

LUTHER'S  
SMALL  
CATECHISM  
*with Explanation*



Interleaved

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SMALL  
CATECHISM  
*with Explanation*





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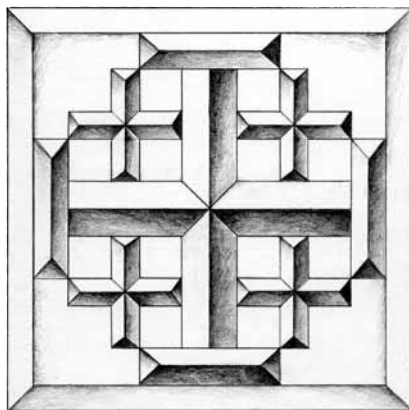
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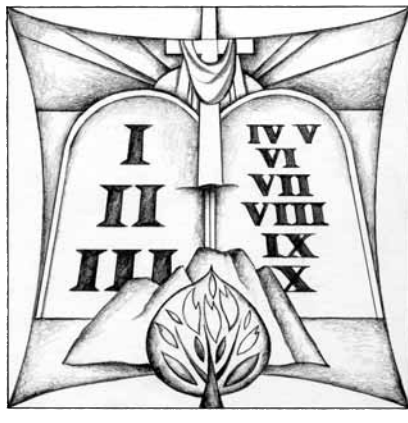
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## Section 1

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

As the head of the family should teach them  
in a simple way to his household

#### *The First Commandment*

**You shall have no other gods.**

*What does this mean?* We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

#### *The Second Commandment*

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

*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or

deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

### *The Third Commandment*

#### **Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**

*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

### *The Fourth Commandment*

#### **Honor your father and your mother.**

*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

### *The Fifth Commandment*

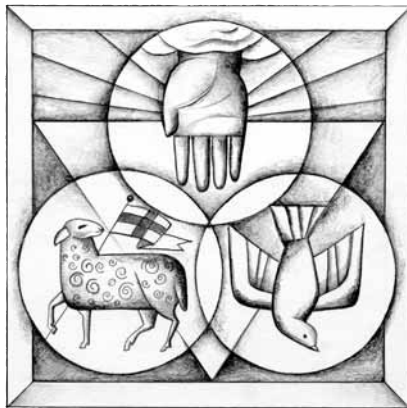
#### **You shall not murder.**

*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

### *The Sixth Commandment*

#### **You shall not commit adultery.**

*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.



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## THE CREED

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As the head of the family should teach it  
in a simple way to his household

### *The First Article*

Creation

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

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

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



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

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

This is most certainly true.

### *The Second Article*

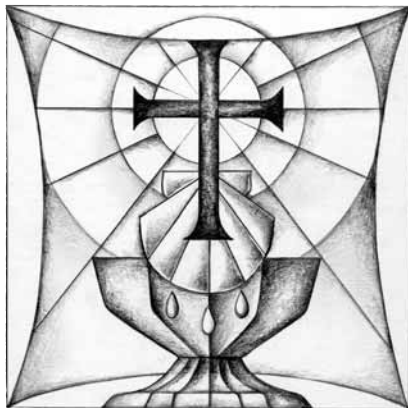
#### Redemption

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

*What does this mean?* I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord,

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,



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## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

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As the head of the family should teach it  
in a simple way to his household

*First*

### *What is Baptism?*

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

### *Which is that word of God?*

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." **(Matt. 28:19)**

### *Second*

#### *What benefits does Baptism give?*

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

#### *Which are these words and promises of God?*

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” (**Mark 16:16**)

### *Third*

#### *How can water do such great things?*

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God’s word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three:

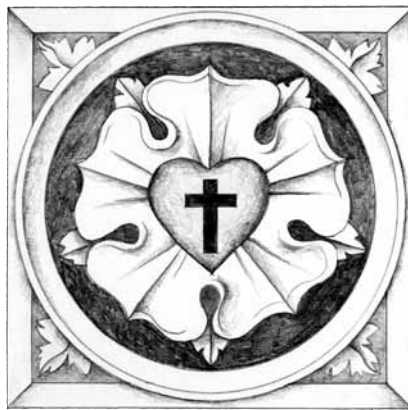
“He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.” (**Titus 3:5–8**)

# AN EXPLANATION OF THE SMALL CATECHISM

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Designed to help students understand and apply Luther's Small Catechism, the following explanation section, like those found in earlier editions, was not written by Dr. Luther. An explanation section, however, has regularly accompanied editions of Luther's Small Catechism since the early days of Lutheranism. This explanation has been based upon and largely includes the work of Johann Konrad Dietrich (1575–1639), Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (1811–1887), Heinrich Christian Schwan (1819–1905), and the committee that prepared the synodical catechism of 1943.

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## INTRODUCTION

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### *1. What is Christianity?*

Christianity is the life and salvation God has given in and through Jesus Christ.

- 1 **John 14:6** I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
- 2 **John 17:3** This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.
- 3 **Acts 4:12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.
- 4 **Acts 11:26** The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.
- 5 **1 John 5:11–12** God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life;

he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

**Note:** Christianity was at first called “the Way” (**Acts 9:2; 24:14, 22**).

## ***2. Where is God’s truth about our Savior Jesus Christ made known?***

This truth is made known in the Bible: the Old Testament, which promises the coming Savior, and the New Testament, which tells of the Savior who has come.

- 6 **Heb. 1:1–2** In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son.
- 7 **Luke 24:27** Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.
- 8 **John 20:31** These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.
- 9 **Eph. 2:20** [You are] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone.
- 10 **1 John 1:1** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

## ***3. Why do we call the Bible the “Holy Scripture”?***

The Bible is the “Holy Scripture” because God the Holy Spirit gave to His chosen writers the thoughts that they expressed and the words that they wrote (verbal