SMALL CATECHISM.
BIG IDEAS.

Sylvia Bull
Joseph Schattauer Paillé
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Curriculum Introduction: Welcome!

Thank you for taking an active role in making this curriculum a success! Volunteers like you help other members of the congregation - young and old - learn more about their faith tradition. The success of this church lies in lay leaders like you.¹

This course has three goals.² The first is to teach basic tenets of the Lutheran faith tradition. Though Luther is most famous for his 95 Theses, it was his later writings that formed the basis of the Lutheran iteration of the Christian faith. This course seeks to go beyond the 95 Theses and what we think we know about Luther to identify the foundations of Lutheran theology.³ Secondly, the curriculum seeks to connect our denominational heritage to our own lives. A basic understanding of the foundations of our faith tradition enriches our worship, strengthens our congregation, and facilitates meaningful engagement with other faith traditions.⁴ Finally, the curriculum puts our tradition in conversation with scripture. Since tradition and scripture are intimately connected, understanding the foundation of our faith tradition enriches our reading of scripture and helps us grow in God’s word, becoming more faithful followers of Christ.⁵

Why the Catechisms?

¹ Before teachers begin their preparation, they are thanked for their work and commitment. In an effort to increase motivation, we affirm their efficacy as teachers, convey enthusiasm for their participation, show a sense of care, and set positive expectations for the outcomes of the course. All four of these activities promote motivation in teachers and students alike. Paul Eggen and Don Kauchak, Educational Psychology: Windows on Classrooms, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2010), 326.

² These goals were designed to maximize learner motivation and interest in the program.

³ The cognitive theory of motivation suggests that people want to understand how the world works. By suggesting that the course will go “beyond the 95 Theses,” we hope to motivate the learner by making her curious about other parts of her faith tradition (Eggen and Kauchak, 286).

⁴ The sociocultural theory of motivation suggests that people are motivated by their “participation in communities that value and support learning” (Eggen and Kauchak, 326). This goal draws from sociocultural theory to present the idea that social engagement that can result from a greater understanding of the Lutheran tradition, both within and outside of the Lutheran church.

⁵ The humanistic theory of motivation suggests that people are eager to “fulfill their total potential as human beings” (Eggen and Kauchak, 288). Combining our faith tradition with scripture allows us to motivate learners by linking knowledge of Lutheran heritage with discipleship of Christ.
Ten years after posting his 95 Theses, Martin Luther embarked on a series of visits to observe evangelical (meaning newly Protestant) congregations in Saxony and Meissen. He was not pleased by what he found. “Merciful God, what misery I have seen,” Luther later wrote. “The common people knowing nothing at all of Christian doctrine ... and unfortunately many pastors are well-nigh unskilled and incapable of teaching.” Especially in rural areas, Luther found that many churches lacked pastors and lay people educated in the Christian faith. Upon the completion of the trip, Luther began to write a catechism (an instructional booklet about the Christian faith) in an attempt to provide evangelical parishes with sound Christian teaching.

Though Luther was a verbose and prolific writer, the catechisms are remarkable for both their brevity and practicality. Over time, the project split into two separate catechisms, each intended for a unique audience. The Large Catechism was intended for pastors and preachers, placing a greater emphasis on evangelical hermeneutics. The Small Catechism, however, was written primarily for lay teachers, parents, and children. The Small Catechism included not only sections on the Decalogue (Ten Commandments), Apostles’ Creed, and Lord’s Prayer, but also sections on the sacraments of baptism and communion. By including the sacraments, Luther made an argument that lay people, not just pastors, should have a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of the sacraments.

The Small Catechism was written not as just as a kind of theological quality control for the young movement, but also as an educational tool. Kolb has noted that Luther’s “understanding of how God’s Word works made the attainment of his primary goal of restoring

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the centrality of the Christian gospel and of reforming the church *rest upon effective education.)*

The care of individual souls as well as the viability of the young evangelical movement depended on clear teaching and instruction of the uniquely evangelical (Protestant) theology. This concern for clarifying evangelical theological teaching is especially evident in Luther’s *Augsburg Confession*, written just one year after the publication of the catechisms.

Toward this end, Luther intended the catechisms to be a resource towards mutual up-building in the faith. The Small Catechism was written for parents not only for their own benefit, but for the education of their children as well.\(^9\) In this way, the Small Catechism sought to shift the burden for teaching from pastors to the broader congregation. Luther believed that it “takes extraordinary people to bring children up right and teach them well.”\(^11\) Emphasizing a priesthood of all believers, Luther argued that ordinary lay people could be extraordinary to bring up good Christians if they were given the right tools. In some writings, Luther even referred to parents in terms that had previously been reserved for ordained pastors.\(^12\) The first editions of the catechism were even printed on a single leaf of paper so they could be posted on church walls and memorized by congregants.\(^13\) By the time Luther died, 30 editions of the Small Catechism had been published. By the end of the sixteenth century, there were an additional 125 editions in circulation and approximately 100,000 copies of the Small Catechism in print.\(^14\)

Though the Small Catechism was successful in promoting evangelical education under a single, unified system of beliefs, it is not used frequently in contemporary Lutheran education, especially among children. There are many reasons for this. Financial incentives have pushed

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9 Bode, 161. Emphasis added.
10 Ibid, 164.
12 Ibid.
14 Bode, 168.
some Lutheran curriculum publishers away from Lutheran-specific resources towards ecumenical resources that can be sold to more congregations. Many Lutheran churches are turning to curricula from non-denominational publishing houses as well, mostly motivated by efficiencies of scale and increased choice. In short, there are many forces pulling educators away from curricula written from a Lutheran perspective.

Yet these arguments are outweighed by the positives of catechism-centered curriculum and new possibilities for Christian education. For example, while budgetary constraints have pushed some Lutheran churches towards non-denominational or ecumenical curricula, others have decided to insource the production of their curricula. By creating their own curricula in-house, these churches have a newfound ability to integrate denominational-specific resources like the Small Catechism into their education programs. In-house curricula also create a greater space for parents and lay leaders to take active roles in the education of their youth, just as Luther intended when writing the Small Catechism. Furthermore, the type of catechism learning that educators like Roberts argue against is not the only kind of catechism learning. Catechism-centered education need not be a process of mere memorization or repetition. With proper attention to the principles of educational psychology, curricula based on the catechism can engage learners in more effective ways. Just because a curriculum is based on a text written in 1529 does not mean that its pedagogy has to be from 1529 as well.

**Why Intergenerational?**

Each week’s curriculum includes suggestions and options for intergenerational programming. Though intergenerational programming is often portrayed as something that small churches have to do, it can be beneficial for learners in all kinds of congregations. Intergenerational education involves more than educating to the lowest common denominator,
with a few references thrown in to keep adult learners awake. Rather, it encourages engagement and learning between generations. Even if your congregation is large enough to be split into all three levels provided in this curriculum, intergenerational Christian education provides unique and often unexpected opportunities for learning and faith development.

Intergenerational learning provides youth with many opportunities to learn through modeling, the “behavioral, cognitive, and affective changes deriving from observing one or more models.”\(^\text{15}\) By learning alongside adults, younger students acquire new behaviors, strengthen existing behaviors, experience changes in inhibitions, and their emotions can be activated.\(^\text{16}\) Creating changes in inhibitions and arousing emotions are particularly important for Christian education. Seeing lay people in their church engage with their faith may make it easier for younger learners to do likewise. Furthermore, engaging with adults in a structured and supportive environment will assure young learners that church is a safe environment to ask questions and explore their faith.

Intergenerational engagement also presents an opportunity for cognitive apprenticeship. Cognitive apprenticeships involve the process of having a “less-skilled learner work at the side of an expert to develop cognitive skills.”\(^\text{17}\) Younger learners will benefit from having mentors explain their thinking, guide them through questions, provide scaffolding for learning exercises, and expose them to new life experiences. Taking on the role of “expert” will be beneficial to adults as well. Being given the responsibility of helping children’s development demonstrates to adult mentors that the church has positive expectations for them, and it can increase adult engagement with the material and with younger learners.\(^\text{18}\) Teaching the material to younger

\(^{15}\) Eggen and Kauchak, 181.
\(^{16}\) Ibid, 183.
\(^{17}\) Ibid, 229.
\(^{18}\) Ibid, 328.
learners also allows adult learners with a chance to practice retrieving their prior learnings. By moving their knowledge from long-term memory to working memory, adult learners are able to re-encode the information and make their prior learnings more meaningful. These cognitive apprenticeships can be beneficial to both adult learners and younger participants alike.

**Ready?**

We hope that this introduction has given you some of the background information that will help you be a successful teacher of this curriculum. If you have questions about the material or activities, ask your education coordinator, pastor, or contact us. All of these resource people are there to help you be successful as a teacher! In terms of the curriculum’s structure, each week’s material includes a concept map, an introductory page with learning goals and suggestions for teaching in an intergenerational context. There are lesson plans and supplemental materials for each of the three curriculum tracks (Elementary, Confirmation, and Adults). Note that italicized typeface indicates information that could be read to the class by the teacher, while regular typeface indicates instructions for the teacher. However, we always suggest that you familiarize yourself as much as possible with the materials to minimize reading directly from the curriculum. You will feel more prepared and confident and you will be more engaging to your students. We pray for God’s blessing on you as you engage in this important ministry of teaching.

In Christ,

Joseph Schattauer Paillé and Sylvia Bull, authors
Comprehensive Insights from Educational Psychology

Though the content of this course is primarily based on Luther’s Small Catechism, the guiding principles of its pedagogy and structure are drawn from the field of educational psychology. The lessons themselves are annotated, indicating specific insights and methods gleaned from educational psychology. However, the curriculum as a whole is also informed by the authors’ learnings from the field of educational psychology. This section will highlight theories from educational psychology that undergird the curriculum as a whole and inform the structure of the course.

First and foremost, it should be noted that this curriculum is designed to promote a mastery-focused environment. A mastery-focused environment is one in which classroom activities center around “effort, continuous improvement, and understanding.” This is different than a performance-focused environment, in which the class ethos promotes “high grades, public displays of ability, and performance compared to others.” Though much of the burden for encouraging a mastery-focused environment rests on the teacher and students, curriculum also has a vital role to play in shaping the classroom environment. This curriculum is designed to make fostering such an environment easier in several main ways.

First of all, in a mastery-focused environment, learners view one another as partners in learning, not as competition. This suggests that learning in the classroom is an “emergent” property. Learners can do more together than they could on their own. For this reason, all lessons include some form of group work or interpersonal engagement. To emphasize effort over evaluation, the curriculum does not rely on behaviorist theories of motivation. Behaviorist methods of motivation seek to motivate learners with external rewards or reinforcement, such as

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19 Eggen and Kauchak, 320.
20 Ibid.
praise, prizes, or high grades. While such methods of motivation may work in the short run, they are problematic in the long run because they encourage learners to view one another as competition and reward outcome, not reward. Instead (with the exception of the Pictionary game activity from week two), the course seeks to draw from cognitive and sociocultural theories of motivation. These focus not on external rewards or reinforcement, but on developing self-worth, feelings of competence, and a sense of belonging within community.

The curriculum also emphasizes understanding and application over memorization and repetition. This assumes a constructivist theory of knowledge in which learners “construct knowledge that makes sense to them” based on their prior knowledge, relationships, and lived experience in the real-world. In this model, learners are not viewed as passive recipients of knowledge, but active agents in the construction and formation of their own knowledge. To foster the construction of knowledge, most lessons encourage learners to engage in a real-world application, an “activity in which students practice thinking similar to that required in the real world.” In this curriculum, learners are asked to draw lessons and insights from the material presented in the catechism and apply them to their own lives. Though the learning occurs within a church, its application can be taken outside of the sanctuary as well. The curriculum also promotes understanding through the use of discussion questions either integrated within or following the Activity for the Day. Far from being a time-filler, these questions are integral to the success of the course. The use of open-ended questions increases student involvement and engagement by allowing students to express their views and experiences. Expressing one’s views helps crystalize the construction of knowledge, while hearing the stories of other learners helps

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21 Ibid, 287.
23 Ibid, 233.
expose learners to new ideas.\textsuperscript{24}

To ensure a mastery-focused environment, the curriculum is also designed to maximize instructional alignment. Instructional alignment refers to the “match between learning objectives, learning activities, and assessments.”\textsuperscript{25} When a curriculum is instructionally aligned, all pieces of the curriculum reinforce one another. The foundation of this alignment lies in the three comprehensive course goals listed in the introductory section written for teachers.\textsuperscript{26} These three goals inform the goals of individual lessons, as well as the learning activities for each of the lesson’s three tracks. Finally, the evaluation materials are designed to measure how well students have mastered the goals. Every lesson goal, activity, or evaluation is grounded in the three comprehensive course goals.

Though instructional alignment is written into the curriculum, the curriculum must also be missionally and contextually aligned. Mission alignment occurs when the goals of the course and individual lessons help forward the mission of the church. For most Lutheran churches, the course will align to the mission of the church since ELCA churches accept the “confessional writings of the Book of Concord,” including the Small Catechism, as “valid interpretations of the faith of the church.”\textsuperscript{27} Because the curriculum reflects the theological beliefs of the Small Catechism, it should align with the mission of all ELCA congregations, as well as some other churches with Lutheran roots.

Contextual alignment is more difficult to ensure. Contextual alignment occurs when the goals and activities of the course are aligned with local culture. If this is not the case, a cultural mismatch may occur, in which a learner’s home culture and the curriculum’s assumed culture

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, 340.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 394.
\textsuperscript{26} See page 1 in “Curriculum Introduction.”
“create conflicting expectations for a student’s behavior.”28 Because American Lutheran churches have such strong roots in Scandinavian and German traditions, Lutheran pastors and educators should be especially cognizant of what implicit cultural norms and expectations are present in their congregations. Though the ELCA is disproportionately white compared to the US population at large, racial diversity within the past ten years has increased.29 From 2000 to 2007, the number of white members of the ELCA fell by nearly nine percent, while African American and Latino populations within the ELCA grew.30 Although the ELCA remains predominately white, educators should be mindful of the diversities that exist within their own congregations. A disproportionately white population should encourage pastors to be more mindful of learner diversities, not less. Educators should also be mindful of differences in socioeconomic status, class, language, and cultural intangibles. To promote contextual alignment, educators must amend or edit the existing curriculum to meet the local community and learners’ needs.

Learners must have a safe, stable, and dependable environment to meet their learning goals. This means not only effective classroom management, but also a healthy culture of learning and contextually appropriate expectations. The authors have sought to create a curriculum that lends itself to a mastery-focused classroom and which can make a large contribute to healthy learning environments in the church. However, the curriculum must be tailored to the mission and culture of the church in which it is used. Contextual adaptations, though, should not be attained at the expense of honesty about the mission of the whole church, theological integrity, or cultural sensitivity.

28 Eggen and Kauchak, 97.
**Age Group Specifics**

There is no shortage of options for how to organize a Christian education class. Classes could be divided based upon interest or subject material. Classes could also be arranged according to learning style, a popular technique in many “rotation” curriculums. This curriculum is designed to be broken down according to three rough groups: elementary school students, confirmation students, and adults. Additional options for intergenerational programming are provided as well. Though lessons are annotated with specific insights pertaining to the development of each group, some broader themes will be identified below.

In terms of their cognitive development, most elementary school students are in a liminal stage between preoperational and concrete operational stages. In this area, learners are beginning to move from a reliance on perception to a dependence on logic concerning concrete objects and logical reasoning.\(^{31}\) Though their attention spans are still short, learners are able to categorize and organize objects. Their moral development is in transition as well as they begin to consider the needs and realities of others’ experiences. Elementary learners are also deeply aware of their perceived competence in completing tasks and can be sensitive to correction and feelings of inferiority.

These developmental themes ought to affect how elementary students are taught. The most important of these is a focus on “concrete examples that connect abstract examples to the real world.”\(^{32}\) For this engagement to be fruitful, elementary learners depend on learning environments that are open enough to allow them space to explore and take initiative, while structured enough to ensure stability and dependability. Elementary learners will also benefit from the use of scaffolding to help them complete assigned tasks. Scaffolding helps move tasks

\(^{31}\) Eggen and Kauchak, 37.  
\(^{32}\) Ibid, 55.
into what Vygotsky called the “zone of proximal development.”\textsuperscript{33} This zone of proximal development refers to the “range of tasks an individual cannot yet do alone, but can accomplish when assisted by the guidance of others.”\textsuperscript{34} Because of elementary students’ desire for competence, teachers should work to cultivate “feelings of competence that lead to industry.”\textsuperscript{35} The most effective way to do this is not through praise or reward, but through effective scaffolding to ensure competency. Lessons include sample ideas and answers to help learners discover new insights.

Confirmation students, many of whom are in middle school, pose a different set of challenges and opportunities for learning. Unlike elementary learners, who learn primarily through concrete examples, middle school learners are more able to represent concrete items with abstract concepts and ideas.\textsuperscript{36} This allows learners to draw comparisons more easily between in-class examples and their own lives. This turn to critical introspection is essential as learners begin to form their self-identity. As a result, the primary need for approval shifts away from the teacher toward peers.\textsuperscript{37} Social inclusion, which is integral to one’s sense of self, becomes increasingly important in the classroom. This focus on social approval also affects moral development. At this age, many learners follow rules to either gain approval from their peers or because they see rules as inflexible.\textsuperscript{38}

These developmental factors also ought to affect teaching methods used in middle school classrooms. Because students can now understand abstract topics, educators should strive for “deep understanding of the topics being studied,” not memorization or shallow learning.\textsuperscript{39} To

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, 47.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, 89.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, 37.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 361.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, 83.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 89.
promote the development of identity and social skills, group work may play an important role in
the classroom. Group work is also important in helping learners begin to see rules as agreements
made between people to promote the general welfare in society. Learners at this age may start to
see their class environment not as a passive environment, but as a group of learners working
towards a common goal.

Though Christian education is often assumed to refer to children or youth, adult
education should not be ignored, nor should the use of educational psychology be limited to
younger learners. The primary goal of the educational resources focused on adults in this section
is integration. Integration refers to the “collaborative, linking functions that coordinate various
levels of processes within the mind and between people.” Integration is the process of making
knowledge more interconnected and meaningful. Whereas lessons for younger learners
emphasize building certain skills and capabilities, lessons for adults focus on strengthening the
links between knowledge, experiences, and people.

The integration of knowledge, experiences, and people is done in a variety of ways in this
course. To strengthen links among prior learnings, the curriculum encourages adults to evaluate
ideas through prior knowledge. For example, discussion questions may ask learners to evaluate
their ideas of grace in light of a particular passage of scripture or reconsider their own
interpretation of a text through putting it in conversation with the Small Catechism. This
overlaying of ideas and concepts encourages learners to see their knowledge as interrelated and
mutually informative, not discrete. To strengthen integration of experiences, the curriculum
emphasizes the use of narrative and personal stories. The use of narrative is a “fundamental
building block” of the integration process. To facilitate this integration, the course encourages

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41 Ibid, 324.
learners to draw from their own experience in group activities. This also supports the integration of one’s life in the church, at work, and at home, encouraging the learner to realize his or her complete self. Many of the activities aimed at adult learners encourage learners to draw connections between their theological beliefs and personal experience to facilitate this process.

Finally, the curriculum supports the integration of community through attunement between learners. Attunement refers to “resonance of energy and information” between learners. This curriculum provides opportunities for learners to “feel felt” through the sharing of ideas and experiences in group settings. Though integration cannot occur in a matter of weeks, this curriculum seeks to provide an environment in which adults can begin to integrate not only their learning, but also their experiences and relationships.

Despite the fact that this curriculum is organized into three tracks based on learner development, it is the opinion of these authors that often the best learning (especially in a faith setting) occurs when generations interact with one another in the same class environment. This allows for modeling of faith formation within the entire learning community, encourages sharing of experiences and perspectives, and eases the burden on the teacher or class leader to provide scaffolding and modeling for all students. Instead, students begin to rely on and assist one another as co-learners and co-teachers. Since modeling, the foundational concept of social cognitive theory, is such an essential part of behavioral and cognitive (and, by extension, faith) development, opportunities to increase capacity for modeling in the Sunday school classroom can be invaluable. Additionally, the authors recognize that not all congregations have the numbers to support three, or even two, tracks of an education program. Thus, we have included suggestions for teaching each unit inter-generationally, in the hopes that some congregations will

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42 Ibid, 71.
43 Ibid, 89.
44 Eggen and Kauchak, 181.
encounter and learn this material together, as a unified and mutually supportive learning community.
Resources for Evaluation

Evaluation is a critical part of any curriculum or educational program. Though this curriculum is intended for Lutheran congregations, it may not be suitable for all Lutheran churches. Pastors, educators, and administrators will have to tailor the course to meet the needs and context of their own culture, congregation, and learners. The evaluation process helps us measure a congregation so we can tailor curriculum to meet its needs. Without meaningful and systematic evaluation, the curriculum cannot meet its full potential. Evaluations not only help educators understand what learning occurred, but also how to improve programs for the future. Evaluations are not the last step in curriculum planning, but the first step in curriculum development and implementation.

Evaluation, as Tyler notes, refers to the “process of determining to what extent the educational objectives [of the course] are actually being realized.” The achievement of these educational goals takes place within the behavior and actions of individuals. To evaluate a program, one must evaluate changes in learners themselves. Because evaluation is concerned with changes in learner behavior and knowledge, evaluation must occur at least twice – once at the beginning and once at the end. Tyler goes even further, arguing that evaluation must occur during the program as well, since learnings are often “rapidly dissipated or forgotten.” Ideal evaluation occurs at multiple stages: upon beginning a curriculum or less, during instruction, and after the completion of the course. Evaluation may even occur months or years after the completion of the course to measure how learnings have been integrated into the learner’s life.

The realities of congregational learning present unique challenges to methods of evaluation used in “traditional” education environments, such as public schools. First, Christian

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46 Ibid.
education programs are often relatively brief. This curriculum, for example, is only four weeks long, whereas a school year is approximately nine months long. Second, attendance at Christian education programs is often sporadic and unpredictable. In a public school, missing a quarter of classes would result in a failing grade. In a Christian education program, attending three-quarters of sessions would qualify as faithful attendance. These differences in attendance make comprehensive evaluation difficult. The odds that a learner will attend all sessions where evaluation occurs is difficult. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, evaluation is a labor-intensive discipline. Because of the effort required for effective evaluation, it is often the first part of a curriculum to be cut. Unlike public school teachers, who are contractually required to provide evaluations, Christian educators are often volunteers. Out of fear of alienating volunteers, pastors and administrators often shy away from asking more of their teachers.

Due to these challenges, a different strategy is needed to effectively evaluate this curriculum’s effectiveness. To address the difficulties of sporadic attendance, evaluations will not cover changes over the entirety of the course, but over individual lessons. The evaluation of individual course lessons is possible because the course material is not cumulative in nature. To address fears of driving away volunteers, this evaluation will use an unorthodox tactic: instead of asking less of its volunteers, it will ask more. This strategy will only be successful if pastors and administrators rethink their views about the evaluation of Christian education programs and Christian education in general. First, evaluation must not be seen as an expendable part of Christian education, but as investment in the future life of the church. Second, administrators must realize that volunteers are motivated by more responsibility, not by easier tasks. People are motivated not by avoiding work, but by taking on more meaningful tasks. The question to administrators is not how to make less work, but how to make the existing work more
meaningful. The use of program evaluations should be seen as a sign that the church takes
volunteers’ time and efforts seriously. By engaging in systematic evaluations of its programs, the
church sends a sign to volunteers that the work they do is valuable and important.

Attached is a form for educators to use for evaluating each week’s lesson.
Lesson Evaluation

Before class:
Identify the three goals of the day from your worksheet.

1. 

2. 

3. 

After class:
Assess the accuracy of each statement on the chart below, 5 being the highest, and 1 being the lowest.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students met learning goal #1</td>
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<td>Students met learning goal #2</td>
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<td>Students met learning goal #3</td>
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<td>Instructions for setting up the lesson were clear, concise, and helpful</td>
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<td>Learners were engaged by the Introduction</td>
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<td>Activity for the Day was clear and easy to follow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learners were able to engage and participate in the Activity of the Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions for Discussion were clearly written</td>
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<td>Learners could answer and engage in Questions for Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time estimates fit well with your classroom’s experience</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What went well in the class?

What could have gone better in the class?

What would have made teaching this class a more valuable experience for you?
Week One

What do the Ten Commandments mean for us today?

Learners discern applications of the Ten Commandments.
Suggested for elementary students.

Learners engage Luther's interpretation of the commandments.
Suggested for adult students.

Learners think about rules and morals in their own communities.
Suggested for confirmation students.
Week One: The Ten Commandments

Suggestions for Intergenerational Programming:

Scripture to Consider
Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5:17-20, 19:16-19; Mark 12:28-34; Romans 7:7-12, 13:8-10; Galatians 2:15-21

Learning aims: Learners will think through the role of rules in our community, understand the Ten Commandments’ relevance for their own lives, and begin to discover the relationship between grace and law in Lutheran theology.

The basic structure of the lessons may remain the same, but below are some suggested changes and activities.

- The activity from the Red Elementary Student track can be done with adult learners as well, albeit with more advanced scenarios. For example, conversation may include views on marriage, career, and family. To facilitate intergenerational learning, encourage time for discussion concerning how life experience in adults and youth can be guided by the same commandments. Young learners may be surprised to find that the Ten Commandments can be useful at all stages in a person’s life.

- In the activity for the Blue Confirmation Student track, learners created a list of new rules for their schools and community based on the Ten Commandments. To use this lesson in a mixed-group, encourage conversation between youth and adult learners concerning how rules differ in different places. Do we have different rules in school than we do in work? Are the rules for parents different than the rules for kids? This exercise will allow adults to draw from their own experience in studying the catechism while also encouraging younger learners to understand how rules exist to shape and form the community.47

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47 This exercise may introduce young learners to social contract ethics, the fifth stage of Kohlberg’s moral development scale (Eggen and Kauchak, 93).
Lesson: The Ten Commandments  
Week: One  
Group: Red Group - Suggested for Elementary Students  
Learning Aims: Help children become more familiar with the Ten Commandments, understand their relevance for the students’ own lives, and encourage taking new perspectives.  
Scripture: Matthew 19:16-19  
Supplies: Bible marked with today’s passage, twenty pieces of construction paper, black marker  
Other Scripture to Consider: Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5:17-20; Mark 12:28-34; Romans 7:7-12; Romans 13:8-10

Welcome to the first week of the catechism curriculum. This week you’ll be guiding a group of children through some practical applications of the Ten Commandments. Before class, write the commandment and scenarios in the chart below on pieces of construction paper. Lay the commandment cards on the floor in order. Keep the scenario cards with you for the Activity of the Day. Start the day’s class by having a student read today’s scripture passage.

(5 minutes)  
Scripture Reading for the Day (to be read by a student): Matthew 19:16-19
Then someone came to him and said, ‘Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?’ And he said to him, ‘Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.’ He said to him, ‘Which ones?’ And Jesus said, ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

(5 minutes)  
Introduction: What are the Commandments? Why should we study them?

In the scripture reading for today, a man asked Jesus what he should do to be good and obedient to God. Jesus answered that he already knew what he should do: keep the commandments. The man replied, ‘Which commandments are you talking about?’ Of course, Jesus was talking about the Ten Commandments that God had given to the Israelites. The Ten Commandments were the rules that God’s people lived by. They helped people stay loyal to God and get along with their neighbors. The Commandments were important not only when Moses was alive, but when Jesus lived as well, which is why Jesus knew them. Today, we’re going to talk about why they are important for us, too.

Who taught you the commandments? (Allow time for students to respond.) Right! A lot of us learned them from a pastor or parent or friend. Someone taught the commandments to Jesus, too. Jesus was active in his temple as a kid just like you. Some of the gospels tell us that Jesus would go into the temple and talk about religion with some of the adults there. Pretty intimidating! One of the things they might have talked about is the Ten Commandments because Jesus would have studied them.

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48 Many youth in the class are in what Piaget called the “preoperational” stage of development (Eggen and Kauchak, 37). At this stage, learners become more proficient at learning through physical objects. While teaching lessons about moral principles can be difficult, allowing the learners to move the scenarios around between commandments may be helpful.
The Ten Commandments might seem outdated or old-fashioned to us. After all, they are over 3,000 years old! But they can still teach us about how to live and follow God today.

Today we’re going to talk about what the Ten Commandments are and how we can use them in our lives today. I think you’ll be surprised at what we learn.

(30 minutes)
Activity for the Day:
Gather the students around the commandment cards that are laid down on the ground. One by one, show them the scenario cards in a random order. Talk with the kids about which scenario would go with which commandment. As they go, feel free to let them move scenarios around if they change their mind. Some of the scenarios are written from the perspective of someone being helped by another person. If someone gives an incorrect answer, take the time to talk through what Luther wrote about the commandments. Some of the scenarios might fit into more than one commandment. As you reveal the answers at the end, talk with your kids about what other scenarios from their own lives might be examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commandment</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>How come?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You shall have no other gods.</td>
<td>When I was sick last month, someone came to visit me and pray with me.</td>
<td>Luther tells us that we are to “fear, love, and trust God above all things.” How do we trust in God?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God.</td>
<td>When we pray, we pray for people who are sick, homeless, or lonely. We do not pray for our own success.</td>
<td>Luther tells us that we do not “deceive using God’s name,” but “call on, pray to, praise, and give thanks to God.” When we discuss our faith and our relationship with God, we do so with respect. When we invoke God’s name, we should do so for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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49 According to psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, most youth in the class are in the market exchange stage of moral development. In the market exchange phase, moral decisions are made on the basis of “reciprocity on someone else’s part” (Eggen and Kauchak, 82). Rules are followed only if the consequences of doing so are beneficial to oneself. This exercise tries to help move children to the interpersonal harmony stage. In this stage, ethical decisions are made out of “concern for or the opinions of others” (Eggen and Kauchak, 83).

50 Many learners in this stage may be experiencing a conflict between industry and inferiority (Eggen and Kauchak, 67). Learners may be sensitive to how they are perceived by their classmates. Instead of saying that an answer is wrong, try to talk about what parts of their thinking are good or “on the right track.”

51 Students will learn more if they can think about the commandments with a variety of examples (Eggen and Kauchak, 277). While students may not be able to sympathize with the experience of being in the hospital, they may be able to think of a similar experience in their own lives they can connect to. Learning will be enhanced and made more meaningful if learners can draw comparisons between similar experiences they have had (Eggen and Kauchak, 203).

52 Though egocentrism, the tendency to believe that “other people look at the world as the individual does,” is often discussed in regards to the physical world, it may be applicable to a learner’s moral universe as well. By including scenarios written from the perspective of an “other,” this exercise seeks to help learners move out of moral egocentrism and expand their empathic horizons (Eggen and Kauchak, 39). This exercise draws from social development’s emphasis on perspective-taking, the “ability to understand the thoughts and feelings of others.” This perspective-taking does normally not occur until age eight, so students’ ability to alter their perspective may vary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.</th>
<th>When we go into church, we turn off our iPods and cell phones so we can sing the hymns with our families.</th>
<th>We “gladly hear and learn” God’s word. We should set aside time to be quiet and still with God. What we do with our bodies, technology, and family can affect our relationship with God. We should set aside special time to worship God, even if it is by ourselves.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honor your father and mother.</td>
<td>We address adults we know as “Mr.” and “Ms.” We don’t talk back to our teachers or principals.</td>
<td>We should not “despise nor anger our parents and others in authority.” This commandment is not only about our mother and father, but other authority figures in our lives. Help the learners think about who the authority figures in their lives might be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You shall not murder.</td>
<td>Once a week, my family goes to a soup kitchen to serve dinner. After Hurricane Sandy, we helped clean out flooded homes on the coast.</td>
<td>We do not “endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbors, but instead help and support them in all of life’s needs.” This commandment is not just about murder, but about helping our neighbors live better and more fulfilling lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You shall not commit adultery.</td>
<td>When I told my friend about an embarrassing problem I was having, he didn’t tell my other friends about it.</td>
<td>Luther tells us we should “lead pure and decent lives in word and deed.” When we are pure, we are open and don’t have anything to hide. When we are friends with people, we treat them with respect, the way we would want to be treated. We should nurture our relationships with others so that we can be open and honest with one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You shall not steal.</td>
<td>When we work on a group project at school, we split the work evenly. We don’t try to trick other people into doing more of the work for us.</td>
<td>Luther tells us that we should not acquire property by using “shoddy merchandise or crooked deals,” but try to help people “improve and protect their property and income.” When we interact with others, we should be honest and seek to help them. We should not take advantage of other people or put our own needs before theirs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. | Some rumors were going around school about me. When my friend hears them, he told me, “I know they’re not true. You | We do not “betray or slander” our neighbors, but “speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.” We should try to assume the positive intent of our neighbors. We should give our neighbors the benefit of the
| You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. | When I lost my wallet in the street, someone found it and returned it to the police station. | Luther says that we should “be of help and service to (our neighbors) in keeping what is theirs.” We should not try to benefit from the misfortune of others, but help people keep what is theirs. |
| You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor. | When I was having trouble on the soccer team, one of my friends helped me practice, even though she wanted my position. | We help our friends “fulfill their responsibilities to our neighbors.” We should not try to entice other people away for our own benefit. We should try to help people be better, even if we want what they have. |

### (5-10 minutes)

**More Questions for Discussion**

- Did any of the commandments surprise you?
- What rules are the hardest for you to follow at home or in school? Which commandment is the hardest to keep?
- Can you think of a time when you might have to remember the commandments?
- Can you think of a time when you would have needed someone else to follow the commandments?

### Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):

Ever merciful and loving God,
You gave us the Ten Commandments so that we might live and serve one another with our whole hearts. Help us to think of others as we honor and keep your commandments.
Amen.
Lesson: The Ten Commandments
Week: One
Group: Blue Group - Suggested for Confirmation Students
Learning Aims: Help youth identify problems in their community, encourage new ways of thinking about rules, and promote positive social engagement.53
Scripture: Galatians 2:15-21
Supplies: Bible marked with today’s passage, whiteboard with dry-erase markers and eraser
Other Scripture to Consider: Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5:17-20; Mark 12:28-34; Romans 7:7-12; Romans 13:8-10; John 8:31-37

Welcome to the first week of the catechism program. This week you’ll be guiding a group of confirmation students through a conversation about the Ten Commandments. Before class draw the grid for the activity of the day on the whiteboard. You may choose a few key phrases from Luther’s commentary to include under the “What did Luther think it meant?” heading.

(5 minutes) Scripture Reading for the Day (to be read by a student): Galatians 2:15-21
And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, - and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

(5 minutes) Introduction: Do we still need the Commandments?
What’s that law that Paul keeps talking about in today’s reading? Is it traffic law or fire code? Is Paul a lawyer? Not quite. Paul is actually referring to the Ten Commandments, part of the covenant that the Israelites made with God at Mt. Sinai. Paul began his life as an observant Jew, well versed in the Hebrew scriptures and intricacies of Jewish law. But one day as he was walking to Damascus, Paul had a conversion experience and became a Christian. Paul believed that what justified him to God was not his ability to follow the Ten Commandments, but his faith in Christ.

So do we still need the Ten Commandments? You bet. Paul thought that the Ten Commandments were important because they were so hard to follow. He could never follow them completely, no matter how hard he tried. His inability to follow the commandments made

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53 Most of the confirmation youth will probably be in the fourth stage of Kohlberg’s stages of moral reasoning, law and order. In this stage, rules are seen as inflexible and “obeyed for their own sake” (Eggen and Kauchak, 83). This activity encourages them to move to the fifth stage of Kohlberg’s model, social contract reasoning. In this stage, rules are seen as agreements between people that ensure the well-being of society. In this stage, rules exist to benefit society, not the other way around. It should be noted that the intent of the activity is not to suggest that the Ten Commandments need to be improved or fixed, but applied to our own context in new and creative ways. Today’s activity is designed to help youth understand that the values behind the laws are more important than the letter of the law itself.
Paul see that he could only be justified to God by his faith in Christ, not by his works. Even though the Ten Commandments don’t help us be justified to God, they can still help us live together as a community. Have you ever worried about someone stealing your goat? Probably not. But not stealing someone’s goat is one of the Ten Commandments. So if there’s stuff about goats in the Ten Commandments, why bother learning about them? This doesn’t sound much like our neighborhood at all.

Really, though, God gave the commandments to the Israelites so they could live faithfully and in peace. They talk about things like goats because they made sense in the Israelite’s community, which depended on farming. So to understand how the Ten Commandments can help us improve our community, we need to think about what they mean for us today, when most of us don’t have goats. Today, we’ll be talking about how the Ten Commandments can help improve our community.

(30 minutes)
Activity for the Day:
In today’s activity, the confirmation youth will be working to identify problems in their own community. Draw the chart provided below on a whiteboard or chalkboard to start the activity. An example of one of the commandments is provided for your convenience. When defining what the problem is, it may be helpful to use analogies to help the learners make the connections between the Old Testament, Luther, and their own lives.

As a class, we’ll be walking through a few of the commandments to talk about how they could help improve our own school, church, and community. We’ll do that in three steps. First, we will identify a problem in our community. Second, we will identify possible solutions to the problem. And third, we will come up with a new rule to help solve the problem.

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54 The introduction to the lesson tries to motivate the learner through the cognitive theory of motivation. By asking a seemingly strange question, the curriculum motivates the learner to resolve why the teacher would ask such a question (Eggen and Kauchak, 286).

55 It is likely that the class will be made up of youth from a variety of schools and circles of friends. Talking about what problems they see in their lives is a good way to build trust and commonalities between students who don’t know each other well yet. It also encourages the class to be a community of caring and trust (Eggen and Kauchak, 354).

56 This activity draws from Urie Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory of development to encourage youth to think about what people, activities, and systems influence their lives (Eggen and Kauchak, 62).

57 At this stage in their development, analogies and roleplaying are helpful in making abstract ideas like morals and ethics concrete (Eggen and Kauchak, 278). Since many of the youth may be experiencing some kind of identity confusion, affirming their experiences through analogies is a great way to increase motivation and learning.

58 Today’s activity also encourages the youth to use a problem-solving model (Eggen and Kauchak, 259). Using a problem-solving model encourages youth to think about how rules are malleable and can be used to the benefit of the community. Introducing the learners to a problem-solving model also encourages the use of critical thinking skills in relation to one’s environment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commandment</th>
<th>What did Luther think it meant?</th>
<th>What’s the problem?</th>
<th>Possible solutions to the problem.</th>
<th>New rule.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.</td>
<td>People at my school spend a lot of time gossiping about people behind their backs and spreading rumors.</td>
<td>Don’t talk about people when they’re not around. Speak up for people, even if they’re not my friends.</td>
<td>We will speak well of others, even when others don’t.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lead the class through the other commandments below. Encourage the learners to ask questions and think critically about their impressions of the Ten Commandments and Luther’s interpretations of them.\(^59\)

<table>
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<th>What did Luther think it meant?</th>
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<td>You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God.</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we do not curse, swear, practice magic, lie or deceive using God’s name, but instead use that very name in every time of need to call on, pray to, praise and give thanks to God.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>You shall not murder.(^60)</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbors, but instead help and</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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\(^59\) Most of the confirmation youth are probably experiencing some form of identity confusion (Eggen and Kauchak, 67). Encouraging learners to ask questions both of the activity and of the other students’ experiences is a good way to help them define their own identity and beliefs about their faith.

\(^60\) This may be a good time to raise the issue of bullying in schools. Be sensitive to the fact that some students in the class may be bullied at school as well (Eggen and Kauchak, 76). If one of the youth does say they are being bullied, contact the church pastor or education coordinator so they can take appropriate action.
| **You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.** | *We are to fear and love God, so that we do not try to trick our neighbors out of their inheritance or property or try to get it for ourselves by claiming to have a legal right to it and the like, but instead be of help and service to them in keeping what is theirs.* |
| **Honor your father and your mother.** | *We are to fear and love God, so that we neither despise nor anger our parents and others in authority, but instead honor, serve, obey, love and respect them.* |
| **You shall not steal.** | *We are to fear and love God, so that we neither take our neighbor’s money or property nor acquire them by using shoddy merchandise or crooked deals, but instead help them to improve and protect their property and income.* |

(5-15 minutes)

**More Questions for Discussion**

- What are some of the biggest problems you see in your community?
- Do you think the Ten Commandments can still be relevant for us? Why or why not? Do any of them seem outdated?
- How did your own experience contribute to your understanding of the Ten Commandments? Did anyone’s experience differ from your own?

**Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):**

Holy and merciful God,

Through the Ten Commandments, you called us to live in peace with one another. Help us to honor your commandments as we seek to serve our neighbors. Provide us with safe schools, warm homes, and vibrant communities. We ask all these things through Christ our Lord, Amen.
Lesson: The Ten Commandments  
Week: One  
Group: Green Group - Suggested for Adult Learners  
Learning Aims: Learners will gain a more comprehensive understanding of Luther’s interpretation of the Ten Commandments, see how the commandments can be relevant in their own lives, and be able to articulate how justification by faith and justice are compatible.  
Scripture: Matthew 19:16-22  
Supplies: Bible, presentation-size pad of paper, markers, copies of worksheets for breakout activities  
Other Scripture to Consider: Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5:17-20; Mark 12:28-34; Romans 7:7-12; Romans 13:8-10; John 8:31-37

Welcome to the first week of the catechism program. This week you’ll be guiding a group of adults through a discussion of Lutheran ethics and the Ten Commandments. Before class, set up a presentation-size pad of paper in front of the class and have a Sharpie available. This class will depend on intergenerational group work.

(5 Minutes)
Scripture Reading for the Day (to be read by a student): Ephesians 2:1-10
You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the inmeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

(5 minutes)
Introduction: The Commandments and Justification by Faith

When you ask people what Lutherans believe, most of them will say that Lutherans believe that we are saved by faith, not works. And they’re right! But if we’re saved by faith, why did Luther start his Catechism with the Ten Commandments? How do Lutherans talk about works? How can Lutherans talk about justice? Today we’ll be breaking up into small groups to talk about the commandments. We’ll come back at the end to discuss how the commandments

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61 The presentation pad is intended to help elderly learners in the congregation, who may make up a significant portion of the congregation. Key ideas and concepts can be written down here. Because church halls are often not outfitted with the same hearing technology as sanctuaries, it is important to provide whatever resources are needed to help learners with exceptionalities meet their goals (Eggen and Kauchak, 126).

62 The class is broken up into small groups early on to help provide an environment of trust and respect among members of the class. Since talking about one’s faith can be intimidating, especially with new people,
help us live as honest Lutherans and faithful Christians.\textsuperscript{63}

\textbf{(30 minutes)}

\textbf{Activity for the Day:}

Invite the class to break up into three groups. The easiest way to do this is to have people count off by threes. Once they’re in their groups, they’ll each have three commandments to talk about. Work through the first commandment with the entire group as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commandment</th>
<th>What’\textsuperscript{d} Luther Say?</th>
<th>What does that mean for us?</th>
<th>Examples of how we do this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You shall have no other gods.</td>
<td>We are to fear, love, and trust God above all things.</td>
<td>What might other gods be for us? Money, stability, power, youth. What does it mean to trust God? Could mean depending on God more than ourselves.</td>
<td>Could mean setting time aside for prayer, especially for those on the parish prayer list. Could mean looking for fulfillment in God, not material objects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below are worksheets for the three groups. Give the groups fifteen to twenty minutes to come up with ideas for their worksheet.\textsuperscript{64}

today’s exercise is designed to help people get to know the other people in the class and establish a “community of caring and trust” (Eggen and Kauchak, 354).

\textsuperscript{63} The discussion after the activity provides a chance for learners to consolidate their knowledge. Activities that encourage rapid exchanges of information cannot meet their full potential unless they also provide an opportunity for consolidation. Discussions provide a valuable opportunity for the teacher to “assess the process of schema activation and help students reconstruct their understanding when necessary” (Eggen and Kauchak, 417).

\textsuperscript{64} By breaking the class up into small groups, the curriculum seeks to promote cooperative learning. Cooperative learning refers to instructional methods in which learners “work in mixed-ability groups to reach specific learning and social interaction objectives” (Eggen and Kauchak, 419). Cooperative learning is important in this lesson because it helps promote learning from people with different backgrounds. It also allows for everyone in the class to participate in the discussion and remain cognitively active.
Green Group – Week One
Group One Worksheet: Commandments 2-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commandment</th>
<th>What’d Luther Say?</th>
<th>What does that mean for us?</th>
<th>Examples of how we do this</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God.</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we do not curse, swear, practice magic, lie or deceive using God’s name, but instead use that very name in every time of need to call on, pray to, praise and give thanks to God.</td>
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<td>You shall not murder.</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbors, but instead help and support them in all of life’s needs.</td>
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<td>You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.</td>
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</table>
Green Group – Week One  
Group Two: Commandments 5-7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commandment</th>
<th>What’d Luther Say?</th>
<th>What does that mean for us?</th>
<th>Examples of how we do this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we do not despise preaching or God’s word, but instead keep that word holy and gladly hear and learn it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You shall not commit adultery.</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we lead pure and decent lives in word and deed, and each of us loves and honors his or her spouse.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we do not try to trick our neighbors out of their inheritance or property or try to get it for ourselves by claiming to have a legal right to it and the like, but instead be of help and service to them in keeping what is theirs.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commandment</td>
<td>What’d Luther Say?</td>
<td>What does that mean for us?</td>
<td>Examples of how we do this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor your father and your mother.</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we neither despise nor anger our parents and others in authority, but instead honor, serve, obey, love and respect them.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>You shall not steal.</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we neither take our neighbor’s money or property nor acquire them by using shoddy merchandise or crooked deals, but instead help them to improve and protect their property and income.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.</td>
<td>We are to fear and love God, so that we do not entice, force, or steal away from our neighbors their spouses, household workers, or livestock, but instead urge them to stay and fulfill their responsibilities to our neighbors.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Allow 15 minutes for the groups to work on their worksheets. After they finish, invite the class back together. Now, a member of each group should be matched up with members from another group. The easiest way to do this is have people count off by threes within their group. Allow another fifteen minutes for discussion and sharing in the new groups. Then, bring the whole group back together for final discussion (see below).

(20 minutes)

More Questions for Discussion

- What was the hardest commandment to apply to your own life?
- Did you agree with Luther’s interpretation of the commandments?
- So if Lutherans believe we are saved by grace, how do we talk about our actions? Why do the commandments matter for us?
  - Luther believed that the commandments were impossible to keep at all times. It would be impossible to never covet, never put anything before God, or always assume the best of our neighbor. Luther believed that there was nothing in the commandments that could save us. They are law, not promises. But in the gospel, we find that by faith in Christ we can receive righteousness. Through our faith in Christ, we can fulfill the commandments. But it is not really we who are fulfilling them, but God who is giving us God’s grace.
- So why did Luther include the commandments?
  - Far from being unable to speak about justice, Lutherans are actually in a unique position to speak on justice and service. Because we know we are saved by God’s grace and not by our works, we can truly serve one another without worrying about our own salvation. God’s grace has freed us to serve one another with our whole hearts, without being beholden to the law.

Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):

Ever merciful and loving God,
You called Moses to liberate your people from slavery, Jeremiah to stand for the poor, and Paul to preach the gospel to the world. Give us the strength to listen to your call in our own lives. Help us love and trust you, so that we might live by your commands and be saved in your Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

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65 This method of instruction is called the “jigsaw method” (Eggen and Kauchak, 421). In this method, every student becomes an “expert” on their commandments and then teaches another group.


67 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, “Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: Lutherans Talk about Human Sexuality” (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2006).
Week Two

Learners see how the Apostles' Creed teaches us who God is. Suggested for elementary students.

Why do we say the Apostles' Creed?

Learners consider what parts of the creed mean for them in their own lives of faith. Suggested for adult students.

Learners discuss why confessing our faith is important. Suggested for confirmation students.
**Week Two: The Apostles' Creed**

**Suggestions for intergenerational programming:**

**Scripture to Consider:** Genesis 1:1-5; Philippians 2:5-11; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 5:17-32; Romans 10:8-10; 1 Timothy 6:10-12; Hebrews 4:14-16

**Learning Aims:** Students are able to define what a creed is and why we say them in church; they begin to understand how the Apostles' Creed teaches us about who God is; they consider what the creed means for them in their life of faith.

**The basic structure** of the lessons may remain the same, but below are some suggested changes and activities.

Depending on the age range of the learners, leaders may opt to adapt either the learning activity for the Red Group or for the Blue Group. A class that includes much younger students would use the Red Group drawing activity, while an older crowd could use the Pictionary activity from the Blue Group.

For the drawing activity, have students from different generations sit at mixed table groups. Older students and adults can help younger children with their drawings if need be (if the group includes many young children, consider reading the Bible passages from a children's Bible). Follow the outline for the activity. Then have the table groups share their drawings with each other and talk about what they learned about God from listening to the creed and the Bible passages.

The Pictionary game would be played according to the same rules outlined in the Blue Group. If you have a very large group of students, consider asking another leader to help you run two Pictionary games concurrently to increase participation. Encourage the groups to discuss why they drew their pictures the way they did and what that part of the creed means, using the explanations from the catechism.
Lesson: The Apostles' Creed
Week: Two
Group: Red Group or Suggested for Elementary Students
Learning Aims: Learners will be able to define what a creed is, talk about how the Apostles' Creed helps us understand who God is, and understand why we say the Apostles' Creed today.
Scripture: Genesis 1:1-5; Philippians 2:5-11; Acts 2:1-4
Supplies: Bible marked with the day's passages; crayons, markers, or colored pencils; one piece of paper for each student, folded into 3 equal parts; sheets with the creed and the Bible passages for students to reference if needed.
Other Scripture to Consider: Hebrews 4:14-16

Welcome to the second week of catechism class. In today’s class, you’ll be teaching your students about the Apostles' Creed and guiding them through an art exercise that will get them thinking about how the creed and the Bible teach us about who God is.68 To prepare, fold plain sheets of paper into equal thirds (enough for one per student). Place one sheet at each student’s place. Make sure that every student will have access to crayons, markers, or colored pencils and a reference sheet with the creed and Bible passages as well.

(5-10 minutes)
Introduction - What is a creed?

Welcome! Today in class we are going to learn about the Apostles’ Creed. Who knows what a creed is? (Allow time for students to respond. Prompt as needed. For example, “It’s something we say in church;” “It starts with the words ‘I believe...’” If they don’t know, let them know that it is okay. We will be learning about what it is today.) A creed is words we say—usually ones that have been used for a long time by many other Christians—about what we believe about God. There are a few different creeds that we use in our church, but the one we are learning about today is the oldest and the shortest. It is called the Apostles’ Creed. Does anyone know what apostles are? (Allow time for response.) Good work—the apostles were people whom Jesus sent out to teach other people about him and about God. The creed we are learning about is called the Apostles’ Creed because it is the oldest, and it is based on the teachings of the apostles, even though they didn’t write it themselves. This creed is over 1500 years old! The important thing about this creed is that it teaches us about God—the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit—and connects us with other Christians all over who also say these same words and believe these same things about God!

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68 Most students in the elementary years are functioning cognitively at the concrete operational stage of development in Piaget’s theory of cognitive development. This means that they are gaining more capacity to think logically and concretely, while also developing the capacity to understand other perspectives. However, their ability to think abstractly and systematically about complex concepts (such as the Trinity) is still limited. Thus, today’s activity uses a concrete activity (drawing) to help students express the relationships among the persons of the Trinity and their understandings of God (Eggen and Kauchak, 41).
(30 minutes)

Activity for the Day: 69

For today’s activity, make sure each student has a piece of plain paper folded into equal thirds and access to markers, crayons, or colored pencils at their table. Explain that the piece of paper is folded into thirds because God is one being (one piece of paper) that consists of three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – three sections of the paper). Explain that you will read passages from the Apostles’ Creed and the Bible about each of the three persons of the Trinity. They will draw a picture of what they think the passages teach them about God on one of the parts of their paper. 70 You may want to play music in the background during the drawing time. Encourage students to remain on task, but to discuss their ideas with other students in their group if they want to.

Begin by reading Genesis 1:1-5: “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.”

Then read the first article of the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.”

Allow about ten minutes for students to draw. Walk around the room to ensure students stay on task and to have an opportunity to ask students about their drawings.

Read Philippians 2:5-11: “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

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69 Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory posits that there are eight or more discrete dimensions of intelligence. All too often, classroom activities are limited to just one or two dimensions of intelligence. Including artistic activities broadens the range of intelligences utilized in classroom activities (Eggen and Kauchak, 141-142). Additionally, this activity concretizes what might otherwise be an abstracted verbal discussion of the Trinity and allows students to engage the material at a range of levels.

70 This activity is a cross between guided and unstructured discovery methods. Because of the artistic and exploratory nature of the activity, there is less scaffolding present than in other types of guided discovery. However, parameters of the paper and the readings from the creed and the Bible serve to guide the students as they think about what the creed teaches them about who God is. Students share their questions and discovery during the final phase of the activity (Eggen and Kauchak, 460-461).
Then read the second article of the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.”

Allow about ten minutes for students to draw. Walk around the room to ensure students stay on task and to have an opportunity to ask students about their drawings.

Read Acts 2:1-4: “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.”

Finally, read the third article of the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.”

Allow about ten minutes for students to draw. Walk around the room to ensure students stay on task and to have an opportunity to ask students about their drawings.

(15 minutes)
Sharing and Closing
To close, ask each student to briefly share with the class the most important thing they learned about who God is from hearing the passages OR a question they had from hearing the passages. Once everyone has shared, invite them to bring their drawing with them the next time they come to worship so they can look at it during the Apostles’ Creed and think more about what they are saying in the creed. Remind them that we say the creed because it helps us understand and think about who God is and connects us with other Christians all over the world and from a long time ago, too. Invite a student to pray the closing prayer.

Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):
Loving God,
Thank you for teaching us about you through the Apostles' Creed and the Bible. We praise you for being the one who creates us, saves us, and stays with us always through the Holy Spirit. Help us to tell other people about you. Amen.
Lesson: The Apostles' Creed
Week: Two
Group: Blue Group or Suggested for Confirmation Students
Learning Aims: Introduce learners to the Apostles' Creed and its history; help them understand why we engage in confessions of faith as a church; begin to discuss and think about what the parts of the creed mean.
Scripture: Acts 5:17-32
Supplies: Bible marked with the day's passage; catechisms for each team of students; prompts with phrases from the creed for Pictionary (included); bowl, hat, or basket to draw prompts from; presentation-size pad of paper and markers OR whiteboard, markers, and eraser; prize for winning team (optional)
Other Scripture to Consider: Romans 10:8-10; 1 Timothy 6:10-12; Hebrews 4:14-16

Welcome to the second week of this catechism class. In today’s lesson, you’ll helping the students learn about the history of the Apostles' Creed, understand the importance of confessing our faith as Christians, and play Pictionary with phrases from the creed. This activity is meant to get the students to start thinking about the meaning of the words they say in the creed, using their catechism as a resource. Begin the class by having a student read the passage from Acts aloud.

(5 minutes)
Scripture Reading for the Day (to be read by a student): Acts 5:17-32
Then the high priest took action; he and all who were with him (that is, the sect of the Sadducees), being filled with jealousy, arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said, “Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life.” When they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and went on with their teaching. When the high priest and those with him arrived, they called together the council and the whole body of the elders of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the temple police went there, they did not find them in the prison; so they returned and reported, “We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were perplexed about them, wondering what might be going on. Then someone arrived and announced, “Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!”

Then the captain went with the temple police and brought them, but without violence, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man’s blood on us.” But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed
by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.

(5 minutes)
Introduction: What is a creed? Why do we confess our faith?
In this passage from the book of Acts, we hear about Peter and some other disciples of Jesus who were thrown into jail for teaching people about Jesus. Even when they miraculously are released from prison by an angel, they return to preaching and teaching knowing the risks. They confess their faith so that other people can hear the Good News and because God commands them to tell other people about Jesus. Over the years, Christian communities wrote down what they believed about God into creeds that they could pass down to those who came after them and so they could use it to tell other people what they believed. We still use some of these creeds today to say what we believe. One of the creeds we use today is the Apostles’ Creed. It was written down as we know it today in the 8th century (Over 1000 years ago), but it is based on creeds used by the church as early as the 3rd century.\(^\text{71}\) We use it in church to remind us of the faith into which we are baptized, and we can use it to tell other people about the core of our faith.

Today, as Christians living in the United States, we don’t have to worry about being thrown in prison or hurt for saying what we believe or telling people about our faith. But like those first Christians from our passage from Acts, we are commanded by God to confess our faith and to teach other people about Jesus. One of the ways we can follow that command is by learning more about the Apostles’ Creed and what it says about what we believe.\(^\text{72}\)

(40 minutes)
Activity for the Day:
Today, we are going to play a game to get us to start thinking about the different parts of the creed more and to have some fun! (Divide the students into 2 teams.) The game will be Pictionary – teams will alternate taking a turn to draw.\(^\text{73}\) When it is their team’s turn, the team will send a member up to draw (team members will take turns drawing throughout the game). The drawer will be given a prompt that comes from the Apostles’ Creed. The drawer will draw the prompt (no letters, numbers, or symbols allowed) and the other members of their team will

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\(^{72}\) This introductory section draws on the concept of personalization by creating a contrast between the world of the scripture passage from Acts and the world of the students (Eggen and Kauchak, 378). This contrast draws attention to the importance of the subject matter and the question about why we say the creed today.

\(^{73}\) The Pictionary game activity promotes active learning because students compete as part of a team, increasing their sense of ownership over the learning activity. Since the game is relatively fast-paced, it decreases opportunities for students to zone out or stop paying attention. Additionally, while behaviorist views of motivation are limited in the long-term, the reward of winning and the possibility of a prize are nevertheless short-term motivators to keep students engaged in the learning activity (Eggen and Kauchak, 333).
try to guess the answer. If the team guesses correctly, they will get a point. While one team is
drawing, the other team will look at the explanations of the Apostles’ Creed from the Small
Catechism. After the drawing team guesses, the opposing team will have a chance to suggest a
part of the explanation that applies to the drawing. If they are able to explain and defend their
choice, they also can get a point. After each round is completed, we will talk about that part of
the creed and what it means, drawing on the explanations from the catechism. *Per typical
Pictionary rules, if the drawer’s team runs out of time without guessing correctly, the other team
will get one guess AND a chance to suggest part of the explanation.* (Explain the rules of the
game, and ask students if they have any questions before you begin, clarifying the instructions as
needed.) At this point, start the game. After each prompt is drawn, has been correctly guessed by
one of the teams, and the other team has suggested part of the explanation, talk about what that
part of the creed means (see suggested questions for each prompt)74. You do not have to go into a
ton of detail, but spend a couple of minutes on each one to get students thinking about the
meaning of the creed beyond just the surface level. Do not worry about running out of time. The
important thing is for students to start thinking about the creed, not to have discussed the entire
creed in detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt from Creed</th>
<th>Possible Explanations</th>
<th>Questions for Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God, the Father almighty</td>
<td>- God protects me against all danger…</td>
<td>- What does it mean that God is almighty?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- All this is done out of pure, fatherly…</td>
<td>- What does this part of the creed mean for us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- For all this I owe…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator of heaven and earth</td>
<td>- I believe that God has created me…</td>
<td>- What does it mean that God is creator?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- God has given me and still preserves…</td>
<td>- What does this part of the creed mean for us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- In addition, God daily and abundantly provides…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- For all this I owe…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord</td>
<td>- I believe that Jesus Christ, true God… is my Lord</td>
<td>- What does it mean that Jesus is God’s Son?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td>- What does this part of the creed mean for us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born of the virgin Mary</td>
<td>- I believe that Jesus Christ,</td>
<td>- What does it mean that Jesus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

74 Personalization again plays a role in this part of the activity in that the discussion asks students, “What does this part of the creed mean for us?” Students are encouraged to think about how to apply the concepts learned in the creed to their own life of faith (Eggen and Kauchak, 378).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>true God… and also a true human being…</td>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td>is a true human being?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Does it matter that Jesus was born like us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What does this part of the creed mean for us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffered under Pontius Pilate</td>
<td>- He has redeemed me…</td>
<td>- What kind of suffering did Jesus experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- He has redeemed me…</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Does it matter that Jesus suffered in his life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- He has purchased and freed me… with his innocent suffering</td>
<td></td>
<td>- What does this part of the creed mean for us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was crucified, died, and was buried</td>
<td>- He has redeemed me…</td>
<td>- Does it matter that Jesus died?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- He has redeemed me…</td>
<td></td>
<td>- What does this part of the creed mean for us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- He has purchased and feed me… with his innocent suffering and death</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the third day he rose again</td>
<td>- He has done all this…</td>
<td>- Why was Jesus raised from the dead?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Just as he is risen from the dead…</td>
<td></td>
<td>- What does this part of the creed mean for us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father</td>
<td>- Just as he is risen from the dead and lives…</td>
<td>- What does it mean that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- What does this part of the creed mean for us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He will come to judge the living and the dead</td>
<td>- He has done all this in order that…</td>
<td>- What does it mean that Jesus will come as a judge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- What does this part of the creed mean for us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Holy Spirit</td>
<td>- The Holy Spirit has called me…</td>
<td>- Who is the Holy Spirit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Holy Spirit abundantly forgives all sins…</td>
<td></td>
<td>- What does the Holy Spirit do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- What does this part of the creed mean for us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The holy catholic church</td>
<td>- Just as he calls, gathers, and makes holy the whole…</td>
<td>- Why do we say “catholic” church? (catholic with a small “c” means universal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Daily in this Christian church…</td>
<td></td>
<td>- What does it mean to say that we believe in the church?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This is most certainly true.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- What does this part of the creed mean for us?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The communion of saints                                                                 | - Just as he calls, gathers, and makes holy…  
|                                                                                          | - On the last day the Holy Spirit…  
|                                                                                          | - This is most certainly true.       | - What is the communion of saints?  
|                                                                                          | - What does this part of the creed mean for us? |
| The forgiveness of sins                                                                  | - The Holy Spirit abundantly forgives…  
|                                                                                          | - This is most certainly true.       | - In what ways do we receive forgiveness of sins?  
|                                                                                          | - What does this part of the creed mean for us? |
| The resurrection of the body                                                             | - On the last day the Holy Spirit will raise…  
|                                                                                          | - This is most certainly true.       | - What does it mean to believe in the resurrection of the body?  
|                                                                                          | - What does this part of the creed mean for us? |
| The life everlasting                                                                      | - And will give to me and all believers…  
|                                                                                          | - This is most certainly true.       | - What is life everlasting?  
|                                                                                          | - How do we receive it?              | - What does this part of the creed mean for us? |
Blue Group – Week Two Pictionary Prompts  
(Cut apart and fold; place in basket, hat, or bowl to draw from)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God, the Father almighty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creator of heaven and earth</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was crucified, died, and was buried</td>
<td>The life everlasting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the third day he rose again</td>
<td>He will come to judge the living and the dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the third day he rose again

The life everlasting

He will come to judge the living and the dead
(5 minutes)

Closing
Remember, the Apostles’ Creed is a statement of what the church believes that Christians have been saying together for over a thousand years! It gives us words to help understand our own faith and to help us share our faith with other people. (Invite a student to close the class with the closing prayer.)

Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):
Loving God,
We thank you for the faithful Christians who have come before us and who help teach us about you through the Apostles' Creed that has been passed down to us. Thank you that we can confess our faith in you without fear of being arrested, hurt, or killed. Take care of and protect Christians who are in danger today, and help us to faithfully tell others about you and your love for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.
Lesson: The Apostles' Creed
Week: Two
Group: Green Group or Suggested for Adult Learners
Learning Aims: Learners will be able to define what a creed is and why we say the Apostle's Creed in church. They will start to articulate what the Creed means for them in their life and faith.
Scripture: Acts 5:17-32
Supplies: Bible, copies of Small Catechism, sheets with discussion questions, paper to take notes, pencils or pens, presentation-size paper or white board, markers.
Other Scripture to Consider: Romans 10:8-10; 1 Timothy 6:10-12; Hebrews 4:14-16

Welcome to week two of the catechism class. Today, you’ll be talking with your group about what creeds are and why we say them in church. You will be splitting the class up into 3 groups. Each group will discuss one article of the creed and what it means for them and report back to the whole group about what they learned. This will allow the groups to engage deeply about the creed, but still enable the whole class to learn something about all three articles. Begin the class by having one student read the passage from Acts.

(5 minutes)
Scripture Reading for the Day (to be read by a student): Acts 5:17-32
Then the high priest took action; he and all who were with him (that is, the sect of the Sadducees), being filled with jealousy, arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said, “Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life.” When they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and went on with their teaching. When the high priest and those with him arrived, they called together the council and the whole body of the elders of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the temple police went there, they did not find them in the prison; so they returned and reported, “We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were perplexed about them, wondering what might be going on. Then someone arrived and announced, “Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!”

Then the captain went with the temple police and brought them, but without violence, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, “We gave you strict orders not to

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75 This week’s class is structured according to a lecture-discussion model. The material is introduced through the scripture reading for the day. The teacher then briefly presents necessary historical information about the creed. Students then move into discussion in which they expand on their understanding of the subject matter and apply it in cognitively active roles. Finally, the class comes together to share their group work so that their learning can be integrated with that of other groups (Eggen and Kauchak, 458).
teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man’s blood on us.” But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.”

(5 minutes)
Introduction: What is a creed?
In this passage from the book of Acts, we hear about Peter and other disciples who were thrown into jail for teaching and preaching about Jesus. Even when they miraculously are released from prison by an angel, they return to preaching and teaching, knowing the risks. They confess their faith so that other people can hear the Good News and because God commands them to tell other people about Jesus. Over the years, Christian communities wrote down what they believed about God into creeds – statements of belief. These creeds helped distill the core of Christian belief so that it could be shared and passed down to later generations. We still use some of these creeds today to say what we believe. In the Lutheran church, we recognize three historical creeds: the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. The Apostles’ Creed was written down as we know it today in the 8th century, but it is based on creeds used by the church as early as the 3rd century! We use creeds in church to remind us of the faith into which we are baptized and which we share with Christians who came before us and who live all around the world. We can also use the creeds to tell other people about the core of our faith.

The Apostles’ Creed is broken up into three articles – one on each person of the Trinity. Martin Luther asks of each article, “What is this?” or “What does this mean?” He then lays out his own understanding of what that part of the creed means for the life of the believer. Today, we are going to be asking “What does this mean for me, for us?” In small groups, you’ll be looking at one of the articles of the creed and thinking about what it means for you and for this community of faith.

(30 minutes)
Activity for the Day:
Break the class into 3 roughly equal groups. There should be about 3-5 people per group. (If you have a large class, you could assign more than one group to each article.) If possible, it is best to have the groups seated a round tables where they can easily hear and interact with one

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67 Research shows that groups must be small enough so that all participants can be in cognitively active roles – usually two to five students per group (Eggen and Kauchak, 463).
another. Assign each group one article of the Apostles' Creed to discuss as a group. Make sure each group has a sheet with the discussion questions, copies of the catechism, and paper and pens to take notes. Remind them that the discussion questions are not meant to be heavy-handed or constricting, but to get them thinking. Remind them also that they will share back what they discuss with the whole group at the end of class. Ask each group to read its portion of the creed aloud, along with the explanation, before they begin discussion. The focus of their discussion should be on what their assigned article means for them.

(15 minutes)
Reflecting back, questions, and closing remarks
At this time, invite groups to share back to the whole group the main things the discussed, including any significant questions they had while discussing their article. Ask the groups to go in the same order as the creed. Write down significant points from their sharing on the easel or whiteboard. Allow each group a few minutes to share. Close by emphasizing that there is more to think about and discuss than we have time for here – this is only a starting point. Encourage them to keep thinking about what the creed means for them and for the community. If they have any really tough questions or are struggling with something in the creed, encourage them to discuss their questions with you or the pastor in the future. Invite a student to pray the closing prayer.

Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):
Holy God, the three-in-one and one-in-three,
We thank you for all the faithful Christians who have come before us to teach us about you. We give you thanks for the teaching of the church that have been passed down to us through the Apostles' Creed. Help us to continue to learn more about you and what these ancient words mean for our lives today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

78 For most successful group work, group members should be seated together so that they are able to work effectively together and can transition easily from group work to whole class discussion (Eggen and Kauchak, 463).
Green Group – Week 2
Discussion Questions – Article One

Read the first article of the Apostles’ Creed aloud.
Read the explanation on the first article from the Small Catechism aloud.

Discuss! The questions below are meant to be a guide. Your conversation should be about what the creed means for you in your lives of faith.

- Does anything stick out to you from the explanation?
- Is there anything you don’t agree with?
- Is there anything you think is left out of the explanation?
- How have you understood this part of the creed in the past?
- Has anything about your understanding of this part of the creed changed? If so, how?
- What does this part of the creed teach you about God? How does that impact your life?
- Do you have any questions about this article of the creed?
- Does it matter that we say this part of the creed in church?
Green Group – Week Two  
Discussion Questions – Article Two

Read the second article of the Apostles’ Creed aloud.  
Read the explanation on the second article from the Small Catechism aloud.

Discuss! The questions below are meant to be a guide. Your conversation should be about what the creed means for you in your lives of faith.

- Does anything stick out to you from the explanation?

- Is there anything you don’t agree with, in the explanation or the creed?

- Is there anything you think is left out of the explanation?

- How have you understood this part of the creed in the past?

- Has anything about your understanding of this part of the creed changed? If so, how?

- What does this part of the creed teach you about God? How does that impact your life?

- Do you have any questions about this article of the creed?

- Does it matter that we say this part of the creed in church?
Green Group – Week Two  
Discussion Questions – Article Three

Read the third article of the Apostles’ Creed aloud.  
Read the explanation on the third article from the Small Catechism aloud. 

Discuss! The questions below are meant to be a guide. Your conversation should be about what the creed means for you in your lives of faith. 

- Does anything stick out to you from the explanation?
- Is there anything you don’t agree with, in the explanation or the creed?
- Is there anything you think is left out of the explanation?
- How have you understood this part of the creed in the past?
- Has anything about your understanding of this part of the creed changed? If so, how?
- What does this part of the creed teach you about God? How does that impact your life?
- Do you have any questions about this article of the creed?
- Does it matter that we say this part of the creed in church?
Week Three

What are we praying for in the Lord's Prayer?

Learners identify prayer needs in their own community.
Suggested for elementary students.

Learners engage Luther’s interpretation of the Lord's Prayer.
Suggested for adult students.

Learners write prayers for their community with biblical help.
Suggested for confirmation students.
**Week Three: The Lord’s Prayer**

**Suggestions for Intergenerational Programming:**

**Scripture to Consider**

**Learning aims:** Learners will engage Biblical presentations of prayer, discover what the Lord’s Prayer teaches us to pray for, and identify where prayer is needed in their own community.

**The basic structure** of the lessons may remain the same, but below are some suggested changes and activities.

- The activity from the Red Group or Suggested for Children can be done in small groups with adult lay leaders helping children identify what needs may be present in their community. While young learners make cards for those in need of prayer, adult learners may choose to write a note or short letter. In the post-activity discussion, encourage adult learners to talk with younger learners about how they pray at home. This is a great opportunity for adults to model meaningful devotional lives for younger learners.

- In the activity for the Blue Group or Suggested for Confirmation, learners write a new prayer based on the Lord’s Prayer. This activity may be done in intergenerational classrooms as well. Adult learners to help younger students identify needs in their own communities and put these into a prayer. Confirmation-age learners may also be able to help elementary students think through what needs they see in their community as well. Modeling need not take place only between adults and youth, but can occur between younger learners as well.79

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79 Eggen and Kauchak, 181.
Lesson: The Lord’s Prayer  
Week: Three  
Group: Red Group - Suggested for Elementary Students  
Learning Aims: Learners will discover what Jesus said about prayer, learn what the Lord’s Prayer teaches us to pray for, and identify needs in our own congregation. 
Supplies: Bible, crayons or colored pencils, construction paper (to make into cards), parish prayer list  

Welcome to the third week of the catechism class. In today’s class, you’ll be talking with a group of elementary students about what role prayer plays in their own lives. You’ll also have some time to talk about what Jesus and Martin Luther had to say about prayer. Finally, the students will have a chance to make cards that will be given to congregants on the parish prayer list.80

(5 minutes) 
Scripture Reading for the Day (to be read by a student): Luke 11:1-8
He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’ He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Give us each day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our sins,  
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial.’

And he said to them, ‘Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, “Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.” And he answers from within, “Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.” I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

(10 minutes) 
Introduction: Prayer is knocking on God’s door  
In the scripture lesson for today, Jesus told the disciples two things. First, he taught them how to pray. The prayer that Jesus taught them is called the Lord’s Prayer because it was Jesus that taught it to us. In the second half of the story, Jesus tells a parable. Does anyone know what a parable is? (Allow learners to respond.) A parable is a story that contains truth or wisdom. When people asked Jesus questions about faith, he didn’t give them straightforward answers. Instead, he answered in parables that made the disciples look for the answers themselves.

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80 As with the Ten Commandments lesson, this lesson attempts to help learners think outside of their own experience. Students at this age are starting to “understand the impact of their actions on others” and are starting to “make the transition from egocentric preconventional morality to conventional morality” (Eggen and Kauchak, 89). Introducing real people into the lesson helps the learners understand that their prayers have an effect on real people.
So let’s try to think through the parable together. Today’s parable is about a man who was getting ready for bed when he heard a knock on his door. (Knock on a table or wall.) When he opened the door, there was an old friend standing there. He was happy to see him, but he didn’t have anything to give him. He didn’t have any food at all! So he ran to another friend’s home and knocked on the door and asked for food. And he had to knock a few times, but eventually the friend got up and gave him some bread to feed the guest. Who do you think the friend who gave him the bread stands for? (Allow learners to respond, prompting as needed so they can see the connection between the one who gives the bread and God.) Who do you think the unexpected friend who came in the middle of the night stands for? (Allow learners to respond, prompting as needed so they can see the connection between the visitor and people in our lives who need help.) What do you think knocking on the door stands for? (Allow learners to respond, prompting them to think of prayer as knocking on God’s door, if needed.)

The parable Jesus told was about a man who went to a friend to get bread to give to an unexpected guest. In today’s lesson, we’ll be talking about who the “unexpected guests” are in our community and about how we can ask God to help people in need.

(30 minutes)
Activity for the Day:
The words in the Lord’s Prayer can be kind of confusing. Because Jesus lived two thousand years ago, some of the words he used sound strange to us. But Martin Luther helps us understand what and who the Lord’s Prayer teaches us to pray for. So before we start today’s activity, let’s talk about the pieces of the Lord’s Prayer as a class. (Ask the students what they think each part of the prayer means. They will probably have some ideas of their own and you can supplement their ideas with those of Martin Luther. Below is a chart that can help start some discussion on Luther’s interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer. It also includes a helpful guide for getting students started on the next part of the activity.81)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lord’s Prayer</th>
<th>What Did Luther Think it Meant?</th>
<th>Who or what should we pray for?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hallowed be your name.</td>
<td>Hallowed is another word for Holy. We make God’s name Holy when we follow God’s commands and listen to God’s Word.</td>
<td>People who help us listen to God’s word. People who help us learn and grow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your kingdom come.</td>
<td>God’s kingdom comes when we “believe in God’s word.” The Holy Spirit helps us live as a church.</td>
<td>People who are members of our church (not just the pastor!). People on the parish prayer list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.</td>
<td>God’s kingdom comes when God “strengthens us and keeps us steadfast in his word and in faith.”</td>
<td>People who guide us in the faith. God-parents, siblings, friends, mentors, among others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

81 The answers suggested here can be used as scaffolding for learners. Scaffolding is “assistance that helps children complete tasks they cannot complete independently” (Eggen and Kauchak, 47). After hearing an example, the learner may be able to come up with her own answer.
Give us today our daily bread. | Our daily bread is not only food, but also things that make our community a better place to live. Luther also included “good weather, peace, health, decency, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.” | People who grow our food and cook our meals. People who are hungry or living in unsafe places. Our neighbors who make our community a nice place to live.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. | We ask not only that God “not regard our sins” against us, but also that we might “forgive heartily and to do good gladly to those who sin against us.” | People who have forgiven us in the past. People who have hurt us or done mean things to us. For ourselves, that we would be able to forgive.

Save us from the time of trial. | We ask that God “tempts no one” to disobey God’s will, but prevail in remaining steadfast to God’s word. | The knowledge to know good from bad and right from wrong.

And deliver us from evil. | We ask that God deliver us from misfortune in our own lives and in the lives of our friends. | We thank God for giving us Jesus to learn from.

After you’ve talked about the different parts of the Lord’s Prayer, hand out the construction paper and colored pencils. Ask the students to fold them “hamburger-style,” like greetings cards. On the front of the card, invite the kids to draw whatever picture they’d like. On the inside of the card, ask the kids to draw or write something that they can pray for based on what they know about the Lord’s Prayer. These cards will then be given to congregants on the parish prayer list.

(10-15 minutes)

More Questions for Discussion

- **What did you draw on your card? What part of the Lord’s Prayer did you choose to draw? Why?**
- **Is there anything that we pray for in the Lord’s Prayer that surprised you?**
  - Who do we usually pray for in church? Who do you pray for at home?
- **What is more important when we pray: the words that we say or what we feel in our hearts?**
  - Luther told us that what matters in prayer is not the “babbling and bellowing” of our voices, but what we need in our hearts.
- **Why do you think Jesus taught us a prayer?**
  - The Lord’s Prayer not only teaches us what to say, but also who to think about in prayer. What we say with our lips helps shape who we hold in our hearts.

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82 Encourage the learners to draw from their own experience in this part of the activity. Learners in elementary school may have difficulty speaking in abstract terms about prayer, so using “concrete and personalized examples” from your congregation will help their learning be more fulfilling (Eggen and Kauchak, 219).
• *How do we pray when we are alone, at home, in church?*

Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):
Merciful and loving God,
In your Son’s prayer, you not only taught us how to pray, but also how to love one another. Help us keep all of our brothers and sisters in our hearts, even those we do not know by name.
We pray all these things in your Son’s name.
Amen.

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83 It may help the learners if you include a story of your own life or a time when you prayed or asked for something. Elementary school students are often in the pre-operational and concrete operational stages of cognitive development and will need some examples to start the discussion (Eggen and Kauchak, 55).
**Lesson:** The Lord’s Prayer  
**Week:** Three  
**Group:** Blue Group - Suggested for Confirmation Students  
**Learning Aims:** Help learners understand Luther’s interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer, engage with scriptural ideas of prayer, and reconsider the role that prayer plays in their own lives.  
**Scripture:** Matthew 7:7-11  
**Supplies:** Bible, presentation-size pad of paper, markers  

Welcome to the third week of this catechism class. In today’s lesson, you’ll be guiding the class through a discussion about the role that prayer plays in our lives and Luther’s own views on the Lord’s Prayer. Most of the class will focus around some group work in which learners will identify needs to pray for. Before class, write the Bible verses and prayer petitions for each group on a sheet of presentation paper. Groups will use these sheets to work on brainstorming their prayer needs. After the activity, you’ll help the class synthesize their work into one cohesive prayer. It might take some finessing, but the learners will likely appreciate being able to contribute to something. You or your pastor may even consider using the prayer in a future service.

**(5 minutes)**  
**Scripture Reading for the Day (to be read by a student):** Matthew 7:7-11  
‘Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!’

**(5 minutes)**  
**Introduction: What do we ask God for in prayer?**  
*In Jesus’s time, if you had to get somewhere, you had to walk. And it wasn’t easy walking either. In the summer, it could be really hot. They didn’t have paved roads or bike paths like we have today. They had dirt paths. And if it rained, they got washed out and muddy. If it was hot, they got dusty and made it hard to breathe. And if you got stuck, because walking was too hard, you would have had to stop in a village or at someone’s home. That’s what today’s story is about.*

*In today’s scripture reading, Jesus tells us a parable about prayer. Does anyone know what a parable is? (Allow learners to respond.) A parable is a story that Jesus told the disciples to teach them an important point or lesson. Instead of telling them the answer, Jesus told them a story and asked them to interpret the answer for themselves. So let’s think through the story and try to think about what it means. What do you the significance was of “knocking on the door?” (Allow learners to respond.) Knocking on the door is a lot like prayer. Prayer is kind of like knocking on God’s door and asking for something. So if you could knock on God’s door and ask for something, what would you ask for? (Allow learners to respond.)

Well, Jesus also gave us some help on this question by teaching us the Lord’s Prayer. The
Lord’s Prayer was what Jesus thought we should pray for. We say it every week in church, but today we’ll be slowing down to think about what things we are asking for when we pray it. When we knock on God’s door, what is it that we ask for?

**30 minutes**

**Activity for the Day:**

In today’s activity, we’ll be talking about what needs we bring to God in prayer. We’ll do that in groups. Each group will have a worksheet with two things on it. First will be a Bible verse. The second will be a petition of the Lord’s Prayer and a paraphrase of Luther’s interpretation of it. Each group will try to come up with a list of possible needs that we might pray for based on them. You can use needs and examples from your church, school, and community. Work through the first example with the group, included below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripture</th>
<th>Lord’s Prayer Petition</th>
<th>Luther’s Interpretation</th>
<th>What should we pray for?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 7:7</td>
<td>Hallowed be your name.</td>
<td>We pray that God’s word be taught “clearly and purely,” and that we would “live holy lives according to it.”</td>
<td>Guidance</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarity</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>An ability to listen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
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<th>Luther’s Interpretation</th>
<th>What should we pray for?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luke 18:1</td>
<td>Your kingdom come.</td>
<td>We pray that through the grace of the Holy Spirit, we might “live holy lives.”</td>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luke 21:36</td>
<td>Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.</td>
<td>We pray that God keep us “steadfast in his word and in faith” so that his will might be done on earth.</td>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romans 12:12</td>
<td>Give us today our daily bread.</td>
<td>We pray that we would recognize what we need and receive it for the “nourishment of our bodies.” We pray not only for food, but also for “good government, peace,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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84 Prayer can often seem like an abstract concept to young learners, so any way you can relate it to their own lives will help the activity run more smoothly. Allowing to use personal “emotionally relevant” examples will help increase their motivation and appreciation for the project. (EK 339)
Let the groups have about 15 minutes to work on their needs. As a class, discuss what needs people came up with and write them down for the class to see. To complete the activity, use the needs to write a new prayer. Try to include needs from all of the group’s worksheets. Let the group write most of the prayer themselves, but you should feel free to guide them if they’re having trouble making a connection or phrasing something.\footnote{This is a process called scaffolding, “assistance that helps children complete tasks they cannot complete independently” (Eggen and Kauchak, 47). Using scaffolding can help ensure that a task is challenging to keep learners cognitively active, while still ensuring that they can be successful (Eggen and Kauchak, 333).} You’ll have about 15 minutes to prepare the new prayer as a class.

(10 minutes)
**More Questions for Discussion**
- Were they any needs that we came up with that you didn’t expect?
- What do we usually pray for in church? Did we come up with anything that we normally don’t pray for in church?
- Where do you normally pray? Who or what do you normally pray for?
- Luther thought that what we prayer in our hearts mattered more than what we said. Do you agree? Why or why not?

**Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):**
Use the prayer that you wrote as a class during the activity, or the following:

Holy God,
Your Son taught us to pray. Help us not only know how to pray, but how to let our hearts be moved towards you. You know all of our prayers before they leave our lips. We know that you delight in our prayers. Help our hearts be stirred to bring you all of our needs. Amen.
**Lesson:** The Lord’s Prayer  
**Week:** Three  
**Group:** Green Group - Suggested for Adult Learners  
**Learning Aims:** Learners will begin to understand Luther’s interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer, think critically about the prayer itself and Luther’s interpretation, and discuss how a 2,000 year-old prayer can guide the mission of the church.  
**Scripture:** Romans 12:9-13  
**Supplies:** Bible, copies of Small Catechism, copies of worksheets for breakout activities.  
**Other Scripture to Consider:** Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 18:1-8; 11:1-13

Welcome to week three of the catechism class. Today, you’ll be working through Luther’s interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer with a group of adult learners. Today’s lesson is a great chance to foster discussion and critical engagement with Luther’s interpretation of the text. If someone doesn’t agree with Luther’s interpretation, encourage them to say why.

*(5 minutes)*  
**Scripture Reading for the Day (to be read by a student):** Romans 12:9-13

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

*(10 minutes)*  
**Introduction:**

Today’s scripture was written by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans. In today’s scripture, Paul encourages the Roman Christians to “contribute to the needs of the saints” and “extend hospitality to strangers.” And Paul believed that they could do this if they “persevere[d] in prayer.” Paul believed that we don’t only pray in good times or in bad times, but at all times. And we don’t just pray once, but continually. Prayer is for all seasons of life. And we do pray at all times, especially in our liturgies. Every week in worship we say the Lord’s Prayer, the prayer that Jesus taught the disciples to pray in the Gospel of Luke.

But while Jesus told us what to say, he didn’t tell us what or who the prayers are for. In the catechisms, Martin Luther took on the task of interpreting the Lord’s Prayer to try to understand what Jesus meant by its petitions and requests. To understand what all the pieces of the prayer mean. Today, we’ll be doing what Luther did: interpreting the words of the Lord’s Prayer.

Today’s activity encourages you to ask questions of the text, both the prayer itself and Luther’s interpretation of it. Don’t be nervous if you have a question! There’s no question that we can’t talk about as a class.  

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86 This activity encourages learners to ask open-ended questions, which are not immediately apparent in the text. The texts have to be interpreted or analyzed to find answers. This use of open-ended questioning has been shown to increase learning involvement from the students (Eggen and Kauchak, 339). Allowing students to raise their own questions about the text encourages them to remain cognitively active and maintain ownership and a sense of autonomy over their learning goals (Eggen and Kauchak, 285).
an answer. What really matters is that we take the time to intentionally engage with the Bible and the catechism. The answers to the activity are secondary.

This is a tough task, but I think we’re up for it. So let’s talk about the tools we have to work with. First, we have the words of the Lord’s Prayer. This will give us a starting point to begin our work. Second, we have Luther’s interpretation in the Small Catechism. Third, we have scripture. Today, we’ll be focusing on Romans 12:9-13 to help illuminate our answers. And finally, we have our experience. There are needs and realities that Paul and Luther couldn’t have foreseen. Let your experiences shape the way you read the Lord’s Prayer. You have a belt full of tools to work with!

(30 minutes)
Activity for the Day:

Break the class into six numbered groups.87 Each group will be given one of the worksheets below. Ask each group to read its portion of the Lord’s Prayer and write a question that they have about the text. Possible questions could include: What does this word mean? What does this mean theologically? What is the practical application of this?

Remind the groups that no question is off limits, too hard, or too easy. After they write their question, ask each group to pass their work sheet to the next group (ex. group one passes to group two, group two passes to group three, etc.). Using their copies of the Small Catechism, this group will try to imagine how Martin Luther would answer the first group’s question.88 After answering that question, the groups will all pass their worksheets to the next group again. This time each group will try to answer the first group’s question based on their own beliefs and experiences.

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87 This activity uses a teaching method called “reciprocal questioning” (Eggen and Kauchak, 421). In reciprocal questioning, learners are asked to “work together to ask and answer questions about a lesson or text.”
88 Allowing the groups to critique Luther’s interpretations supports critical thinking skills. Critical thinking requires reaching decisions based on evidence, not beliefs (Eggen and Kauchak, 271). By allowing learners to critically engage Luther, learners will be more motivated. It is also likely that by critically engaging Luther’s arguments they will have a better understanding of his arguments than if they simply memorized them.
Green Group – Week 3
Group 1

Petition: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name…

Question for the text:

What would Luther say?

What do we think?
Green Group – Week 3
Group 2

Petition: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven…

Question for the text:

What would Luther say?

What do we think?
Green Group – Week 3
Group 3

Petition: Give us this day our daily bread…

Question for the text:

What would Luther say?

What do we think?
Green Group – Week 3
Group 4

Petition: And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us…

Question for the text:

What would Luther say?

What do we think?
Green Group – Week 3
Group 5

Petition: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil…

Question for the text:

What would Luther say?

What do we think?
Green Group – Week 3
Group 6

Petition: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Question for the text:

What would Luther say?

What do we think?
After the worksheets are completed, return them to the original group. Invite each group to share its question with the whole group, along with the answers provided by other groups.

(15 minutes)
More Questions for Discussion

- Did any of Luther’s interpretations surprise you? Did you disagree with any of his interpretations?
- Which parts of the Lord’s Prayer do you find the most meaningful? Are there parts that you find troubling or disconcerting?
- How can the Lord’s Prayer inform the mission of the church? Possible topics to discuss:
  - Luther says that God’s name is made holy where the gospel is “taught clearly and purely.” What does that mean for our church? How do we teach and proclaim the gospel?
  - How can the church ensure God’s “will be done” on earth? What is “God’s good and gracious will?”
  - How can the church provide “daily bread” to our neighbors?
  - What do Lutherans believe about the forgiveness of sins? Can Lutherans go to confession like Catholics do?
    - The short answer is yes. Luther believed that “private absolution is derived from the office of the keys.” Early in his life, Luther believed confession and absolution to be its own sacrament. After 1520 he had a change of heart and claimed that it should be thought of as an extension of baptism since it included no “divinely instituted visible sign.” The main difference between Catholic and Lutheran confession is that the Lutheran rite of absolution does not include penance or satisfaction.
  - Some translations of the Lord’s Prayer use “save us from the time of trial,” while others use “lead us not into temptation.” Do these two phrases sound like the same thing to you? Which one do you prefer?
- How can we incorporate more time for prayer into our lives? What should we strive for in our prayer?
  - Luther believed that to pray was to “call upon God in every need.” What needs are regularly lifted up in our liturgy? What needs should be included in our liturgy?

Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):
God, who is with us in all times and in all places,
We ask that you be here today in our going out, that you might make us servants of one another, forgiving our trespasses, sharing our daily bread, and helping your kingdom come.

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We pray this all in your Son’s name.
Amen.
Week Four

What is a sacrament? Why are they important?

Learners define and name the two sacraments. Suggested for elementary students.

Students critically evaluate the relationship between sacramental theology and church practice. Suggested for adult students.

Learners relate the sacraments to their own faith journey, especially confirmation. Suggested for confirmation students.
Week Four: The Sacraments

Suggestions for intergenerational programming:

Scripture to Consider: Romans 6:3-5; Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 26:26-28; Luke 22:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Learning aims: Learners will be able to name and describe the two sacraments (baptism and communion), exhibit a Lutheran understanding of what a sacrament is and does, and articulate why the sacraments are important for our lives of faith.

The basic structure of the lessons may remain the same, but below are some suggested changes and activities.

- The activity from the Red Group or Suggested for Children can be done with learners of all ages. The field trip's concrete aspects allow both children and adults to engage this material together.
- Encourage learners of all ages to share their experiences of baptism and communion at each station. You could encourage any recent confirmands to share their experience of affirming their baptism. Talk about the importance of both sacraments for people during their whole life. Emphasize the importance of remembering our baptism, even if it was a long, long time ago. Talk about how communion helps us stay connected to our faith, our community, and Jesus - no matter how old we are!

__93 Perspective-taking ability__, an important part of social development, grows slowly over time (Eggen and Kauchak, 87-88). However, sharing experiences inter-generationally may help all students to think about and understand how other people at a different stage of life experience the sacraments. This sharing may help the development of perspective-taking.
Lesson: The Sacraments  
Week: Four  
Group: Red Group - Suggested for Elementary Students  
Learning Aims: Name and describe the two sacraments; understand why we do baptism and communion in the church.  
Scripture: Romans 6:3-5; Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 26:26-28; Luke 22:19-20  
Supplies: Bible marked with the day’s passages, baptismal font with water in it OR bowl with water in it; communion ware with bread and wine or grape juice.  
Other Scripture to Consider: Mark 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Welcome to week four of the catechism class. This week you’ll be talking with your group about the sacraments – baptism and communion. Before class, mark a Bible with today’s passages so that they are ready for your students to read. Most of today’s class will take place in the church’s sanctuary, if possible. If you are unable to use the sanctuary, set up a large bowl of water in one part of the room and place communion ware with bread and wine or juice in another.

(5-10 minutes)  
Introduction: What is a sacrament?\(^{94}\)

Good morning! Today we are going to be learning about sacraments. Who knows what a sacrament is? (Allow time for students to answer; if needed, prompt with questions about special things we do in church – something we do every week (or every other week), something we do when there is a new baby in the church). Right! In the Lutheran church, we have two sacraments: baptism and communion. Does anyone know what makes baptism and communion sacraments? (Allow time for students to respond and brainstorm). Those are all really great ideas! But did you know there are only 3 things needed to make a sacrament? The first thing is ordinary stuff (like water, bread, and wine), the second thing is God's promise in the Bible, and the third thing is Jesus’ command for us to do it. So what are the three things we need for a sacrament? (Allow time for students to respond, prompting as needed.)

That’s great! Now we’re going to go on a field trip to the sanctuary to learn more about the two sacraments, baptism and communion! (Lead students to the sanctuary and gather around the baptismal font. Alternatively, gather the students around the bowl of water in your classroom.)

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\(^{94}\) Much of today’s lesson is developed through the technique of questioning, which encourages students to remain cognitively active during the lesson and helps reinforce content. The lesson has a high questioning frequency, which will be made more effective if the teacher calls equitably on all students in the class. Prompting when students fail to answer correctly and giving feedback on their answers to help them avoid constructing misconceptions will increase the effectiveness of this teaching technique and contribute to achieving the day’s learning aims (Eggen and Kauchak, 447-449). Additionally, the definition of a sacrament is repeated frequently throughout the lesson. This creates rehearsal of the information being stored in the working memory, increasing the chances that it will be stored in the long-term memory (Eggen and Kauchak, 213).
(30-40 minutes)

**Activity for the Day: Baptism and Communion as Sacraments**

Once you have reached the sanctuary and gathered around the baptismal font or gathered around your classroom baptism station, you'll engage the students in a discussion of what baptism is and why it is important. *Okay, class, who remembers what three things we need for a sacrament?* (Call on students to share the three things, prompting as needed.) *Great! The three things we need are ordinary stuff, God's promise in the Bible, and Jesus' command for us to do it. What ordinary stuff do we use in baptism?* (If students have trouble, indicate the water in the baptismal font.) *That’s right, water. What makes the water special?* (Allow students to brainstorm and respond, prompting as needed.) *Right! God promises in the Bible that being baptized makes us part of God’s family and gives us forgiveness of sins and new life in Jesus.* (Ask a student to read Romans 6:3-5.)

So we have our ordinary stuff and the promise of God in the Bible, what else do we still need? (Allow time for students to respond, prompting as needed.) *Right! We need the command of Jesus.* (Have another student read the second reading, Matthew 28:18-20). *Great! So we have all the things we need for a sacrament in baptism: ordinary water, God's promise, and Jesus' command. Have any of you been baptized?* (Allow time for students to respond and share.) *Do any of you remember being baptized or remember when someone else in your family or this congregation was baptized?* (Allow time for students to respond.) A lot of us don't remember our baptism because most of the time in our church, people are baptized as babies. A person can be baptized any time, but they can only be baptized once because once is all it takes! But even though we don’t get baptized again, it's important for us to remember our baptism during our whole life!

*What are some ways we could remember our baptism?* (Allow time for students to brainstorm and respond. Based on their responses, suggest other things like remembering when we wash our face, take a bath or shower, or go swimming.) *Another way we can remember our baptism is in church, by dipping our finger in the water in the font and then making the sign of the cross on our own forehead or by making the sign of sign of the cross on someone else’s forehead and reminding them that they are a child of God and that their sins are forgiven. So let's try that!* (Have the students dip their fingers in the water, then turn to their neighbor and make the sign of the cross on their forehead, saying “You are a child of God and your sins are forgiven.” When everyone has received the blessing, have the students move either to stand around the altar or to your classroom's communion station.)

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95 Reading scripture passage throughout the lesson connects what the students are learning to the biblical narrative, helping reinforce that narrative as part of the student’s self-narrative. Additionally, asking students to share their own experience of baptism and communion encourages them to rehearse and share parts of their own narratives with the class. Narratives have an essential integrative function in human life and contribute to the health of the mind (Siegel, 364-365).

96 This activity models how to engage in a concrete practice for remembering our baptism. The practice itself may help increase students’ memory of the lesson because it combines verbal and sensory elements. This activates distributed processing in the memory and increases the likelihood that students will remember what they learned in the lesson (Eggen and Kauchak, 218).
Now that we’ve learned about baptism, we’re going to learn about the other sacrament, communion. What are the three things that make a sacrament again? (Allow time for response.) Right! So what are the ordinary things we use for communion? (Allow time for response. If needed, prompt them by indicating the bread and wine on the altar or at your station.) Right! Bread and wine or juice. So what else do we need? (Allow time for response.) Yep! God’s promise in the Bible. (Have another student read the passage from Matthew 26:26-28). So in communion, God promises to forgive our sins and to be with us through the body and blood of Jesus. But we still need one more thing, right? (Allow time for response.) Exactly, we need Jesus’ command that we do it! (Have another student read the passage from Luke 22:19-20.) In this passage, Jesus commands us to "do this in remembrance of him." And so that is why we have communion every week (once a month, etc.) in church.

Do any of you take communion on Sundays? (Invite students to share their experiences of communion. Depending on your church’s practice, you could suggest to students who don’t take communion that they can ask their parents and the pastor about when it would be okay to start taking it.) Communion is important because in it, our sins are forgiven and Jesus is here with us whenever we take communion. Communion is also special because it connects us with other Christians. It’s a special meal for our Christian family and whenever we eat it, we are connected with Christians here in our church, Christians who came before us a long time ago, and Christians who will come after us. It also connects us with other Christians all over the world!

Do any of you have family who live in another place or who speak another language? (Allow time for students to respond.) That’s great! In our Christian family, we also have people who live in other places and speak other languages, but in communion Jesus connects us with them, no matter how far away from them we are. It’s pretty amazing! We take communion every week (every other week, monthly) because it is important for our faith to be fed through the presence of Jesus. So even though baptism only happens once in our life, communion happens many times over our whole life so that our faith can keep on being fed.

(5 minutes)

Closing

So let’s review – what makes a sacrament? Right! Ordinary stuff, God’s promise, and Jesus’ command together make a sacrament. What are the two sacraments we have? (Allow time for students to respond.) Yes – baptism and communion are our two sacraments, and they make us part of God’s family, bring us forgiveness of sins, and connect us with God and with other Christians all over. Remember – even though baptism is only a one-time sacrament, we can remember our baptism anytime! And we take communion through our whole life to sustain and nourish us along the way. Let’s end today’s class with prayer. (Ask a student to pray the closing prayer.)

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97 This review section aims to crystallize the key concepts from the lesson, again rehearsing content in the working memory in the hopes that it will be stored for the long term (Eggen and Kauchak, 213).
Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):
Loving God,
You gave us the sacraments of baptism and communion to make us part of your family, forgive our sins, and connect us with Christians from every time and place. Help us remember our baptism every day and know that Jesus is with us every time we take communion. Help us invite other people to be part of your family, too. Amen.
Lesson: The Sacraments
Week: Four
Group: Blue Group - Suggested for Confirmation Students
Learning Aims: Students will gain an understanding of what the sacraments are, what they mean, and how they relate to the students’ affirmation of baptism and lifelong faith practices
Scripture: Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
Supplies: Bible marked with today’s passages, scratch paper, pens, presentation paper or whiteboard, markers, copies of the catechism, copies of the affirmation of baptism liturgy from the LBW or ELW
Other Scripture to Consider: Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 26:26-28; Luke 22:19-20; Mark 1:9-11

Welcome to week four of the catechism program. This week you’ll be guiding a group of confirmation students through a conversation about the sacraments. You’ll be helping them gain an understanding of what the sacraments are, what they mean, and how they relate to the students’ affirmation of baptism and lifelong faith practices.

(15 minutes)
Introduction: The Sacraments and Affirmation of Baptism

Good morning! Today we are going to be learning about the sacraments. Who knows what a sacrament is? (Allow time for students to answer; if needed, prompt with questions about important moments in our faith life and in worship). Right! In the Lutheran church, we have two sacraments: baptism and communion. Does anyone remember what makes baptism and communion sacraments? (Allow time for students to respond and brainstorm). Remember - there are only 3 things needed to make a sacrament. The first thing is ordinary stuff (like water, bread, and wine), the second thing is God’s promise in the Bible, and the third thing is Jesus’ command for us to do it. So in baptism, the ordinary stuff is water. Jesus commanded us to go out and baptize in the Great Commission, and we have the promises of God in the Bible. (At this point, ask a student to read Romans 6:3-5). God promises that in our baptism we are joined to Christ and we receive forgiveness of sins and new life.

Communion also uses ordinary stuff – bread and wine. Jesus commands us to “do this in remembrance of him,” and we have the promises of God in the Bible. (At this point, ask one student to read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 and other student to read Matthew 26:26-28). God promises that in communion we receive forgiveness of sins and we proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus as part of the body of Christ.

You all will be confirmed soon (in a year or two, possibly). In that service, called Affirmation of Baptism, you will be asked to affirm, or say yes to, the promises that were made

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98 This lesson is personalized for confirmation students through applying our study of the sacraments to the Affirmation of Baptism service, something that the students are working toward and will be experiencing within the
for you by other people in your baptism. You will be asked if you plan to continue in the life of faith, which includes taking part in communion as part of a congregation. Today, we are going to look at the Affirmation of Baptism liturgy (the words we use in that service) and the explanations of the sacraments in the Small Catechism. You will have a chance to ask questions about what the sacraments mean and about the Affirmation of Baptism service so that you will be prepared for confirmation.

(40 minutes)
Activity for the Day:

Today, students will be looking at the explanations of the sacraments in the Small Catechism and the Affirmation of Baptism liturgy in either the Lutheran Book of Worship or Evangelical Lutheran Worship, depending on which resource your congregation has. Have students get into groups of three. Make sure each group has at least one catechism and one copy of the liturgy, as well as paper and pens for note-taking.

For the first 5-7 minutes, have them read through the explanations of the sacraments and the liturgy. Have them write down any questions they have about the explanations of the sacraments or the liturgy. At the end of the time, have the groups share their main questions. Write down the main questions on the board or paper and try to answer them together as a class. If you don’t know the answer to a question, it’s okay to say so. Tell the students that you will find out for them, or encourage them to ask a pastor or lay leader in your congregation.

For the next ten minutes, ask them to list places where they notice that the sacraments are mentioned or where the liturgy has similar language to the explanations of the sacraments. Have each group share where they found similar language or mention of the sacraments. Talk about how it’s important to know about and understand the sacraments when we get confirmed because the sacraments are such an important part of our faith. Ask the students if they noticed any differences as well.

For the last ten minutes, discuss as a class how the students feel about saying the words in the Affirmation of Baptism liturgy. Is there anything they are excited to say? Is there anything they are not sure about? Remind students that it’s okay to have questions. Write down any major questions or concerns so that these can be addressed in other sessions of confirmation class. At the end, ask a student to pray the closing prayer.

(5 minutes)
Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):

Holy God,
We give you thanks for the people who made promises to teach us about you in our baptism. Help us to understand the sacraments and say yes to the promises that were made for us. Guide us as we learn more about you and your will for our lives. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

next year or two. Personalizing helps students relate to the topic of study and remain cognitively engaged (Eggen and Kauchak, 378).
Lesson: The Sacraments  
Week: Four  
Group: Green Group - Suggested for Adult Learners  
Learning Aims: Learners will be able to define what a sacrament is, gain an historical understanding of the relationship between the two sacraments, and consider to what extent our practice of the sacraments in the church reflects a historical and Lutheran understanding of the sacraments.  
Scripture: Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26  
Supplies: Bible marked with today's passages, presentation-size pad of paper, markers, copies of the catechism  
Other Scripture to Consider: Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 26:26-28; Luke 22:19-20; Mark 1:9-11

Welcome to week four of the catechism program. This week you’ll be guiding a group of adults through a discussion of the relationship between the two sacraments and of the sacramental practices of your congregation. If possible, it would be great if the congregation’s pastor or a theologically trained layperson in your congregation could be present for this class session. That way, he or she could field theological questions from the groups that you may not be able to answer. If he or she cannot be present, feel confident to admit if you don’t know the answer to a student’s or group’s question. Refer them to the pastor or another leader in your congregation.

(10 minutes)  
Introduction: History of the Sacraments in the Early Church99

Today, we’ll be learning about the two sacraments – baptism and communion – and how they relate to each other historically. We’ll then be discussing how our sacramental practice in this congregation fits in with the history of the sacraments and with our Lutheran theology of the sacraments.

For Luther, three things are required to make a sacrament: ordinary, earthly elements; the promise of God in scripture; and the command of Christ. Therefore, we have two sacraments in our tradition: baptism and communion. Although some other Christian traditions have additional sacraments, these two are the fundamental sacraments shared by most Christian churches and have a history going all the way back to the first Christian communities. We believe that in baptism, we receive forgiveness of sins and are united in the body of Christ as part of God’s family. In communion, we receive forgiveness of sins, Christ is present with us, and we are joined with Christians everywhere in the communion of saints through the shared meal.

In the early church, baptism and communion were very closely connected. Before people were baptized, they often went through a long process of instruction called the catechumenate.

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This could be anywhere from three weeks to three years in length! Baptisms usually occurred on significant holy days in the church year, such as on the Easter Vigil. Individuals would prepare by fasting and praying in the days before the vigil. Then, they would be baptized on the Easter Vigil and receive communion for the first time. In many early traditions, communion was viewed as the culmination of the sacrament of baptism.100 Cyprian, a bishop of the early church in North Africa, saw the sacraments of baptism and communion as being inseparable.101 Cyprian also argued that age was unimportant for either sacrament. The important thing was that the sacraments joined people to the Christian community. Communion, especially, continually brings the Christian community into being through the body of Christ.

Much later, Luther also argued that the sacraments must be received in faith. This faith, however, was not only a cognitive, rational faith, but one that everyone could have. He believed that even infants have faith, even though their faith is not rational, but based on trust in a relationship.102 For him, the whole Christian life is a remembrance of baptism, a daily death of the old self and rising to new life in Christ.103 In communion, we also receive “forgiveness of sins... life and salvation,” continuing to be renewed in our baptismal promises.104

(35 minutes)

Activity for the Day:

Break the class into groups of 3-5 participants each. (If you have a small class, you could also engage in whole class discussion). Make sure each group has a copy of the discussion questions. Indicate to the groups that they will be discussing the history and theology of the sacraments and to what degree the sacramental practices of your congregation fit with the history and theology.105 Remind students that in discussing the practices of the church, individuals may have strong and differing opinions. Emphasize the need for respect and listening in the group discussions. It is also important for the students to know that they can ask difficult questions. If they have theological questions, encourage them to refer back to the Bible or to their catechism first. If a pastor or lay leader is present, remind the groups that he or she is there to be a resource, but that they should be directing and contributing to the discussion themselves. Critical engagement of the theology, traditions, and practices of your church is the goal. Additionally, the groups will have an opportunity to share their insights with the whole class at the end of the session.

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100 Ibid., 111.
101 Ibid., 93.
102 Ibid., 318.
103 Ibid., 317.
104 Martin Luther, Luther’s Small Catechism with Evangelical Lutheran Worship Texts, trans. Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008).
105 This lesson for adults is also personalized and concretized through asking students to apply their learning about sacramental history and theology to their congregation’s actual practice, with which they should be familiar. Similarly, this helps bridge the gap between concrete operational and formal operational cognitive development. Since most adults are formal operational thinkers in areas where they have considerable experience, this activity asks them to apply more abstract thinking about the sacraments to concrete and specific practices in the church (Eggen and Kauchak, 42).
(15 minutes)

More Questions for Discussion

Invite groups to share their ideas about what the congregation does well. Write these down on the presentation paper. Discuss any common themes or stand-out ideas.

Then have groups share their ideas about what the congregation could do better. Write these down as well. Discuss any common themes or stand-out ideas. Discuss how any changes could be implemented and what impact they would have on the congregation. Close by having a student pray the closing prayer.

Closing Prayer (to be read by a student):

Lamb of God,

Thank you for being present with us and making us part of your family in the sacraments of baptism and communion. Help our congregation to be faithful ministers in our baptism and communion practices. Guide us in the way that we should go. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

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106 This activity has potential practical applications for the congregation’s practice. Seeing that changes they thought about and considered could be implemented in the congregation may increase student motivation in the future through demonstrating competency and progress in student learning (Eggen and Kauchak, 371). Additionally, this activity contains elements of problem-based learning because it asks students to address potential mismatch between their congregation’s sacramental practice and its theology by considering possible changes to the congregation’s practice. Evidence suggests that problem-based learning is more effective for transfer and long-term storage of concepts (Eggen and Kauchak, 268). Finally, this activity challenges students to think critically about congregational practices by evaluating them according to theological frameworks and historical precedents. Asking students to illustrate or explain their thinking during the sharing time would promote critical thinking even more (Eggen and Kauchak, 276).
Green Group – Week Four
Discussion Questions

Describe the current baptismal practices of your congregation. Who is typically baptized? Where do baptisms take place? Who is present? Is there baptismal instruction before or after the baptism? How does the congregation care for the newly (or not-so-newly) baptized?

Describe the current communion practices of your congregation. How often is communion served? Who is allowed to receive communion? Are there any people who don’t take communion? If so, why? How is the sacrament introduced in worship? (Is there an invitation to communion? What does it say?) How is communion served? Is there a home communion ministry at your congregation? Is there any instruction about communion for people in your congregation?

Given what you have learned about the history and theology of the sacraments, what do you think your congregation does in its sacramental practice that fits well with the history and theology?

What could your congregation change to make its practice fit the theology and history of the sacraments better?
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