

“A Change of Thinking...”

The material in *The Lutheran Catechesis Series* represents “a change of thinking about the task of catechesis” that is summarized in the following points:

- ◆ Faith in Christ is the goal of all catechesis.
- ◆ Catechesis is God’s way of teaching the Word of God by which faith is established. God’s way of teaching always involves the preaching of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
- ◆ Catechesis establishes preaching and teaching the Word of God as the center of congregational life.
- ◆ Catechesis passes on the language of our holy faith as God’s gift that is received as a gift, rather than as something that is “force fed” into the catechumen.
- ◆ The Christian life of faith is lived from the Word of God that is received and believed.
- ◆ The Christian life of faith has concrete expressions:
 - ◆ in the ongoing reception of God’s gifts in the Divine Service through the hearing of Scripture, the hearing of preaching, and the eating and drinking of the Lord’s body and blood;
 - ◆ in the daily prayer of the Christian;
 - ◆ in the confession of one’s faith in the world;
 - ◆ in the confession of one’s sins to God or a brother;
 - ◆ in forgiving the sins of those who have sinned against him;
 - ◆ and in living “concretely” by faith in Christ in the vocation to which God has called him.
- ◆ God has His own language for learning how to receive God’s gifts in the Divine Service, how to pray, how to confess, and how to live where God has called us.
- ◆ The Small Catechism preserves for us the “pattern of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13) so that it functions as both a prayer book and a handbook for the Christian faith and life.
- ◆ The chief reason why the catechism is memorized or “learned by heart” is so that it can shape the faith and understanding of the catechumen and be used by him throughout his life as he learns to interpret Scripture, listen to preaching, receive the absolution, pray, confess, and live in his vocation.
- ◆ Catechesis is, therefore, much more comprehensive and involves the actual doing of things that Christians will continue to do for the rest of their lives: attend Divine Service, listen to preaching, receive the Lord’s Supper, confess their sins, receive absolution, pray, confess their faith, forgive one another, live as husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children, workers of every kind, etc.