

Introduction to the Catechism

1. What does the word **Catechism** mean? (look at question 10)_____

2. Look at the table of contents and list the main sections of the Catechism

A. _____, _____, _____
_____, _____, _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

3. Look at the table of contents and list the sections contained in “An Explanation of the Small Catechism”

_____, _____, _____
_____, _____, _____
_____, _____

Appendix

_____, _____, _____
_____, _____, _____

4. Find Luther’s Preface to the catechism in the table of contents. What page is it on? _____

Read the preface to the catechism and answer the following questions

a. Why did Luther write the catechism? _____

b. Who was Luther particularly angry with? _____

Why? _____

c. Luther lists four things that pastors should do in order to catechize the people, please list these below.

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

iv. _____

5. What is the first thing that we are going to be doing as we learn the catechism? _____

6. What is the second step in learning the catechism? _____

7. What, exactly, are you going to be memorizing? _____

8. After memorizing the section of the catechism we will proceed with the second goal of Lutherand that is to come to understand what the words mean. The following will be a short discussion about words, their meanings and how we derive the meaning of a word.

A. Where might one look for a definition of a word? _____

B. How might the catechism be of help in this process? _____

C. Look up the word "hand" in a dictionary. How many entries are listed for this word? _____
_____. Give some examples of what the word means?
_____, _____
_____.

D. The word hand is used in all of the following examples, what does each reference mean?

a. The farmer hired a "hand" to help him _____

b. The man asked the girl's father for her "hand" _____

c. The card player looked intently at his "hand" _____

d. The comedian got a "hand" from the audience _____

e. The man hurt his "hand" in the machine _____

f. The "hands" on the clock were approaching 12 noon _____

E. Do these words mean the exact same thing? _____

What helps us to understand the meaning of the words? _____

F. When we try to define a word, can we just go to the dictionary and pick out any definition and plug it in? _____ What do we have to do to make sure that we have the right definition? _____

G. As an example, let us try to define the word "hand" in the phrase "sits at the right

hand of God, the Father Almighty” in the creed. What does the word “hand” mean in this context? _____

[To help us figure this out, let us answer a few questions about this text. Who is it speaking about? _____ and _____

Does God the Father have a literal “right hand”? _____

What information does a dictionary give us to help us understand what this means? _____

How does the catechism itself help us to come to understand what this word means in this context? _____

9. We will be spending our time memorizing and then coming to understand what the words which we have memorized means. We will also use the Large Catechism, when appropriate to help us define words in our memory work. For example, what does the word “gods” mean in the first commandment, “You shall have no other gods”? _____

What does the word “God” mean in the explanation “trust in God above all things”? _____

If we read Luther’s explanation to the First Commandment in the Large Catechism can also find a definition for the word “god” and “God.” Luther writes,

What is it to have a god? Or, what is one’s god? Answer: To whatever we look for any good thing and for refuge in every need, that is what is meant by “god.”

What kind of things can become “gods” then? _____

According to Luther a God is that to which we look for what? _____

According to Luther a God is that which give us a place of what? _____

Read Psalm 50:15, how does this apply to our discussion about the word God? What does God promise here? _____

Read Psalm 46, how does this apply to our discussion? What does it say about God? _____

10. One other way in which we can come to understand what a word means is to use the bible itself to interpret and define words. Look through the catechism and explain how the catechism actually does this? _____

11. We will also be memorizing and learning the books of the bible and the church year.

A. Where in the catechism will we find the listing of the books of the bible? _____

B. Where will we find the Church Year? _____