

Catechesis I: Grammar Level

Baptized children of member families of St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church who desire the Sacrament of the Altar are brought to the pastor by the child's father and mother (or legal guardian), who serve as his or her primary instructors in the faith: "As the head of the house should teach it in a simple way to his household." (Small Catechism).

Father and Mother will be equipped by the pastor, and the child will receive supplemental instruction from him. The child will have learned by heart the primary texts of Luther's *Small Catechism* and is able to recite them in front of his or her father and mother (or legal guardian), the pastor, and one of the elders.

The primary texts are:

- The Ten Commandments,
- The Apostles' Creed,
- The Lord's Prayer, and
- Bible passage for Baptism (Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:16), Confession (John 20:22-23), and the Sacrament of the Altar (Words of Institution/*Verba*).

In addition to this, the child confesses his or her sins and trust in Jesus Christ along with an understanding of the bodily presence of the risen Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. The child then undergoes the "Rite for First Communion" as it is endorsed by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and provided for in the *Lutheran Service Book: Agenda*. Thus there is no specific age or grade for First Communion, but rather depends on each individual child and parents.

Children who are admitted to the altar in this way make similar vows of Confirmation including a promise, with the help of God, to continue receiving instruction.

This program is optional, with eligibility tied to regular worship attendance.

"Teach them, first of all, these parts: the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and so on according to the text, word for word, so that they, too, can repeat it in the same way after you and commit it to memory" (Small Catechism Preface 10).

"Therefore let every father of a family know that it is his duty, by the injunction and command of God, to teach these things to his children or have them learn what they ought to know. For since they are baptized and received into the Christian Church, they should also enjoy this communion of the Sacrament, in order that they may serve us and be useful to us; for they must all indeed help us to believe, love, pray, and fight against the devil" (Large Catechism V The Sacrament of the Altar: 87).

Catechesis II: Logic Level

This program expands from the previous two year program to a three year program which includes:

Year I: Old Testament Catechesis

Year II: New Testament Catechesis

Year III: Lutheran Catechesis

All of these materials are available through Concordia Catechetical Academy of Peace Lutheran Church—Sussex, Wisconsin, and will be provided by St. Peter's.

This will better equip the children of our congregation to be disciples for life and have a deeper foundation in the Scriptures and Lutheran doctrine.

Also included in this level will be ways for families to serve in the church *i.e.* assisting with Sunday School, fall clean up, Altar Guild for girls, ushering for boys, etc.

This program eligibility begins in 6th grade, but may be started later. Completion of Catechesis: Grammar Level is not required to enter Catechesis: Logic Level, but learning the 10 Commandments, Apostles' Creed and Lord's Prayer by heart prior to entry is strongly encouraged.

“In the second place, after they have learned the text well, teach them the meaning also, so that they know what it means. . . . Take your time in doing this. For it is not necessary for you to explain all the parts at once, but one after the other. After they understand the First Commandment well, then explain the Second, and so on. Otherwise they will be overwhelmed, so that they will not be able to remember anything well” (SC Preface 14-16).

Catechesis III: Rhetoric Level

Continued worship, Sunday Morning Bible Study, and service in the church.

“In the third place, after you have taught them this short catechism, then take up the Large Catechism and give them also a richer and fuller knowledge...” (SC Preface 17).