

PRAY THE
CATECHISM



*DAILY LENTEN PRAYERS
BASED ON DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S
SMALL CATECHISM*

INTRODUCTION

Lent is a 40-day season of an intentional Christ-centered return to our baptisms, where we daily die with our sins and rise with Christ to live a new life.

In the early Church, Lent was a time when new converts to Christianity (catechumens) were being instructed and preparing for baptism on Easter morning. Through Lent, and through baptism, they “walked the way of Lent and Easter” participating in the mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection.

This booklet is a guide to “walk the way of Lent and Easter” like those catechumens, by meditating on the basic teachings of the faith as Martin Luther expressed them in the Small Catechism.

It has been said that part of the genius of the Small Catechism is that it is the only catechism ever written that is capable of being prayed. One can simply open the Catechism and begin at any point and address the words to the Lord. Concerning the use of the catechism for daily prayer and meditation, Martin Luther wrote,

“I, too, am a doctor and a preacher - yes, and as learned and experienced as any of those who act so high and mighty. Yet I do as a child who is being taught the Catechism. Every morning, and whenever else I have time, I read and recite word for word the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Psalms, etc. I must still read and study the Catechism daily, yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and I do it gladly” (Large Catechism, Preface, 7-8; Tappert, p. 359).

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Soli Deo Gloria

Ash Wednesday

The 1st Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

O Lord, my God, You command me to have no other gods. May I fear, love, and trust in You above anything else; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, my Lord. Amen.

Thursday

The 2nd Commandment

You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.

O God, You command me not to take Your name in vain. May I so fear and love You, that I do not use Your name to curse, swear, practice witchcraft, lie, or deceive. Instead, lead me to call upon You in every trouble, to always pray and praise and give You thanks; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Friday

The 3rd Commandment

You shall keep the Day of Rest holy.

O God, You command me to keep the Lord's Day holy. May I so fear and love You, that I do not neglect Your Word and the preaching of it, but cause me to regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Saturday

The 4th Commandment

Honor your father and your mother, that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

O God, You command me to honor my father and mother. May I so fear and love You that I do not despise or anger my parents and others in authority. Help me honor, serve, obey, love, and esteem them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, my Lord. Amen.

First Sunday in Lent

The 5th Commandment

You shall not kill.

O God, You command me not to kill. May I so fear and love You so that I do not hurt my neighbor in any way, but use me to help and be a friend to him in all his physical needs; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Monday – Lent 1

The 6th Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

O God, You command me not to commit adultery. May I so fear and love You that I lead a chaste and decent life both in my words and in my deeds. Help all husbands and wives to love and honor each other; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Tuesday – Lent 1

The 7th Commandment

You shall not steal.

O God, You command me not to steal. May I so fear and love You that I do not take my neighbor's money or property nor try to get them in any dishonest way. Help me to assist him in improving and protecting his property and means of making a living; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Wednesday – Lent 1

The 8th Commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

O God, You command me not to bear false witness against my neighbor. May I so fear and love You that I do not lie about, betray, or slander my neighbor; but teach me to excuse him, to speak well of him, and to put the best construction on all he does; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, my Lord. Amen.

Thursday – Lent 1

The 9th Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

O God, You command me not to covet my neighbor's house. May I so fear and love You that I do not desire to get my neighbor's possessions by scheming, or by pretending to have a right to them, but cause me always to help and serve him in keeping what is his; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Friday – Lent 1

The 10th Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.

O God, You command me not to covet anything that is my neighbor's. May I so fear and love You that I do not tempt, force, or coax away from my neighbor his wife or his workers, but help me to encourage them to remain loyal; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Saturday – Lent 1

The Conclusion to the Commandments

I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, and showing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

O God, You warn that you will punish all who break these commandments. May I fear Your wrath and not disobey You. I thank You for promising grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Help me to love and trust You, and gladly do what You command; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Second Sunday in Lent

The First Article

I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

Dear heavenly Father, You created me and all creatures. You have given and still preserve for me my body and soul with all their powers. You provide me with food and clothing, home and family, daily work, and all that I need from day to day. You also protect me in time of danger and guard and keep me from every evil. Help me to remember that You do all this out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, though I do not deserve it. I surely ought to thank and praise, serve and obey You. Help me to do this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, my Lord. Amen.

Monday – Lent 2

Hymn: 38:1, “We All Believe in One True God”

1. We all believe in one true God, Who created earth and heaven,
The Father, who to us in love Hath the right of children given.
He both soul and body feedeth, All we need He doth provide us.
He through snares and perils leadeth, Watching that no harm betide us.
He careth for us day and night; All things are governed by His might.

Tuesday – Lent 2

The Second Article

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

O Jesus Christ, true God, Son of the Father from eternity, and true man, born of the virgin Mary—You are my Lord. At great cost, You have saved and redeemed me, a lost and condemned person; freed me from sin, death, and the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with Your holy precious blood and with Your innocent suffering and death. Thank You for doing all this that I may be Your own, live under You in Your kingdom, and serve You in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; just as You are risen from the dead and live and rule eternally. Amen.

Wednesday – Lent 2

Hymn: 38:2, “We All Believe in One True God”

2. We all believe in Jesus Christ, His own Son, our Lord, possessing
An equal Godhead, throne, and might Source of ev’ry grace and blessing,
Born of Mary, virgin mother, By the power of the Spirit,
Made true man, our elder Brother, That the lost might life inherit,
Was crucified for sinful men And raised by God to life again.

Thursday – Lent 2

The Third Article

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

O God, the Holy Spirit, I could not by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but You have called me through the Gospel, You enlighten me with Your gifts, and You sanctify and keep me in the true faith. How grateful I am that in the same way You call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify the whole Christian Church on earth and keep it united with Jesus Christ in the one true faith! O Holy Spirit, in this Christian Church continue day after day to forgive my sins and the sins of all believers. On the last day raise up me and all the dead and give me and all believers in Christ eternal life. Amen.

Friday – Lent 2

Hymn: 38:3, “We All Believe in One True God”

3. We all confess the Holy Ghost, Who sweet grace and comfort giveth
And with the Father and the Son In eternal glory liveth,
Who the Church, His own creation, Keeps in unity of Spirit;
Here forgiveness and salvation Daily come through Jesus' merit.
All flesh shall rise, and we shall be In bliss with God eternally.

Saturday – Lent 2

Introduction

Our Father Who art in heaven.

O God, You encourage me to believe that You are truly my Father and that I am Your dear child. Help me to pray to You with complete confidence just as a child speaks to its loving father; grant this through Jesus Christ, Your only-begotten Son, my Lord. Amen.

Third Sunday in Lent

The 1st Petition

Hallowed be Thy name.

O God, Your name is certainly holy in itself, but I pray You to help me to keep it holy. Because Your name is hallowed whenever Your Word is taught in its truth and purity, and when Your children live according to it, help me to do this, heavenly Father! And because anyone who teaches or lives contrary to Your

Word dishonors Your name, keep me from doing this, heavenly Father! In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen.

Monday – Lent 3

The 2nd Petition

Thy Kingdom come.

O God, Your Kingdom indeed comes without my praying for it, but I ask in this prayer that it may come also to me. Give me Your Holy Spirit, so that by Your grace I will believe Your holy Word, and live a godly life on earth now and in heaven forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tuesday – Lent 3

The 3rd Petition

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

O God, Your good and gracious will is surely done without my prayer, but I ask in this prayer that Your will may be my will also. Break and hinder every evil scheme and purpose of the devil, the world, and my sinful flesh, which would prevent me from keeping Your name holy and which would oppose Your Church on earth. May Your will be done as You strengthen my faith and keep me steadfast in Your Word as long as I live; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Wednesday – Lent 3

The 4th Petition

Give us this day our daily bread.

O God, You give daily bread to all people, without our prayer, even though we are all sinners. I ask in this prayer that You will help me to realize this and to receive my daily bread with thanks. Because daily bread includes everything I need for this life, I thank You for such things as food and clothing, home and property, work and income, a devoted family, an orderly community, good government, favorable weather, peace and health, a good name, and true friends and neighbors. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Thursday – Lent 3

The 5th Petition

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Our Father in heaven, I ask in this prayer that You would not hold my sins against me, nor because of them refuse to hear my prayer. I pray that You would give me everything by grace, for I sin every day and deserve nothing but punishment. Help me heartily to forgive and gladly to do good to those who sin against me; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Friday – Lent 3

The 6th Petition

And lead us not into temptation.

O God, You do not tempt me to sin, but I ask in this prayer that You would watch over me so that the devil, the world, and my sinful flesh may not deceive me nor lead me into misbelief, despair, and other great and shameful sins. I pray that even though I am tempted toward such sin, through Jesus Christ I may still obtain the final victory. In His name I ask, Amen.

Saturday – Lent 3

The 7th Petition

But deliver us from evil.

My heavenly Father, I pray that You would save me from every evil of body and soul, property and honor, and at the hour of my death that You would mercifully take me from the troubles of this world to Yourself in heaven; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, my Lord. Amen.

The Conclusion

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

My Father in heaven, I say “Amen” because I am certain these petitions are pleasing to You. You Yourself commanded me to pray in this way and promised to hear. Amen: Yes, it shall all be so through Jesus Christ my Redeemer. Amen.

Fourth Sunday in Lent

The Nature of Baptism

Jesus says: **“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you”** (Matthew 28:18-20).

I thank you, Lord God, for my Baptism, which I know is not just water, but is water used together with Your Word and by Your command to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Amen.

Monday – Lent 4

Hymn: 247:1, “To Jordan Came Our Lord the Christ”

1. To Jordan came our Lord, the Christ,
The Father’s will obeying.
And there was by St. John baptized,
All righteousness fulfilling.
There He did consecrate a bath
To wash away transgression,
To rescue us from bitter death
By His own blood and passion,
New life for us creating!

Tuesday – Lent 4

The Blessings of Baptism

Christ our Lord says, Mark 16:16: **“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”**

How grateful I am O God, for the benefits You give in Baptism! In Baptism You forgive my sin, deliver me from death and the devil, and give eternal salvation to me and to all who believe what You have promised. Lord Jesus, You have said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Having been baptized, let me continue to believe Your Word so that I may be saved! I ask through Jesus’ name, Amen.

Wednesday – Lent 4

Hymn: 247:5, “To Jordan Came Our Lord the Christ”

5. To His disciples Jesus said:
“Go forth, teach every nation,
For, lost in sin, all must repent,
And flee from condemnation.
All who believe and are baptized
Shall thereby have salvation.”
Thus, born again in Jesus Christ
We’re freed from sin’s damnation.
We shall inherit heaven.

Thursday – Lent 4

The Power of Baptism

St. Paul says, Titus 3:5-8: **“According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that having been justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.”**

Lord God, what great things You accomplish through Baptism. Thank You for reminding me that it is not water that does these things, but Your Word with the water and trust in this Word. Water by itself is only water, but with this Word it is a life-giving water, which by grace gives me the new birth through the Holy Spirit, that having been justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Amen.

Friday – Lent 4

Hymn: 247:2, “To Jordan Came Our Lord the Christ”

2. So let us hear and ponder well
What God creates in Baptism.
What He would have us all believe,
Who error shun and schism.
That water at the font be used
Is surely His good pleasure,
Not water only, but the Word
And Spirit without measure-
He is the true baptizer!

Saturday – Lent 4

The Meaning of Baptism

St. Paul writes, Romans 6:4: **“We are buried with Christ by baptism into death, that just as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”**

Lord God, You teach me that “we are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that just as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also might walk in newness of life.” I pray that my sinful flesh, with all its evil deeds and desires, may be drowned through daily repentance; and that day after day a new self may arise to live with You in righteousness and purity forever; through Jesus Christ, my Savior. Amen.

Fifth Sunday in Lent

The Office of the Keys

The evangelist writes, John 20:22-23: **“Jesus breathed on His disciples and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; and if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’”**

Dear Lord Jesus Christ, You have given the Office of the Keys to Your Church on earth – Your special authority to forgive the sins of penitent sinners and retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent. Thank you for warning me about unrepentance and for forgiving my sins. Help me to believe that when Your called ministers do this, their word is as valid and certain in heaven also as if You dealt with me Yourself. In Your holy name, Amen.

Monday – Lent 5

Confession – What is Confession?

Confession consists of two parts: one, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the pastor or confessor as from God himself, and in no way doubt, but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

Hymn #452:2, “Out of the Depths I Cry to Thee”

2. Thy love and grace alone avail
To blot out my transgression;
The best and holiest deeds must fail
To break sin’s dread oppression.
Before Thee none can boasting stand,
But all must fear Thy strict demand
And live alone by mercy.

Tuesday – Lent 5

Hymn #452:3, “Out of the Depths I Cry to Thee”

3. Therefore My hope is in the Lord
And not in my own merit;
It rests upon His faithful Word
To them of contrite spirit
That He is merciful and just-
This is my comfort and my trust.
His help I wait with patience.

Wednesday – Lent 5

Confession – What sins should we confess?

Before God we should acknowledge ourselves guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not know about, as we do in the Lord’s Prayer. But before the pastor or confessor we should acknowledge those sins only which we know and feel in our hearts.

Hymn #452:1, “Out of the Depths I Cry to Thee”

1. Out of the depths I cry to Thee,
Lord, hear me I implore Thee!
Thy gracious ear incline to me;
My prayer let come before Thee.
On my misdeeds in mercy look,
O deign to blot them from Thy book,
Or who can stand before Thee?

Thursday – Lent 5

Confession – Which sins are these?

Here consider your own situation according to the Ten Commandments, whether you are a father, mother, son, daughter, employer, employee; whether you have been disobedient, dishonest, lazy; whether you have injured anyone by word or deed; whether you have stolen, neglected, wasted anything, or done any harm.

Gracious heavenly Father, I pray: Lead me to consider my own situation according to the Ten Commandments, and to confess my sins. Help me not only to acknowledge myself guilty, but especially to hear Your absolution with a believing heart; that I not doubt at all but firmly believe that when my pastor or confessor speaks the word of forgiveness, my sins are thereby forgiven by You in heaven. For Jesus’ sake I pray. Amen.

Friday – Lent 5

Hymn #452:4, “Out of the Depths I Cry to Thee”

4. And though it tarry through the night
And till the morning waken,
My heart shall never doubt His might
Nor count itself forsaken.
Do thus, O ye of Israel’s seed,
Yet of the Spirit born indeed;
Wait for Your God’s appearing.

Palm Sunday

The Nature of the Sacrament of the Altar

The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke, together with St. Paul, write thus: **“Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, ‘Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same way also He took the cup after supper, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”**

Thank You, Lord Jesus Christ, for instituting this Sacrament, in which You give me Your true body and blood under the bread and wine, for me to eat and to drink. Amen.

Holy Monday

Hymn: 327:1, “O Lord, We Praise Thee”

1. O Lord, we praise Thee, bless Thee, and adore Thee,
In thanksgiving bow before Thee.
Thou with Thy body and Thy blood didst nourish
Our weak souls that they may flourish.
O Lord, have mercy!
May Thy body, Lord, born of Mary,
That our sins and sorrows did carry,
And Thy blood for us plead
In all trial, fear, and need:
O Lord, have mercy!

Holy Tuesday

The Benefit of the Sacrament of the Altar

Lord Jesus, what wonderful benefits I receive from this Sacrament, especially as they are shown to me by Your Words, “**given and shed for you for the remission of sins.**” Help me to believe that in this Sacrament I receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation; for where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. Amen.

Holy Wednesday

Hymn: 327:2, “O Lord, We Praise Thee”

2. Thy holy body into death was given,
Life to win for us in heaven.
No greater love than this to Thee could bind us;
May this feast thereof remind us!
O Lord, have mercy!
Lord, Thy kindness did so constrain Thee
That Thy blood should bless and sustain me.
All our debt Thou hast paid;
Peace with God once more is made.
O Lord, have mercy!

Maundy Thursday

The Power of the Sacrament of the Altar

O God, keep my mind and heart focused on the main thing in the Sacrament; the Words here written: “**given and shed for you for the remission of sins.**” Help me to believe that these Words, along with the eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Grant this so that I may have exactly what they say, that is: forgiveness of my sins. Amen.

Good Friday

Hymn: 327:3 "O Lord, We Praise Thee"

3. May God bestow on us His grace and favor
 To please Him with our behavior
And live as brethren here in love and union
 Nor repent this blest Communion!
 O Lord, have mercy!
 Let not Thy good Spirit forsake us;
Grant that heav'nly minded He make us;
 Give Thy Church, Lord, to see
 Days of peace and unity:
 O Lord, have mercy!

Holy Saturday

The Proper Reception of the Sacrament of the Altar

O God, help me to be rightly prepared to receive the Lord's Supper. While fasting and other outward preparations serve a good purpose, make me truly worthy and well prepared by strengthening my faith in these Words, "**given and shed for you for the remission of sins.**" Take away any unbelief and overcome any doubts that I may have in these Words, for I do not wish to be unprepared or unworthy. Lord Jesus, give me a believing heart that the Words "**for you**" truly are for me. Amen.