

HOW TO LEARN BY HEART THE CATECHISM

FOR CHILDREN:

- **Learn by Heart** the texts of the Small Catechism naturally **at one's own pace** throughout the daily prayer life of the Christian.
- **The Congregation at Prayer**—Confess, recite, pray, and meditate out loud (word for word) the small portions of the Catechism assigned in the *Congregation at Prayer* each week as a part of **family prayer and conversation in the home** with parents and siblings. (Over the course of an academic year the entire Small Catechism, including the Table of Duties, is recited in the *Congregation at Prayer*).
- **Sunday School**—Participate actively in Sunday School (preschool through grade 4) which focuses upon learning by heart the primary texts and explanations of
 - **The Ten Commandments**
 - **The Creed.**
- **Old Testament Catechesis**—Participate faithfully in Old Testament Catechesis which focuses upon learning by heart the primary texts and explanation of
 - **The Sacrament of Holy Baptism**
 - **The Sacrament of the Altar.**
- **New Testament Catechesis**—Participate faithfully in New Testament Catechesis which focuses upon learning by heart the primary texts and explanations of
 - **The Lord's Prayer**
 - **The Office of the Keys and Confession.**
- **Stars and Certificates** mark progress for children. **
- **Stars** are received when children can recite the primary text of an entire chief part, first to their parents and then to the pastor.
- **Certificates** are received when children can recite the primary text and explanation of an entire chief part, first to their parents and then to the pastor.
- A **Chart of Progress** lists the progress of each child in the congregation. Stars indicate primary texts, dates following the star indicate that the explanations have also been learned.

**NOTE: "Small Certificate Slips" may be picked up in the office for parents to sign when their children have successfully recited to them. Bring the slip to Pastor who will hear your child recite, so that he or she may receive either a star for the Primary Text or a parchment certificate for the entire chief part. Certificates are received by children with a prayer of thanksgiving in an appropriate catechetical setting.

***The Goal** of the children's Learn by Heart program is that the texts of the Six Chief Parts of the Small Catechism are learned by heart before children receive First Communion and before they are enrolled in the final year of catechesis that culminates in Confirmation. It is the prayer that the habit of "learning by heart" the Word of God in childhood will continue for the rest of their lives.*

FOR ADULTS:

- **Learn by Heart** the texts of the Small Catechism naturally **at one's own pace** throughout the daily prayer life of the Christian.
- **The Congregation at Prayer**—Confess, recite, pray, and meditate out loud (word for word) the small portions of the Catechism assigned in the Congregation at Prayer each week as a part of family prayer and conversation in the home with spouse and children.
- **Didache and Lutheran Catechesis**—In the 24-week Adult and Youth Didache course, we pray and recite the primary texts of the Catechism at each class session to assist adults in “learning by heart” those texts and how they are used in the life of a Christian in preparation for Confirmation and admission to the Lord’s Table.

The Goal of the Learn by Heart program for adults is that adult members and converts to the Christian faith know from memory, at the very least, the primary texts of the Catechism and how those texts function in their lives as Christians before they are admitted to the Sacrament of the Altar. It is the prayer that “learning by heart” the Word of God as adult catechumens and members of the congregation would continue to be their habit for the rest of their lives.