

WHAT THE NEW EXPLANATION DOES

**The 2017 edition
of Luther's Small
Catechism with
Explanation is here.**

While this is exciting news for many, you may find yourself asking, "Isn't the catechism something pastors use for Confirmation?" and "What does that have to do with me?"



What's the purpose of Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation?

As someone who has spent a lot of time digging into and thinking about the catechism and the new explanation, three practical purposes stick out right away:

- 1.** It's a summary of the timeless truths of God's Word.
- 2.** It a lens through which to faithfully and joyfully understand God's Word.
- 3.** It's a practical guide for the Christian faith for daily life.

All three are important. It's the third point that's huge for understanding the implications of this new explanation for the parish.

MORE THAN A TEXT-BOOK

If we think of the Small Catechism as simply a textbook for Confirmation class, then we won't consider its use outside of that narrow window of time. However, if we see it for what it is—a summary of and lens for interpreting Scripture as well as a guide for daily Christian life—then we can explore why it's so important.

BUILDS UPON LUTHER'S INTENT

The Small Catechism was meant to be a guide for the head of the household in teaching and learning the faith at home. The layout of the new explanation to the Small Catechism models how to teach both in the parish and at home. It works logically through self-reflection, examination of the content, and applying that content to daily life.

BREAK IT DOWN, NOW

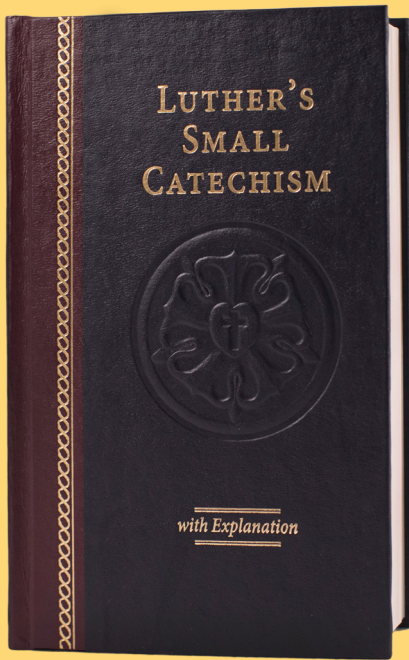
The elements of the Small Catechism, the original Six Chief Parts, are divided up into different sections like previous editions. This forms the backbone of the explanation. In this new edition, each of these is enclosed in a box **to visually distinguish the core content from the explanation**. This helps you know what is original (what we tend to memorize in confirmation) and what is new.

The Central Thought summarizes the main point of each element of the Small Catechism, but also includes reflection questions to guide meaningful discussion.

A Closer Look intentionally forces us to slow down and work on understanding the content.

Connections and Applications takes you through a deeper reading of the content—directing it toward issues and topics in daily life. The traditional questions and answers are clearly organized into two parts—distinguishing the questions that focus on examining the text from those that directly apply it to life.

The final section contains a Psalm reference, Lutheran Service Book hymn reference, and a prayer. This extra layer takes the big ideas of the faith associated with the Small Catechism and brings them home into devotional life.



Timeless truth for every generation.

Church and state. Marriage issues. Different worldviews and religions. Times change, but the Word of the Lord endures forever. Now with an updated and expanded Explanation, Luther's Small Catechism guides you to the answers.

View sample pages at cph.org/catechism2017.

THE NEW EXPLANATION IS A LOT LONGER—BUT FOR GOOD REASON

The writers added extra reference material to each element to make this the most robust and useful guide for the Christian life as possible.

Added Bible verses form a rich and deep web of Scripture to inform and edify the reader with God's Word.

Extra connections to Bible narratives pull Bible history and the timeless truths of the Small Catechism together in a greater way than ever before in an explanation.

Expanded asides with notes and real-world applications align the explanation text to the lives of the learners.

The expanded topical and Scripture indexes assist readers in identifying and navigating the reference parts of the Explanation.

The appendix has expanded the scope and nature of the added material to help guide learners through questions and topics.



By Peter Jurchen

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This article was adapted from Rev. Pete Jurchen's blog post, **Implications of the New Explanation for the Parish**, located on education.cph.org.

IN SUMMARY

The new Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation is a great resource for teaching and learning in the parish. It has been updated and reorganized to better guide Christians to understand the timeless truths of the faith. In addition, it now includes some internal tools through which faith leaders in the parish can adapt the core content to different situations.

Want to learn more? View sample pages, read the Introduction the 2017 Explanation, explore the new features, and order at cph.org/catechism2017.