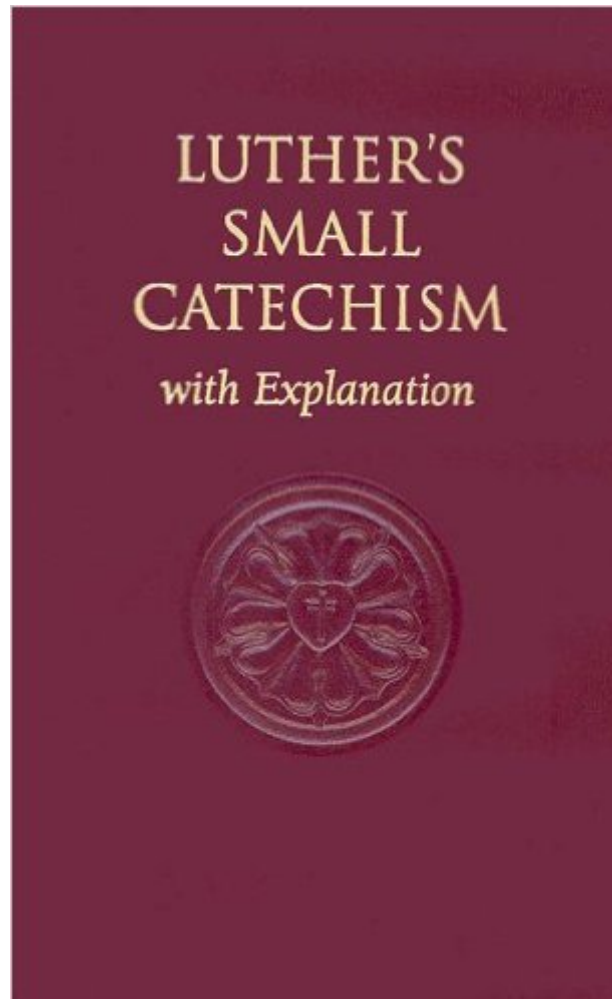


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# Luther's Small Catechism, With Explanation



## Synopsis

This version of Luther's Small Catechism features scripture references taken from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible. Written by Martin Luther in 1529 in question and answer format, the Small Catechism explores the Six Chief Parts of Christian Doctrine: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Altar. Also included are daily prayers, a table of duties for Christians in their various callings in life, and a guide for Christians to use as they prepare to receive Holy Communion. Luther intended the catechism to be a prayer book for individuals and families and a powerful tool for the Christian life because it provides a brief, clear summary of God's Word on the essentials of the Christian faith. Additional reference material includes: books of the Bible; the creeds and confessions; an explanation of Luther's seal; an explanation of the church year; fifty terms relating to worship and God's House; a brief history of the time between the testaments; an outline of God's salvation plan; and fifty Christian symbols and their meanings. The explanation contained in this text was not written by Martin Luther. An explanation designed to help students understand and apply Luther's Small Catechism has accompanied editions of the Catechism since the early days of Lutheranism. The explanation is based upon and largely includes the work of Johann Konrad Dietrich, Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, Heinrich Christian Schwan, and the committee that prepared the synodical catechism of 1943.

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## Customer Reviews

"The deplorable, miserable conditions which I recently observed when visiting the parishes have

constrained and pressed me to put this catechism of Christian doctrine into the brief, plain, and simple form. How pitiable, so help me God, were the things I saw: the common man, especially in the villages, knows practically nothing of Christian doctrine, and many of the pastors are almost entirely incompetent and unable to teach." Thus begins Martin Luther in his incomparable little guide to the Christian faith. The Small Catechism is simple enough to be understood by a child, yet challenging enough for the most mature Christian. In his book Luther outlines the basics of the Faith: The Ten Commandments, The Creed, The Lord's Prayer, The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Confession (the Office of the Keys), and The Sacrament of the Altar. Luther also adds Daily Prayers, a Table of Duties, and Christian Questions with Their Answers. The addition featured above also contains more elaborate question and answers involving the six chief parts. Luther was at his finest as a theologian and a pastor when he penned the Small Catechism. Don't just read this book, it must be continually reviewed, memorized, and taken to heart.

As a faithful member of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, I decided to re-read the old Small Catechism. To tell you the truth, in church every Sunday, the pastor would talk about how Baptism and Holy Communion forgive one of his sins, but I never really understood why. I couldn't understand why a baby is Baptized when that baby obviously can't even understand the concept of "I" let alone the concept of a Triune God. So, to find the answers to these questions, I turned to the Catechism. I found the answers to why Communion and Baptism offers forgiveness of sins; I found the rationale for Baptising babies (they can have a saving faith); I found answers to other questions that I have never thought of: Even though we pray "...and lead us not into temptation," God does not tempt us to sin; what each commandment really means, the relationship between obeying the Law of God and Grace/Forgiveness. Now, if Luther had just sat down and wrote his own thoughts on all these subjects, the book wouldn't be worth the paper it was written on, but Luther makes sure he puts several verses from the Bible (none taken out of context), to show Biblical support for his answers. It really helped me to understand my faith a little better. It's little wonder that it's been in print for nearly 500 years.

This small catechism, though not a deal clincher on its own, certainly played a vital role in my move from the contemporary American evangelical movement to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. If you're looking for solid teaching on the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, The Apostles Creed, the Lord's Supper, baptism, and Confession and Absolution, then the writing in this book will aid you along very nicely. For those who desire a deeper look at the Lutheran Confessions I would

recommend purchasing a copy of the Book of Concord, which has a copy of the Small and Large Catechisms. That said, I highly recommend this version of the small catechism as it's nice to have as a resource when questions come up.

This Concordia publication has Luther's small catechism with 200 pages of scripture verses and explanations. This is an excellent study for anyone, young or old. I am in my forties and found this a great way to remind me of the clear truths of christianity. Luther's writings have a way of always bringing you back to the basics and the basics are always relevant to whatever you are going through in your life. It is only when you get away from clear doctrine that the gospel seems less than relevant to your daily life. The catechism is a great review of the truths of the christian faith.

I have been a Christian for quite a few years. And I went through two years of confirmation classes as a teen. But over the last few years as I spent more time in God's Word, I found I had a lot of questions. I asked my pastor, but never got satisfactory answers. I recently joined a Lutheran (LCMS) church and read this book and the Book of Concord. I found both to be very helpful, but in particular, I enjoyed how the Small Catechism answered so many of the questions I had previously been unable to answer. All of the points are backed up with quotations from scripture (NIV translation) which I also liked. All in all, I highly recommend this book. I think it is appropriate for all Christians, not just Lutherans.

This is a great place to start for finding answers to common Christian questions. All of the basic parts of the Christian faith are presented in good detail with Biblical references to back up the answers. Ever wonder why Christians believe the way that they do or how to answer a non-Christian friend? You should find good answers here in easy to digest pieces. This book is the primary source of teaching Lutheran doctrine in the Lutheran Church.

This is the backbone of the Lutheran faith. It's comprehensive on every single subject within religion today. It is an excellent read for all Lutherans to better understand their faith and for non lutherans to grasp a look into this area of christianity.

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