13

Level IV

Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown You and say, 'Who is the LORD?' -Prov. 30:8-9

Primary

[No assignment for this week.]

Family Devotion

Asking a Blessing

Readings

Genesis 32:26-30

Devotion

Prayers are such funny things. As I have studied the Lord's Prayer, it has always struck me that the first half of the explanations follow the same basic pattern: X happens even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that X would happen among us also (or that we would realize that X is happening). Our prayers are not there to appease God or to persuade God, but to lead us to realize who God is and what He does in our lives. The best prayers are those that basically say, "God, be God, and help me to realize what it means that You are You." To ask God to bless us and the food we are about to receive is nothing more than us saying with God what He has already promised, what He speaks to us in His Word about His protection and compassion.

Prayer

God, our heavenly Father, be Yourself. Love us, keep us, guard us and protect us. Help us to see Your hand at work in all the blessings we receive, and to realize that You have created us, You sustain us in all good things, You have redeemed us from our sin, and You sanctify us by Your Holy Spirit. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 169-174, questions 193-204

Large Catechism - pp. 78-83

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 300-307, 449

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

Prayer at Meals

Returning Thanks

Primary Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. His love endures forever.

Level I [He] gives food to every creature. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor is His delight in the legs of a man; the Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love.

(Ps. 136:1, 25; 147:9-11)

[Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:]

Junior We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

Bible Passages

Level II He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. -Romans 14:6

Level III How can I repay the LORD for all His goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD....I will sacrifice a thank offering to You and call on the name of the LORD. -Psalm 116:12-3, 17

Level IV Let them give thanks to the LORD for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for men, for He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. -Psalm 107:8-9

Family Devotion

Returning Thanks

Readings

Luke 17:11-19

Devotion

To give thanks. Even in English, this expression keeps the idea of giving something. In other ancient languages, a more literal translation of the expression of thanks would be to give or return grace, that is to say, unearned favor. And that idea is helpful here, as we ponder what it means to "Return Thanks" to God. God has showered upon us His blessings, of which (we will later confess in the Meaning of the Fifth Petition) "we are neither worthy...nor have we deserved them." God gives these to us out of His grace (or favor) toward us on account of Christ's sacrifice, not out of our deserving. And so we return a portion of that grace, that is to say, we give Him thanks for all that He has done. It is all too easy to see the means God uses to give us things, e.g. our jobs, our parents, the work of other people in our lives, and forget that God is the one working through them. Let us in all things remember the God who gives us all things.

Prayer

Lord God, our heavenly Father, You have showered us with so much goodness, keep our eyes of faith focused on the grace You give, both the favor of physical care as well as the spiritual blessing of eternal life for the sake of Christ Jesus, that in all things we may give You thanks, for You are our creator and sustainer, and You live and reign with Christ and the Holy Ghost, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 169-174, questions 193-204

Large Catechism - pp. 78-83

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 300-307, 450

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Introduction to the Lord's Prayer

Primary

Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean?

Level II

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

Bible Passages

Junior

O You who hear prayer, to You all men will come. -Psalm 65:2

Level I

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

-Mark 11:24

Level III

I tell you the truth, My Father will give you whatever you ask in My Name. -John 16:23

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. -Phil. 4:7

Level IV

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

-1 Thess. 5:16-18

The LORD is near to all who call on Him; He hears their cry and saves them. He fulfills the desires of those who fear Him; He hears their cry and saves them. -Psalm 145:18-9

Family Devotion

Introduction to the Lord's Prayer

Readings

Isaiah 2:2-4, Romans 8:15-16, Mark 2:17

Devotion

How far does your "Our" go? When you pray to "Our Father," does your "our" just include your family? your church? Lutherans? Christians? human beings? When our heavenly Father teaches us through His Son, Jesus, to pray, He begins with the words, "Our Father." God, the Father and creator of all things, reminds us of His goodness when He uses the term "Father." Fathers love their children and try to take care of them. God reminds us of His personal relationship with us by using the word "our." But God also reminds us in that word "our" that we are not alone, it is not "my Father." God is the Father of all, even the heathen, and He provides and takes care of all creation, just as a father maintains a home for his family. All too often, we restrict our "our" to those who are just like us. But God is Father of all. Let us share that good news.

Prayer

Almighty God, You are the Father of all, not just those who have faith in Christ, but all who inhabit the earth. Send Your Holy Spirit to enable us to share Your Holy Word, that all may come to know the Fatherly goodness You shower upon them, most especially the joy of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 169-176, questions 193-207

Large Catechism - pp. 78-84

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 308-309

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The First Petition of the Lord's Prayer

Primary

Hallowed be Thy name.

What does this mean?

Junior

God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

How is God's name kept holy?

Level II

God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!

Bible Passages

Level I

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. -Psalm 103:1

Level III

Let the one who has My Word speak it faithfully. -Jeremiah 23:28

Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. -Matthew 5:16

Level IV

"Yes," declares the LORD, "I am against the prophets who wag their own tongues and yet declare, 'The LORD declares.'" -Jeremiah 23:31

Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth. -John 17:17

Family Devotion

First Petition

Readings

Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 3:1-4; Acts 17:11

Devotion

"God helps those who help themselves," is said to be the most often quoted verse of the Bible, but there is only one problem... it is not in the Bible. All too often, we are confronted with a quote that begins "somewhere in the Bible it says..." The problem with that type of fuzzy logic is that our memory can become imprecise, just like Eve's. Look at what Eve said God said (3:4) and what God actually said (2:17). She added to God's Word. What she added was a good and fine tradition (you can't eat the fruit if you cannot touch it), but she didn't recognize the difference between God's Word and tradition, and Satan used that to drive a wedge between Eve and God. We study God's Word (yes, we even memorize God's Word) so that we, like the Bereans, can examine what is taught us to see if it is honoring God's Name. We study God's Word, and even memorize it, so that we can examine our lives to see if we are living according to His Word. And when we see our sin, we see in God's Word, the forgiveness He has for us in Christ Jesus. We live with God's Name placed on us, placed on us in Baptism when we receive His forgiveness there given, and continue as His children now and forever.

Prayer

Pray for God to send the Holy Spirit into your life to help you learn God's Word, to test the teachings you receive, and to live in the forgiveness God has given you.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 176-178, questions 208-211

Large Catechism - pp. 84-85

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 310-313

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer

Primary Thy kingdom come.

What does this mean?

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

How does God's kingdom come?

Level II God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

Bible Passages

Level I 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

Level III Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. -Phil. 3:20
Your faith has saved you; go in peace. -Luke 7:50

Level IV Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us. -1 Peter 2:12
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 55:11

Family Devotion

Second Petition

Readings

Mark 12:28-34

Devotion

What is the Kingdom of God? In the Synodical Explanation of the Small Catechism, question 212 asks just that, and answers "The kingdom of God is His ruling as king over the whole universe (kingdom of power), the church on earth (kingdom of grace), and the church and angels in heaven (kingdom of glory)." God's kingdom, simply put, is that which is near God, just as an earthly king's kingdom is near to him. What brings us near to God is His grace. God's kingdom comes when His grace comes, when our hearts are filled with His love, and then we, in response to that love given freely and undeservedly, also give love freely and undeservedly. Discuss how God's grace comes to us. What are the opportunities that God has provided for you to receive His Word and His Sacraments? Who has God appointed to make sure these opportunities are frequent and in accord with God's will?

Prayer

Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for the opportunities to receive His grace, and ask God for His Holy Spirit to give you the strength to be God's instrument in bringing His kingdom into the lives of someone you know.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 178-180, questions 212-214

Large Catechism - pp. 85-87

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 314-317

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer

Primary

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

What does this mean?

Junior

The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God's will done?

Level II

God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will.

Bible Passages

Level I

Direct me in the path of Your commands, for there I find delight. -Ps. 119:35

Level III

It is God's will that you should be sanctified. -1 Thess. 4:3a

Send forth Your light and Your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to Your holy mountain, to the place where You dwell. -Psalm 43:3

Level IV

[You] through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. -1 Peter 1:5

For to me, to live is Christ, to die is gain. -Philippians 1:21

Family Devotion

Third Petition

Readings

Genesis 50:15-21; Romans 8:28

Devotion

"If I were God, I certainly wouldn't do that!" There are times when we are tempted to think this...times when God does puzzling things. But God, in His divine protection, works in all things for our good. We may not see what that good is in our lifetime, but God has a little different perspective on things. A previous pastor from my parish liked to use this poem to describe that difference:

The Weaver

My life is but a weaving Between my Lord and me,
I cannot choose the colors He worketh steadily.
Of times he weaveth sorrow, And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper And I, the underside.
Not till the loom is silent And the shuttles cease to fly
Shall God unroll the canvas And explain the reason why.
The dark threads are as needful In the Weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver In the pattern He has planned.

—Author Unknown

Prayer

Thank You, God, for all of the experiences of our lives. We do not always know or understand why You do what You do, but give us the patience and strength to bear all things, and the faith to know that in all things, Your will is working to strengthen our faith and defeat the devil. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 181-184, questions 215-218

Large Catechism - pp. 87-89

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 318-322

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer

Give us this day our daily bread.

Primary

What does this mean?

God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

Junior

What is meant by daily bread?

Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

Level II

Bible Passages

Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.

—1 Peter 5:7

Level I

He makes the grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate— bringing forth food from the earth.

—Psalm 104:14

Level III

Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. —Matthew 6:33

Level IV

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 145:15-6

Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

—Matthew 6:34

Family Devotion

4th Petition

Readings

Psalms 145:15-16; Matthew 6:19-34

Devotion

When we pray "Give us this day our daily bread," for what are we praying? We are praying for the farmers, asking God to send the right kind of weather for the grass to grow and the crops to produce abundantly. The farmer needs crops to feed animals and people so that we can have food on our tables. We are praying for the processors and the truck drivers and others who transport the food to stores. We are praying for the stores and workers who stock and sell food. We are praying for all those places that provide jobs to people so that they can purchase their daily bread and provide for their families. We are praying for good government so that others might not steal our daily bread from us.

God is the giver of all gifts. He has given us our abilities, our skills, our minds, and the knowledge we need in order to have our daily bread. He is a gracious and generous God for He has given us far more than we need to care for our bodies. He is worthy of our praise and thanks. We honor Him and show our thanks when we help our neighbor who is in need of daily bread and when we daily acknowledge that everything we have to support our body and life comes from Him.

God wants us to thank Him and not worry about our daily bread. He wants us to seek first His kingdom knowing that He will take care of our earthly needs, just as He takes care of our spiritual needs through Word and Sacrament.

Prayer

Almighty and gracious Father, You are so good to us. You have not given us as we deserve but You have generously showered us with all that we need to care for our physical needs. You have given some less so that those who have more might share their blessings from You with others. Help us to live thankful lives and know that all things come from Your good and gracious hands. Most of all, we thank You for Jesus Christ and for the spiritual strength and nourishment we receive through Your Word and Sacrament. Amen.

Additional Reading

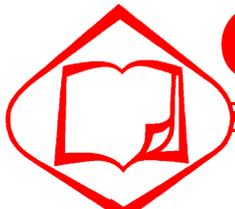
To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 184-187, questions 219-222

Large Catechism - pp. 89-92

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 323-327

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer

Primary

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

What does this mean?

Level II

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor 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 sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

Bible Passages

Junior

God, have mercy on me, a sinner. –Luke 18:13

Level I

Do not bring Your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before You. –Psalm 143:2

Level III

Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. –Psalm 19:12

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. –Mark 11:25

Level IV

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. –Proverbs 28:13

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. –Col. 3:13

Family Devotion

Fifth Petition

Readings

Matthew 18:21-35

Devotion

“To err is human, to forgive—divine.” This secular proverb is more true than we often realize. The forgiveness that we enjoy is the forgiveness that only God can give. So often we pray this petition as a tit-for-tat proposition. If I forgive others, then God will forgive me. But God has already purchased your forgiveness; God is bringing that forgiveness to you through His Word. Our forgiving others is a response to God’s first having forgiven us. Since God does not deny our prayers because of our sins but grants our requests by His grace, so also do we, seeing that those who sin against us are also the ones for whom Christ died, not deny their requests of us because of their sins against us. The forgiveness we give is merely the overflowing of the forgiveness we have received from God.

Prayer

Blessed Jesus, by Your crucifixion, You brought us the forgiveness of sins. Help us to crucify our old selves, which do not want to forgive others. Send Your Holy Spirit into our lives, that we may better follow Your example and lead our lives in conformity to Your will; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Additional Reading

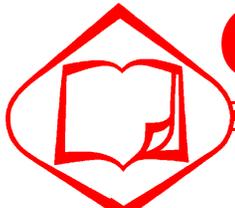
To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 188-190, questions 223-227

Large Catechism - pp. 92-94

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 328-331

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Sixth Petition of the Lord's Prayer

And lead us not into temptation.

Primary

What does this mean?

God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.

Level II

Bible Passages

If sinners entice you, do not give in to them. –Proverbs 1:10

Junior

The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them. –Psalm 34:7

Level I

God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. –1 Cor. 10:13

Level III

Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

–1 Peter 5:8-9

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. –2 Cor. 4:8-9

Level IV

Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! –Matthew 18:7

Family Devotion

Sixth Petition

Readings

1 Cor. 10:13

Devotion

Luther is credited with once writing, "You cannot keep the birds from flying overhead, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair." The devil, the world, and our sinful nature (often called the unholy trinity) send temptations to try to drive a wedge between us and God. Like vultures circling above, they loom darkly waiting for our spiritual death in sin. But God, our heavenly Father, has promised His protection. He sends His Holy Spirit to guard and preserve us in our faith through all trials and temptations. And even when we stumble and fail, He keeps us in faith to return to Him in repentance through the Cross of Christ. "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body." (2 Cor. 4:8-9) God guards and keeps us in faith through all temptations. Thanks be to God!

Prayer

Into temptation lead us not. When evil foes against us plot
And vex our souls on every hand, Oh, give us strength that we may stand
Firm in the faith, a well-armed host, Through comfort of the Holy Ghost.

Amen.

(Our Father, Thou in Heaven Above, TLH 458 st. 7)

Additional Reading

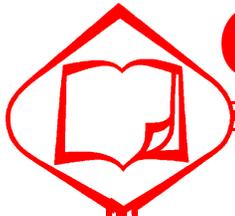
To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 190-193, questions 228-230

Large Catechism - pp. 94-96

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 332-334

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Seventh Petition of the Lord's Prayer

Primary But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean?

Level I We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

Bible Passages

Junior I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. -Phil. 1:23

Level II We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God. -Acts 14:22

Level III And I—in righteousness I will see Your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing Your likeness. -Psalm 17:15
The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. -2 Timothy 4:18

Level IV The LORD will keep you from all harm—He will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. -Ps. 121:7-8

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. -Revelation 14:13

Family Devotion

7th Petition of the Lord's Prayer

Readings

Genesis 4:6-7

Devotion

Sin is everywhere. It is in our print ads, on television, on the radio. Modern television shows, rather than upholding an ideal for family life (though it may have struggles), often show us the lowest common denominator. We take pride that at least our family is not as bad as the Simpsons. And we can become comfortable in our little sins. But God warns us that even little sins can lead to bigger sins. Cain's anger opened the door for Satan to tempt, and later succeed at getting, Cain to kill his brother Abel. Throughout the Lord's Prayer, we have been asking God to guard and preserve us in the knowledge of what He has done for us. This petition now summarizes the entire prayer up in four words: Deliver us from evil. God sent Christ into the world to die on the cross to loosen Satan's grip on us. By the grace He won for us on Calvary, we have been delivered from the evil ways of Satan. We are guarded and protected, so that regardless of what Satan may throw our way, God can keep us safe until life everlasting.

Prayer

By the sacrifice of Your Son, O God, You have delivered us from sin, death and the power of the devil. Help us to live in that deliverance, abiding in Your grace until we come to our eternal rest in Your heavenly kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

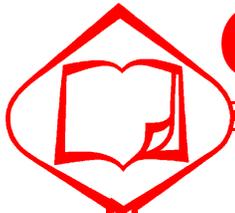
To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 193-195, questions 231-233

Large Catechism - pp. 96-97

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 335-337

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer

Primary

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

What does this mean?

Level I

This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing 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. Amen, amen means "yes, yes, it shall be so."

Bible Passages

Junior

Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. -Isaiah 65:24

Level II

This is the confidence that we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

-1 John 5:14

Level III

The LORD is far from the wicked but He hears the prayer of the righteous. -Proverbs 15:29

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. -James 1:17

Level IV

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. -Matthew 7:7-8

Family Devotion

The Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer

Readings

Romans 1:16

Devotion

Language is a wonderful gift of God. It is so adaptable: it changes to meet the needs of those who use it. For the Aleut peoples of northern Alaska, "snow" is not enough, so their language developed 14 different words for snow. Equally important is how language does not develop when a single word meets the needs of what is being said. For example, in many of the community based tribes of Africa, their language has no words for "I" or "me" because their entire existence revolves around the "we" and "us." We Christians are blessed to have such a word. This word is "Amen."

We all recognize the word. We have said it so many times, we sometimes forget its full meaning. How many times have we somberly or absent-mindedly mumbled our way through an "Amen", thinking in the back of our minds "finally, it's over and I can go now." Or worse yet, how many times have we lazily left that word for only the pastor to speak?

"Amen" is a confession of faith. "Amen" is the word of God's people. "Amen" is our way of stating our faith that what has just been spoken is indeed true. And it is never the pastor alone who makes that confession, but all the people of God. When we gather for worship, we are directed by tradition to speak the word "Amen" over a dozen times. And in every single instance it is God's people who are given that confession to speak: not the pastor alone, but all God's faithful people.

"Amen" is our word. Let us not be quick to give it up. "Amen" is our confession, our response to God's love. Let us not lose its importance because of its familiarity. "Amen" is our song. Let us proclaim it boldly.

Prayer

Pray for God to give you boldness in confessing "Amen" at all times and in every place.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 195-196, questions 234-235

Large Catechism - pp. 97

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 338-339

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism (I)

Level I *What is Baptism?* Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.

Level II *Which is that word of God?* Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Mt. 28:19)

Bible Passages

Primary [Jesus] said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." -Mark 10:14

Junior The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call. -Acts 2:39

Level III No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. -John 3:5-6

Like the rest, we are by nature objects of wrath. -Eph. 2:3

Level IV From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. -Eph. 4:16

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 be drowned in the depths of the sea. -Matt. 18:6

Family Devotion

Holy Baptism (I)

Readings

Matthew 28:19

Devotion

Are you a disciple? Before our Lord left and ascended into heaven, He gave His followers instructions on making disciples. Those instructions could seem rather confusing, until you sit down and think about it. Who makes disciples? We don't make disciples, but rather, God makes people disciples through baptism. He comes through the water combined with His Word and brings us into His fold. Our discipleship is God's action in us, and through that action we respond, but it is first and foremost God's action in us. Isn't it a joy and pleasure to know that God brings us into His church by His grace, and not because of something we have done to "earn" discipleship?

Prayer

We thank You, God, for choosing us and bringing us into Your kingdom through the waters of Baptism. Help us to remember the great promise included in the Word and combined with the waters of Baptism, that we have become Your disciples. Send Your Holy Spirit to live in us and turn us by the grace of our Baptism to right living in Your Word, that we may not, by our lives, detract others from Your Word, but rather, by our lives, bear witness to Your great love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 197-203, questions 236-247

Large Catechism - pp. 97-101

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 344-351

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism (II)

Level I *What benefits does Baptism give?* It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Level II *Which 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." (Mk. 16:16)

Bible Passages

Primary One Lord, one faith, one baptism. -Eph. 4:5

Junior Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away. -Acts 22:16

Level III He 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. -Titus 3:5-8

Level IV You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. -Gal. 3:26-27

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

You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. -1 Cor. 6:11

Family Devotion

Holy Baptism (II)

Readings

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Devotion

"You are going to get what you deserve!" So often we like the confines of the Law: you do this then that will happen to you. But when God's Law is being spoken against us, we weep in despair. We are by nature wicked and unclean. We deserve nothing but punishment and to be disinherited as God's children. But in Baptism, God washed us clean and made us whole. He cleansed us and made us perfect and holy. He took our dirty, stinky, smelly sin and covered it with His perfect robe of righteousness. Salvation comes to us through the waters of Baptism, and we, in faith, lead godly lives according to that grace He has given.

Prayer

Lord God, our heavenly Father, You have washed us and made us clean in the waters of Baptism. Guard and protect our lives that we may reflect that salvation into the lives of others, share with them the good news of Your Holy Gospel, and bring them to where You have promised to be for us: in Your Word and in Your Sacraments. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 204-207, questions 248-252

Large Catechism - pp. 101-102

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 352-358

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism (III)

Level II

How can water do such great things? Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God’s word the water is just plain water and no baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit,

Level III

as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three: “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.” (Titus 3:5-8)

Bible Passages

Primary

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. –Mark 16:16a

Junior

Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word. –Eph. 5:25-6

Level I

This water [of Noah’s flood] symbolizes baptism that now saves you also....It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. – 1 Peter 3:21

Level IV

For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. –Romans 6:6-7

Family Devotion

Holy Baptism (III)

Readings

Isaiah 55:10-11

Devotion

Combine equal parts of bleach and water. Mix them together thoroughly. Now throw in one pair of blue jeans. What happens? The blue in the jeans is removed rather rapidly. If you were to put jeans in plain water, nothing would happen, but the water combined with the bleach is a powerful dye (or stain) remover. The water of Baptism has no power as water, but when it is combined with God’s Word, it removes the most persistent stain of all, our sin. That is the purpose God for which God has sent His Word. That is why He combines water and Word in Baptism. To bring that forgiveness to us in this visible and certain way.

Prayer

Lord God, our heavenly Father, You combined Your Word with the waters of Baptism to bring to us the grace of Your salvation. Help us to live in the forgiveness of our Baptism until we join You in life everlasting. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Additional Reading

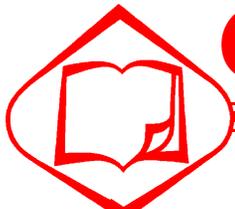
To learn more about this week’s topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 208-209, questions 253-254

Large Catechism - pp. 102-103

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 359-360

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism (IV)

Level I

What does such baptizing with water indicate? It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Level II

Where is this written? St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: "We were therefore buried with Him 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." (Rom. 6:4)

Bible Passages

Primary

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. -2 Cor. 5:17

Junior

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. -Gal. 5:24

Level III

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. -Eph. 4:22-24

Level IV

But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. -Col. 3:8-10

Family Devotion

Holy Baptism (IV)

Readings

Galatians 2:20

Devotion

"She is dead to us." With these painful words, the dairyman Tevye scolds his wife in the Broadway musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. Chava, their middle daughter had broken tradition and married outside the faith. No one could talk to her, no one was permitted to even speak her name. That may sound harsh, but when it comes to sin, and the Old Adam in us, that is exactly what we must do. Every morning, when I get up and take my shower, I remember that I am baptized. Just as the water of the shower cleanses my body, so has God cleansed my spirit in Baptism. But I didn't live the previous day perfectly. I sinned. And so, as I remember my baptism, I ask God to help me turn from my sins and do His will even better that day. I am sorry for my sins (contrition) and I want to do better (repentance), so in faith, I turn again to Jesus and His blood-bought forgiveness. Refreshed and renewed, I step out of the shower to face another day, a day full of temptation and Satan trying to raise up the Old Adam. And when that Old Adam does rear his ugly head again, I return to my Lord for forgiveness, and He reminds me of the promise of forgiveness and salvation He made in my baptism.

Prayer

O God, our heavenly Father, be with us and protect us throughout the days of our lives. You gave us forgiveness through the death and resurrection of Christ, and You joined us with Him in His death in the waters of Baptism. Keep us ever mindful of this promise, living as Your children until we join Him in His resurrection. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

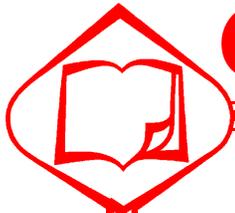
To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 210-212, questions 255-260

Large Catechism - pp. 103-109

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 361-365

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

Confession

Junior

What is confession? Confession has two parts. First, we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

Level I

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.

Level II

Which are these? Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?

Bible Passages

Primary

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him. -Ps. 32:2

Level III

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." -Is. 1:18

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. -Ps. 103:12

Level IV

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. -1 John 1:8-9

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. -James 5:16

Family Devotion

Confession

Readings

Prov. 28:13; Mark 11:25; Luke 18:13

Devotion

Have you ever said or done something bad to you friend? Well, you were angry, and after all, what did it hurt? It hurt your friend's feelings. That was bad enough, but it is also a sin. Later, however, you went to your friend and apologized. When you confessed to your friend, what you had done and they forgave you, you felt restored. It is like a big weight is off your shoulders.

That is the way it is with us sinners. We know if we confess our sins to God and are truly sorry, they will be forgiven. We ask and receive absolution of our sins from our pastor, as from God Himself. So, in our Sunday morning service, the pastor says, "in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins." Our sins are gone even the ones that we are unaware of. That is a great feeling, to think that even I can have my sins forgiven.

Prayer

When ministers lay on their hands, Absolved by Christ the sinner stands;
He who by grace the Word believes The purchase of His blood receives.
Amen.

As Surely as I Live, God Said
stanza 6

text by Nikolaus Herman, tr. by Matthias Loy

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 213-219, questions 261-268

Large Catechism - pp. 122-127

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 368-374

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Office of the Keys

Junior

What is the Office of the Keys? The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

Level I

Where is this written? This is what St. John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty: The Lord 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." (John 20:22b-23)

Level II

What do you believe according to these words? I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

Bible Passages

Primary

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out. -Acts 3:19

Level III

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. -Matt. 16:19
I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. -Matt. 18:18

Level IV

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. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." If he refuses to listen to them, 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.

-Matt. 18:15-17

Family Devotion

Office of the Keys

Readings

John 20:22-23; Ephesians 4:11

Devotion

Has your dad ever locked his keys in the car? He tried and tried, but couldn't get the door open. He needed help to open the door, didn't he?

A key is an important thing. With a key, you can open something up, or maybe close something. This is what the Office of the Keys is like. It really isn't like a key that you can put on a keychain. You can't even unlock a door with it. It is the power given to pastors, by Christ Jesus Himself, to unlock or open the way to heaven to all believers.

Our pastors are chosen men of God. They have an important job to do, probably the most important job there is. They, as called men of God, are given power here on earth to give us forgiveness of our sins, if we are truly sorry. For those who are not sorry, the door of heaven is locked before them, until they do repent.

The keys we have for Dad's car are important, but the keys to the kingdom of heaven opens to us eternal life. And that is the most important of all.

Prayer

Almighty God, You have given us Your servant, our pastor, to do Your work here on earth, for this we are grateful. For without You, O Lord, we would be locked out of Your kingdom forever. We are grateful to You for giving us pastors through whom You absolve us of our sins that we, too, may have the door of heaven unlocked. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 220-226, questions 269-284

Large Catechism - pp. 122-127

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 375-387

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Sacrament of the Altar (I)

Junior

What is Sacrament of the Altar?

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

Level II

Where is this written?

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write:

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

Bible Passages

Primary

[Jesus said,] "This is My Body...This is My Blood." -Matt. 26:26, 28

Level I

Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. -1 Cor. 11:26

Level III

I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you. -1 Cor. 11:23

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. -1 Cor. 11:27

Level IV

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. -Acts 2:42

By one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. -Heb. 10:14

Family Devotion

The Sacrament of the Altar (I)

Readings

Matthew 26:26-28

Devotion

I'm going to a party!! A couple I know are getting married. After the wedding we get to go to the wedding banquet. That will mean all kinds of good food and a great big cake. I like to go to parties that have really good food. But then, in a while, the party will be over and the good food will be forgotten.

We as Christians have a banquet that we are invited to, also, and it is very special. We go to the meal and there receive bread and wine. Not ordinary bread and wine... this bread is the body of Christ and the wine is the blood of Christ.. Just as the disciples were given this supper before Jesus died on the cross, we too are invited to the Lord's Supper. Jesus tells us to come to this meal, for there our sins are forgiven. Unlike the banquet I will attend, this meal will last forever.

Prayer

Dear and gracious God, you have given us a banquet that gives us forgiveness of all our sins. Help me, O Father, to receive this forgiveness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 227-233, questions 285-295

Large Catechism - pp. 110-121

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 390-398

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Sacrament of the Altar (II)

Level II

What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?

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

Bible Passages

Primary

The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. -1 John 1:7

Junior

This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. -Matt. 26:28

Level I

If God is for us, who can be against us? 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?
-Rom. 8:31-32

Level III

You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a Lamb without blemish or defect. -1 Peter 1:18-9

Level IV

He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation. -Col. 1:22

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed. -1 Peter 2:24

Family Devotion

The Sacrament of the Altar (II)

Readings

1 John 1:7; 1 Cor. 11:26

Devotion

I ate every cookie in the jar! Mon was outside and those chocolate chip cookies were my favorites. I really got in trouble and then I got really sick, Mom said that I should have known that eating more than I needed was bad for me, besides being the wrong thing to do.

When we eat and drink at the Lord's Supper it does do us good. We get just what we need, the forgiveness of sins. It takes away our sins, the little sins, the big sins, all are wiped away. What a great feeling!

When our Lord Jesus Christ gave us the Sacrament of the Altar, He gave it to us for the forgiveness of our sins. And not only do we receive the forgiveness of our sins, but also receive everlasting life and salvation.

Prayer

Gracious Father, You have given us a promise of eternal life. Help me to worthily receive forgiveness in Your Holy Supper. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 233-235, question 296

Large Catechism - pp. 110-121

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 399-401

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Sacrament of the Altar (III)

Level II

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?
Certainly not just eating and drinking do these things, but the words written here: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: "Forgiveness of sins."

Bible Passages

Primary

Whoever comes to Me, I will never drive away. –John 6:37

Junior

He who stands firm to the end will be saved. –Matt. 24:13

Level I

Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished. –Luke 1:45

Level III

"Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you."
[Jesus] replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it. –Luke 11:27-28

Level IV

My sheep listen to My voice; I know them and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. –John 10:27-8

Family Devotion

The Sacrament of the Altar (III)

Readings

Luke 8:42b-48

Devotion

When we are sick, we turn to our doctors, and the medications they give us, to help us to feel better. We trust their judgement and their knowledge of how medicine works. The woman who sought Jesus had a medical problem, and she knew that Jesus could heal her. By faith, she looked to the only one who could help her. In the Sacrament of the Altar, our Lord brings to us medicine for our souls to heal us of our sickness. We come to the altar to receive our Lord's Body and Blood because we know that we are sinful and we need to be healed. We know that our Lord comes to us here as He comes to no other place, joined with the bread and the wine, and through faith we receive forgiveness, life and salvation. Our eyes of faith look to God, and the sacrifice of Christ alone, for our forgiveness. And we receive that forgiveness given in His Body and His Blood. We receive that forgiveness through faith. And departing from the table, we hear those words of our Lord echoed to us: "Your faith has made you whole. Go in peace."

Prayer

By the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, You made us whole, dear Father, and healed us of our sins. We look with the eyes of faith to receive that forgiveness when we approach the altar to receive our Lord's Body and Blood. Strengthen us in our faith that we may ever keep our eyes on Jesus, ever look to Him and Him alone for our forgiveness, and see Him as He comes to us in this Sacrament. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 236-237, questions 297-298

Large Catechism - pp. 110-121

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 402-403

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

The Sacrament of the Altar (IV)

Level II

Who receives this sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words "for you" require all hearts to believe.

Bible Passages

Primary

I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief! -Mark 9:24

Junior

Be faithful, even to the point of death,
and I will give you the crown of life. -Rev. 2:10

Level I

A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread or drinks of the cup. -1 Cor. 11:28

Level III

The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. -1 Cor. 10:20-21

Level IV

I urge you, brothers, to 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. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. -Rom. 16:17-18

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. -1 Cor. 10:17

Family Devotion

The Sacrament of the Altar (IV)

Readings

Matthew 8:5-10, 13

Devotion

Who is worthy? It is a question that has been asked throughout time. Who is worthy to do this or that? The angels ask this question in heaven (Rev. 5:2). We ask this question all the time. And now, Dr. Luther asks this question in his catechism, who is worthy to receive? Like the Roman centurion in our reading, we are not, of ourselves, worthy to receive Christ as He comes to us in His Body and Blood. We are sinful flesh and cannot see God, or else we would be consumed (Is. 6:5). If we really took a good, hard look at ourselves, we certainly could find something wrong that would make us feel unworthy to receive Christ. But our Lord has given us faith, faith to see Christ in the Sacrament, faith to receive the grace He offers there. By that faith, we repent of our sins, we turn from them and try to no longer do them. Strengthened by the grace that God gives us, we are emboldened to live according to His will. But our worthiness is not in the perfection of our life, but in the perfection of Christ's life given for us, and our faith which looks to that sacrifice of Christ for our forgiveness. "Go. It will be done just as you believed it would."

Prayer

Lord, we are not worthy to receive You, but You have spoken Your Word and healed Your servants. Teach us never to despise this Sacrament or take it for granted. Keep us ever mindful of the great cost of our salvation, and send Your Holy Spirit to enable us constantly to do Your will. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:

Explanation - pp. 238-242, questions 299-306

Large Catechism - pp. 110-121

The Lord Will Answer - pp. 404-410

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Catechesis

Basic Bible Knowledge for the Family

Morning Prayer

Level II

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

Bible Passages

Primary

Pray continually. -1 Thess. 5:17

Junior

Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. -Psalm 124:8

Level I

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. -Ps. 19:14

Level III

&

Level IV

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. -Rom. 8:26

Family Devotion

Morning Prayer

Readings

Psalm 5:1-3

Devotion and Prayer

Sing or speak the following hymn (TLH 540, LW 483)

With the Lord begin thy task, Jesus will direct it;
For His aid and counsel ask, Jesus will perfect it.
Ev'ry morn with Jesus rise, And when day is ended,
In His name then close thine eyes; Be to Him commended.

Let each day begin with prayer, Praise and adoration;
On the Lord cast ev'ry care, He is thy Salvation.
Morning, evening, and at night Jesus will be near thee,
Save thee from the Tempter's might, With His presence cheer thee.

With thy Savior at thy side, Foes need not alarm thee;
In His promises confide, And no ill can harm thee.
All thy trust do thou repose In the mighty Master,
Who in wisdom truly knows How to stem disaster.

If thy task be thus begun With the Savior's blessing,
Safely then thy course will run, Naught thy soul distressing.
Good will follow everywhere While thou here must wander;
Thou at last the joy wilt share In the mansions yonder.

Thus, Lord Jesus, every task Be to Thee commended;
May Thy will be done, I ask, Until life is ended.
Jesus, in Thy name begun Be the day's endeavor;
Grant that it may well be done To Thy praise forever.
Amen.

With the Lord Begin Thy Task, translation by W. Gustave Polack

Additional Reading

To learn more about this week's topic, try reading the following:
The Lord Will Answer - pp. 444-446