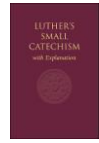




Reading the Catechism – A Window to God’s Word



Introduction to the Catechism

January 2011

For January we will spend some time getting familiar with the catechism--why it was written and what it contains. This will give us a basis for understanding the catechism and how it should be used in our daily life.

Luther wrote the catechism as a means of conveying the Word of God more easily to everyone. Let’s look at a few Bible verses that instruct us as to what we are to do – that is to read and study God’s Word. Look up the following verses: 1 Timothy 4:13, 2 Timothy 3:14-16, 2 Timothy 4:3-4, Acts 20:28.

What is this word *catechism*? The term catechism comes from the Greek word *katecho*, which literally means to “sound back and forth.” The catechism was written to help us learn about God’s Word. Asking questions and responding with answers is part of the fundamental way we learn. That’s the way our teachers have instructed us in our education from preschool through graduate study. Then if something is really important, it takes time and repetition to understand it and feel at home with it. That means our daily catechism reading can repeat the material a number of times over the month or through the years of our lives as scripture feeds us to grow our faith.

For this study we will be using Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation [1]. First, just check out the table of contents and leaf through the book to get a feel for it. For January our study will start with the Introduction, pages 47-53 and Luther’s Preface, pages 246-252. The Preface is more for adults and those soon to be who are studying the catechism in Living Word. The introduction is good for children of all ages. Let your children ask questions and make this a time to explore God’s Word together. Set up a good time to do this together with the whole family and pace yourself to complete the material, so you will be ready for next month.

For further information and pointers to other resources to enhance your study of the catechism, check out the education bulletin board and catechism link on Zion’s web site, www.zionkent.org.

Reference:

[1] “Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation” (NIV edition), Concordia Publishing House, © 1991 with © illustrations 2005, 296 pages, ISBN 13: 978-0-7586-1121-5, ISBN 10: 0-7586-1121-5