



Raising Christian Children
Bible Study
Leader's Guide

[Please provide: copies of this Bible study, Bibles, Lutheran Service Books (LSB)]

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, we thank You for blessing so many of our families with children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Forgive us for the many ways we have fallen short in raising them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We ask that You bless our congregations with wisdom and understanding, to the end that our children would be diligent in the means of grace in all the chapters of life, and that they would suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from the Christian confession. In Jesus' strong name we pray. Amen.

A Beginning Discussion

If you are blessed with children, why did you choose for them the Godparents you chose?
Encourage participants to share.

If you have raised one or more children, list three life lessons you most wanted to impress upon them:

1. Encourage participants to share and compare the similarities and differences in their responses.
2. _____
3. _____

If you could encourage young parents in three ways with regard to raising Christian children, what would your encouragements sound like?

1. As participants share their encouragements, help them as necessary to state them in Christ-centered, Gospel-sharing ways.
2. _____
3. _____

The Confirmation Vow

Read through the Rite of Confirmation on pages 272–274 of the Lutheran Service Book (LSB). Then answer these questions:

What does it mean to acknowledge the gifts given by God in Holy Baptism? It means to acknowledge God's gifts of the forgiveness of sins, rescue from death and the devil, and eternal salvation to all who believe. It is important to remember that when an individual is confirmed, he or she is publicly reaffirming the vows made for him or her (or by him or her if the child was older) at the time of baptism.

What does it mean to renounce the devil and all his works and ways? This means that we spend our days doing battle with all the enemies of our faith, by daily contrition and repentance.

What does it mean to confess the First Person of the Trinity as “the Father?” It means to confess that God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and also our Father through faith in Christ. God is the Father of all people because He created them.

In these confirmation vows, the confirmand confesses his or her belief that *God is the maker of heaven and earth*. These are the same words he or she has confessed often in both The Apostles’ Creed and The Nicene Creed. Based on this confession of faith, what is the Christian’s proper response to theories of evolution regarding the beginning of the world? By faith, we believe what the Word of God teaches concerning creation. Evolutionary theories are not scientifically verifiable.

How does catechetical instruction, both in the home and at church, help prepare children to defend their Christian faith in the world? Catechetical instruction, given by both parents as well as pastors and teachers in the church, helps children learn to articulate what it means to believe in the Triune God. Such instruction gives children Bible truths to use to defend their faith against the claims of the world. Through catechetical instruction, as well as through all instruction in God’s true Word, the Holy Spirit works to equip people to share the truth of creation, the truth of how we get to heaven, and the truth of what God does and continues to do for us with those who do not know Jesus. Catechetical instruction is a very important next step after Holy Baptism, through which the Holy Spirit continues to build a life-long foundation of faith in an individual.

What does it mean to confess faith in Jesus Christ? When we confess faith in Jesus, we know and trust in Jesus as our only Savior from sin, death, and the devil, and believe that He gives us eternal life.

How would you summarize the work of the Holy Spirit? See also 1 Corinthians 12:3 and Ephesians 1:13. In the wide sense, sanctification is the whole work of the Spirit by which He brings us to faith and enables us to lead a godly life. In the narrow sense, He directs and empowers us to lead a godly life. As 1 Corinthians 12:3 states, *no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit*. In Holy Baptism, we are *sealed with the promised Holy Spirit* who gives us faith and keeps us in the one true faith (Ephesians 1:13).

How does catechetical instruction in your congregation in these days compare to your own in the “good old days?” Encourage participants to share some details concerning their confirmation instruction and how it has helped them to defend their faith throughout their lives.

Searching The Scriptures

Read Matthew 28:16–20. What tools does Christ give us for making disciples of all nations? Christ gives us Holy Baptism and His Word.

As we set out to obey our Lord’s command (the Law), what is His Gospel promise? Jesus’ Gospel promise is that He is with us always (Matthew 28:20).

Read Titus 3:1–8. How does Paul describe the human condition, apart from Christ? Titus 3:3 tells us that, apart from Christ, we are *foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another*. This is certainly a desperate condition.

What changes everything? The goodness and loving kindness of God appeared and that changes everything for us. Or to say it another way, the Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter messages which tell the story of Jesus' mission to save us from our sins.

Why does God save us? God saves us according to His mercy.

For what purposes does God save us? God saves us so that we might be careful to devote ourselves to good works. These works, of course, are not done for our salvation, but rather as a loving expression of thanks and praise to God for rescuing us from sin, eternal death, and the devil.

Read Deuteronomy 6:1–9. What promise is attached to the Fourth Commandment? See Deuteronomy 5:16. The promise is that our days might be long and that life would go well for us.

What promise is attached to God's command for Israel to carefully keep the statutes and rules commanded by God? God's promise to Israel was that their days would be long, their lives would go well, and they would multiply greatly.

What does it mean to have the commands of God on our hearts? It means that we always remember God's commands and that we inwardly treasure them.

How do these verses serve as a warning to parents about entrusting Christian education to their pastors and Sunday school/day school teachers? The Bible tells us that parents are their children's primary teachers. This privilege and duty is to be carried out in the rhythm of everyday living. Christian education at its best should always be a partnership between parents and the pastors and teachers in the church. God commands parents to actively teach the truths of His Word to their children. Instruction concerning the Triune God and the way to heaven starts in the home. Note also that Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism is to be used as a teaching tool for parents.

Read Psalm 22:27–31, 33:11, and 45:17.

What does it mean to proclaim God's *righteousness to a people yet unborn*? Most wonderfully it is taught in Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.

How would you summarize the *plans of God's heart to all generations* (Psalm 33:11)? God's plan is the salvation of our souls, by grace and through faith in Jesus Christ.

Enabled by the Holy Spirit, name some specific ways that you can work within both your own family and your church family to help raise Christian children. Answers include daily Bible reading and devotions with your children at home, encouraging your children to memorize Scripture and to do it along with them, guiding and encouraging your children to complete midweek school and confirmation class lessons, regular attendance at worship, Sunday school, and Bible class, volunteering to teach a Sunday school or Vacation Bible School class, encouraging your adult children to do all of the above, praying for truthful teaching of God's Word in the home and in the church.

If you could have one wish for the next generations, what would it be? Answers will vary. Hopefully it will be that all know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Closing Prayer: Gracious God, we pray for Christian parents everywhere, that they would not exasperate their children, but bring them in the training and instruction of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We pray for parents, teachers, and pastors as they tell the next generations of Your

wonderful deeds, that Your Name would be honored, Your cross would be lifted high, and Your Kingdom would come more and more among us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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