

WHAT LUTHERANS CONFESS

A Theological Course of Study In Five Session
Based Upon the Five Parts Of Luther's Large Catechism

By Robert W. Bertram
Lay School of Theology
Piedmont Circuit, Southeastern District, LC-MS, 1979

The Readings

1. The Large Catechism, in Tappert, Theodore G. (translator and editor), The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Philadelphia: Fortress Press [1959], pp. 357-461. Hereafter, BoC.

2. From the Holy Scriptures:

- a. Exodus 20:2-17
- b. Matthew 6:9-13
- c. Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16
- d. I Corinthians 11:23-25

3. "Ernest Bradshaw", a selection from Studs Turkel, Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do, New York: Random House [1972], pp. 521-525.

The Goal

The goal of this course is the same as the goal of The Large Catechism, on which the course is based. And the goal of the Catechism, Luther seems to say, is to turn our lives into a good fight. Not to do so is to give in and go to pot—and die. So what

this course ought to accomplish is to arouse within us a life-and-death conflict, negatively and positively: negatively, to fight the enemy; positively, to fight for control.

First, the negative. The enemy, says the Catechism, is “the Devil”—in other words, the master deceiver. And we are most masterfully deceived when we think we are not really deceived at all and imagine we have things pretty well together. For instance, “if we imagine, after reading or hearing the Catechism once, that we know it all and need not read or study it any more,” then the Enemy already has us where he wants us. (LC “Martin Luther’s Preface”, §16) You and I may want to pause at this point and check whether that, in fact, is what we imagine about ourselves, namely, that when it comes to things like the Catechism “we know it all.” If so, that is a sure sign that we have already been had. For poor folks like that—Luther calls them “bored, presumptuous saints” (§ 16) and worse—the goal of the course is, negatively, “that in due time they themselves will make the noble confession that the longer they work with the Catechism, the less they know of it and the more they have to learn.” (§20)

Of course the Enemy will not like that, that his victims are waking up and resuming the struggle. So he is bound to counter-attack. That brings us to the positive part of the goal, fighting for control. But that takes immense power. And that is exactly what the Catechism claims to provide, “the power of God,” because what the Catechism claims to be is “the Word of God.” The Enemy “cannot bear to hear God’s Word.” (§11) But what if we can bear to hear it, and even enjoy it? Well, that is when the sparks begin to fly between us and the Enemy. And that struggle right within our own lives—the struggle between liking the Word of God and being fed up with it—is a sign that our strength is coming back, as gradually we recover our appetite for the Word. “Only then, hungry and thirsty, will we truly

relish what now we cannot bear to smell because we are so bloated and surfeited.” (§ 20) The odds are that the Catechism could not possibly interest us, even though we know it is the Word of God. But the truth is, it does recapture our interest after all, though that is always a fight. And that very fight is a sign of “the power of God which burns the devil and gives us immeasurable strength, comfort and help.” (§11)

Is that claiming too much for the Catechism, to equate it with the Word of God? Shouldn't that claim rather be reserved for the Holy Scriptures? Still, what else is the Catechism but “a brief compend and summary of all the Holy Scriptures?” (§ 18) What the Catechism amounts to really is five short biblical samples, beginning with the Ten Commandments from the Book of Exodus and ending with Jesus' invitation to The Lord's Supper, in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. But what the Catechism does with these five samples is to drive home to us why they are the Word of God. And why is that? Not just because they come from Scripture. But because they are that “power of God which burns the devil and gives us immeasurable strength, comfort and help.” (§11) The Catechism is Scripture battling as The Word of God. Maybe that is why in the Catechism Luther uses such militant language.

With all this big talk about fighting the Enemy and gaining control, there is one military secret we need to remember especially, namely, that throughout the struggle we must remain children—not childish but childlike. Aristotle once said that philosophy begins with wonder. And a recent philosopher, Whitehead, said that that is also where philosophy ends, in wonder. Wonder is something which children particularly are good at. They still expect to learn. That childlike trait is especially important in our adult fight against the Enemy. “What Christians need is to become children and begin learning their ABC's, which they think they have outgrown long ago.” (§ 8) The

Catechism—like the Word of God and like all great theology—is for children. But no one finds it so hard to become authentically, Christianly childlike as grown-ups do, especially church professionals. So what if I “am a doctor of theology and a preacher”? “I must still remain a child and pupil of the Catechism.” (§s 7-8)

But why? Because in this fight of ours for survival it is the Catechism, the Word of God, which is the brains, the master-mind. It is not we ourselves but the Word which is “the master of more than a hundred thousand arts.” (§ 12) And only honest-to-God children would ever dare to wish for such mind-blowing mastery—for the hottest thing going—“which burns the devil and gives us immeasurable strength, comfort and help.” Try telling some cynical grownup that, if he would just learn the Ten Commandments, then “in all affairs and circumstances he can counsel, help, comfort, judge, and make decisions in both spiritual and temporal matters,” that then he would be “qualified to sit in judgment upon all doctrines, estates, persons, laws and everything else in the world.” (§ 17) Why, only a child, one of God’s own, would have the nerve to expect that. So go ahead, expect that. And if you do, you are already well into the fight. Which, after all, is the goal.

Session One

First Part: The Ten Commandments

A. Friday evening:

1. Read together

- a. The above statement of “The Goal” and
- b. “Martin Luther’s Preface” to the Large Catechism (BoC, pp. 358-361)

2. In open discussion compare these statements of the goal with the goals which the students personally may have for the course.

3. Consider: In what sense is the Large Catechism a confession—"what Lutherans confess"

B. Saturday morning:

1. Read (each student privately) these two sections from The Ten Commandments:

- a. "The First Commandment" (§ 1-48, BoC, pp. 365-371) and
- b. "Conclusion of the Ten Commandments" (§311-333, BoC, pp. 407-411)

2. Class reconvenes and writes a short pre-test, or quiz, on the basis of the above readings and the readings of the previous evening.

3. Consider:

a. In his explanation of The First Commandment which of these two questions is Luther really answering: "What is God," or "What is it to have a god"?

b. We are commanded "to trust in God alone..., expecting from him only good things." (§ 24) Still, he commands this "under penalty of eternal wrath" (§16)—which is hardly a "good thing." So how can we expect from him "only good things"?

c. "When men have devoted all their care and diligence to scraping together great wealth and money, ...you will find that...these have turned to dust and vanished." (§ 43) Do the facts actually bear that out? If not, is God's threat of punishment and promise of reward really true?

d. God demands "a heart that fears God alone and, ...conversely, trusts him alone..." (§ 323) How can people

trust a God whom they are supposed to fear?

C. Saturday afternoon:

1. Read (each student privately) the sections on “The Fourth Commandment”, “The Fifth Commandment,” “The Sixth Commandment,” and “The Seventh Commandment.” (§ 103-253, BoC, pp. 379-399)

2. Class reconvenes and writes a short pre-test, or quiz, on the basis of these readings.

3. Consider:

a. Both Scripture and Catechism remind us that our treatment of our parents is something for which we must answer to God. Yet for us, their children, to be made as answerable as all that is already to take us seriously as something more than mere children. It is to treat us as responsible persons in our own right, each of us with an ultimate accountability of our own. This biblical view of persons as being highly accountable is the opposite, so it is said, of authoritarianism, which reduces even grownups to mindless slavish children. What do you think?

b. Nowadays, says Luther, speaking about his own day, “everyone wishes to be his own master, be free from all authority...” (§ 154) In our own day, however, people truly are free, legally and morally, from many of the former authorities (e.g., princes and masters). In fact, in some areas the people have become the rightful authority, the “parents” to which government officeholders now owe obedience and honor. Still, these “public servants”, too, sometimes disobey the people, who in a democracy now wield the authority. How would you use Luther’s analysis of disobedience in society to explain why elected officials

nowadays disobey us, their authorized “parents”?

c. Luther considered it a great advantage that God has decided for us, and that we do not have to, which of all our responsibilities takes priority, namely, our responsibility to our parents and other similar authorities. (§ 115-120) Do you also understand the Fourth Commandment as helping us in our prioritizing?

d. Now take up, one at a time, the Fifth and Sixth and Seventh Commandments, and with respect to each one of them discuss the following questions, giving down-to-earth examples.

1.) In our human relations nowadays whom does this commandment protect? Against whom does it protect them?

2.) How is this commandment’s protective function actually enforced? How effectively?

3.) If this commandment is meant for our protection, illustrate (from your own experience) what that says about the One who imposes this commandment—how he feels about us?

4.) Specifically, how much does this commandment demand of us? Does it demand more than it delivers?

5.) The very fact that we even need such a commandment to constrain us is already a criticism of us. How effectively (in your experience) does this commandment perform that function, its critical function?

6.) If that too is a function of this commandment—not only to protect us but also to criticize us—what does that say about the One who imposes this commandment—how he feels about us?

7.) How does your answer to Question 6 square with your answer to Question 3?

D. Saturday evening

1. In this concluding period, the group may have questions of its own to raise, and to answer, in connection with the Ten Commandments.
2. Use the final moments of this evening's session to look ahead to the Second Part, The Creed, which will be the subject of the next session.

Session Two

Second Part: The Creed

A. Read – at home, prior to Session Two – The Large Catechism, “Second Part: The Creed,” BoC, pp. 411-420.

B. Consider—at home, prior to Session Two – what the answers might be to the ten questions which follow.

C. In Session Two, discuss with each other the answers to these ten questions, or to at least as many of the questions as the group has time and energy for. Try to reach consensus on the basis of the Word in the Large Catechism.

1. What need of the Creed? What is “the advantage and necessity of the Creed”? It is “to help us do what the Ten Commandments require of us.” But the way the Creed helps us to do that, interestingly enough, is that “it teaches us to know [God] perfectly.”

Isn't life always like that—for example, in our relations with parents or spouse or children? We cannot begin to do what they expect of us, not really, unless we can first be sure how they feel toward us. Likewise, in the Ten Commandments “we have seen all that God wishes us to do or not to do.” But how could we even begin to live up to that unless we first knew what “we must expect and receive from God?” (LC, The Creed, § 1-4)

Recall what we said in Session One – for instance, what God requires of us through the Seventh Commandment, or the Sixth, and what he actually gets out of us in those areas of life. How does what he gets from us depend on what we know we get from him?

2. One thing we surely do get from God, every day and every hour, is his continual questioning of us, “My boy [my girl, my woman, my man], what kind of God have you?” And how we answer that question, every day and every hour, “is nothing else than a response and confession.” (§ 10-11)

Remember what we said in Session One about being “answerable”, being treated by God – even if in other ways we are children – as “response-ible” persons, accountable to God. We are constantly on a witness stand, being interrogated by him. And what he asks is not only, What kind of God exists, but rather, What kind of God do you know and do you have?

How we are answering that constant question, not only with our theological words but with the way we actually live out the Ten Commandments – that is our “response and confession,” our testimony in answer to The Prosecution’s cross-examination. How does this divine interrogation help you to understand the title of this course, “What Lutherans Confess”?

3. What makes the Creator our Creditor? The First Article emphasizes that all the many things we get from the Creator, this “Maker of heaven and earth” (§13-16), we get from him as from “a kind father,” a caring and mothering dad-like God. (§ 17-18) But if that is true, if he is giving us all this as an outright gift, “out of pure love and goodness, without our merit,” then how do you explain that we are being billed for all this and by now are badly in arrears in our payments?

For as the Catechism puts it, “to love, praise and thank him without ceasing, and, in short, to devote all these things to

his service, as he has required and enjoined in the Ten Commandments” – all that is what “we are in duty bound” to do. (§ 19) “In duty bound?” Worse than that. What the original German (schuldig) really says is that we are “indebted” to do all that. But how does what starts as a gift, then suddenly, once it reaches our hands, turn into a debt? This First Article of the Creed is “about what we have and receive from God and about what we owe him in return.” (§ 24) And what we owe him, which is more and more, is fast coming due.

For example, take just this one day, Saturday. It started out from the Father gratis. But then what is it about us that turns this day into a crushing debt, a luxury we can hardly afford, not to mention what we already owe in thanks and praise for yesterday and the day before? What is it about us that turns the dad-like God into the terrifying opposite, our Creditor? (See § 20-22, and look ahead to the Second Article, § 28).

4. What is the collection agency, the pawnbroker, the debtors’ prison to which such debtors are turned over? Does that make sense? Can you think of a more modern way of saying the same thing? Is there any reason why these “tyrants and jailers” might prefer that we did not discover how seriously in debt we are? (Recall what was said about the Enemy on the first two pages of this course syllabus.)

5. But now we read on to the Second Article, about Jesus Christ as “Lord” – that is, as the one who “redeems” us, buys us back out of debt. Now first can we look back and understand why that First Article had talked so much about our indebtedness. Here all along the Catechism had been looking ahead, to Jesus as “Lord”, the re-possessor who came to “pay what I owed, not with silver and gold but with his own precious blood.” (§ 31) The First Article, with its talk about debt, is all part of the same story as the Second Article, with its talk of the lordly debt-

payer.

The Second Article refers to Jesus also as “the Son.” How does that role of his as God’s “only Son” solve the problem we faced in the First Article, the problem of having and keeping the Maker of heaven and earth as our own “Father”?

6. At first it may sound strange to say what the Catechism does about Jesus’ being born of the Virgin Mary, that it was not some spectacular feat to prove how almighty he is but rather his terribly costly way of becoming our Lord, “how much it cost Christ and what he paid and risked in order to win us...” (§ 31) What was so costly about being born of “the Virgin”?

7. What does it take to make the Virgin Birth (or anything else, for that matter, in the Second Article) not just true but good – Good News, Gospel?

8. The Third Article prompts us to raise a question about the Second Article. If Christ regained ownership of us entirely by his own doing – through a transaction which pretty much took place behind our backs – why is it so important that we be let in on all that, that we need to hear about it and believe it? Isn’t it true whether we know it or not? In other words, wouldn’t it still be the case that God is our loving Father and Jesus is our Lord even if there were no Holy Spirit to get us to believe that? (See especially § 38).

9. What makes the Holy Spirit “holy” and distinguishes him (or is it a “her”?) from all other spirits is not just that this Spirit is himself holy but that, unlike all other spirits, he makes us holy as well. (§ 36) So if someone or other should offer to lead us to “the Spirit”, we ought to make sure which spirit they are working with. Only one Spirit is a Holying Spirit – a healing Spirit.

But the strange way this Spirit does its healing doesn't really look much like healing, unless it is a healing by means of radical surgery, cauterizing. (See § 57) Whom does this Holying Spirit resemble? And whom does this Spirit help us to resemble? How popular is that Spirit nowadays?

10. That Spirit does its holying always through "means" or media, never im-mediately. Two of those media are only temporary. The other two are still in the future. But through all four of them the Spirit is so vigorously holying us, now already, that we can even survive the Ten Commandments, and even swing with them. How so? Illustrate.

Session Three

Third Part: The Lord's Prayer

A. Read – at home, prior to Session Three:

1. The Large Catechisms, "Third Part: The Lord's Prayer," BoC, pp. 420-436, and
2. Studs Terkel's interview of "Ernest Bradshaw," appended to this syllabus.

B. Session Three might well begin – after the opening devotion, which should include The Lord's Prayer – with a brief review of Sessions One and Two. Why not conduct the review by means of an all-group free association of ideas, as follows? The leader speaks aloud the Lord's Prayer, pausing after each petition long enough to let one of the students say in a phrase or sentence what that petition reminds him/her of from the preceding two sessions on the Ten Commandments and the Creed. For example:

Leader: "Our Father in heaven,..."

First Student: The God who creates heaven and earth is our father, because his only Son, Jesus Christ, is our Lord.

Leader: "...Hallowed be your name,..."

Second Student: “Hallowed” means to make holy, to sanctify, as in the Holying Spirit and as in the Third Commandment, “Thou shalt sanctify the holy day.”

And so on, around the room. When all the petitions have been spoken and responded to, the leader begins all over again, “Our Father, in heaven” – and if necessary, a third time around and a fourth – until every student has had a chance to respond with some fitting reminder from the Catechism’s First and Second Parts.

C. Next, the leader leads a brief discussion on one or more of these three questions.

1. How comparable are these two situations?

a. The boy from the mansion on the hill invited the bastards and the orphans from the ghetto to come live in his fine home, and he told them, “When you talk to my father, feel free to call him ‘Dad’ – I’ve arranged for that.”

b. And Jesus said to his followers, “When you pray, say, ‘Father’, ...” (Luke 11:2)

2. The punchline of every Christian prayer is the line, “for Jesus’ sake.” Why? Why then is that line (or even its equivalent) missing from the Lord’s Prayer?

3. Why pray? The introductory pages in the Large Catechism’s “Third Part: The Lord’s Prayer” mention at least four good reasons why we ought to pray. (§ 2-9, 12- 29) The same pages also mention the wrong reasons we often have for not praying or for praying badly. Take both sorts of reasons, the positive and the negative, and try verbalizing them to the way you would if you were talking to God about them in prayer.

D. Now divide into small groups, as follows. Count off, “one”,

“two”, “three”, and so on, up to “nine”, going around the room until each student has a number. Let all the “one’s” form into a group, taking as their subject The First Petition. The “two’s” take The Second Petition. And so on. The “seven’s” take “The Last Petition”, though not the part which deals with “Amen.” (§119-124) That little word goes to the “eight’s”. And the “nine’s” take the salutation with which the Lord’s Prayer begins, “Our Father in heaven.” The Large Catechism does not have a separate section on that salutation but deals with it, more or less, in § 35-39. Beyond that, let the “nine’s” recollect what they can about the “Father” from Session Two on the Creed.

The small groups should now go into huddle and try to relate their respective segments of the Lord’s Prayer to “Ernest Bradshaw,” making it into his prayer. The goal, when the small groups come back into plenary session, is to piece together one whole expanded version of the Lord’s Prayer

1. Which reflects Bradshaw’s needs and
2. Which does justice to what the Catechism means by good Christian praying. (Assume what may actually be the case, that Bradshaw is a practicing Christian – approximately as successful and un-successful as the rest of us are.)

Each small group may proceed through the following three stages:

1. Under each petition the Large Catechism always explains, either in so many words or by implication, the negative, the sinful, opposite of that petition, namely, what those particular sins or obstacles are in our lives which prevent us from praying that petition as we ought. Be clear about what these specific prayer- problems are for your petition, and then locate where those same problems seem to be occurring in the experience of Ernest Bradshaw. (You may have to use a

little imagination. Theologians always do. Anyway, it is all for a good cause: it is for our own battles against the Enemy, remember, and not of course for gossiping about Bradshaw.)

2. Next, consider the positive, how the Catechism does encourage us to pray that petition. Then ask, how might such a positive petition be expanded into words by which Bradshaw himself could pray it as a Christian talking to the Father.

3. Now put the expanded petition (Bradshaw version) in writing – no more than five or six sentences, please – and take it back into the plenary gathering, where each of the small groups will read its Bradshaw petition in sequence.

E. As a final agenda item for Session Three, the leader may help the group formulate three or four major unanswered questions, unfinished pieces of business which have emerged from the course so far. These should then be forwarded to the undersigned for consideration in the final session, Session Five.

Session Four

Fourth Part: Baptism

A. Read – at home, prior to Session Four – The Large Catechism, “Fourth Part: Baptism”, BoC, pp. 436-446.

B. Session Four – with each congregational group (usually four laypersons and their pastor) meeting separately in their own locality – may be spent considering the following five questions:

1. The first point which the Catechism is determined to get across is this, “It is of the greatest importance that we regard Baptism as excellent, glorious and exalted.” (§ 7) (We may want to pause and check just how well we are currently

fighting “the good fight”: does Baptism – particularly our own – currently strike us as “excellent, glorious and exalted”?)

What makes Baptism so great is the Word of God, both his Word of command and his Word of promise. How do these Words read?

Notice who it was who spoke these words: Jesus the Christ. That is whom the Catechism means when it says the baptismal Word is a Word of God. What if, as some historians claim, the baptismal command and promise in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark never really were spoken by Jesus at all but rather were added after his death by the early church? What difference would that make to what the Catechism says about Baptism being “excellent, glorious and exalted”?

2. The Catechism not only explains what it is which gives Baptism its great “dignity”, namely, that this simple water is divinely Worded, but also it explains what Baptism’s “purpose” is for us – “what benefits, gifts, and effects it brings.” (§22-23) One of these “benefits, gifts, and effects” is that it brings us “the entire Christ,” a Christ who uses Baptism’s water as well as its Word to save our “bodies” as well as our “souls” (§ 41-46) How so?

3. What if baptized babies do not immediately, at the time of their baptisms, actually believe (anymore than they disbelieve) but do gradually grow into faith? For “we bring the child with the purpose and hope that he may believe, and we pray God to grant him faith.” (§ 52-62)

How, as this child grows up, does his Baptism come to figure as that crucial event in his past to which he looks back and from which he draws confidence and faith? For isn’t that the way his Baptism brings him to faith? In other words, it isn’t that faith somehow had worked its way secretly into his soul through the magic of the baptismal rite. Rather, his being

baptized was an objective, publicly witnessed event – like Jesus’s crucifixion and resurrection – and thus “something to which [his faith] may cling and upon which it may stand.” (§ 28-29) Read especially what the Catechism says about Baptism as an “external object,” (§ 30-31)

Then isn’t each baby’s Baptism the re-playing of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection in that baby’s own public dying and rising with Christ, at a specific place and time, with eye- and ear-witnesses to confirm it? And isn’t that – namely, this baby’s personalized version of Good Friday and Easter – what more and more his “faith grasps, just as the Lord Christ upon the cross is...a treasure comprehended and offered to us in the Word and received by faith”? (§ 37)

Do you know enough about your own Baptism – when it happened and where, who witnessed it – to be able to use it as an “external object” to which your faith might cling? Even if you do not know all those particulars, what is important about your Baptism in order for it to encourage your faith?

4. Baptism’s “signification”, as the Catechism calls it, is a pantomiming (so to speak), an acting out of what Baptism actually accomplishes. It looks like what it does. (§72) What (or whom) does it look like? And what does it do – every day over, for the rest of our lives? (§64-86)

5. If you were counseling (not just interviewing) Ernest Bradshaw as one Christian to another, how would you show him that the daily struggles he is going through might better be put to use if he saw them instead as the daily penitential playing out of his Baptism? Get specific in terms of his own words and experiences. What if he then pooh-poohed his Baptism and shrugged it off as some “rinky-dink ceremony long ago and far away.” Might you introduce some impressive Name- dropping

at this point?

Session Five

Fifth Part: The Sacrament of the Altar

A Read-at home, prior to Session Five –

1. The Large Catechism, “Fifth Part: The Sacrament of the Altar,” BoC, pp. 447- 461;
2. The preceding four parts of the Large Catechism, as a quick review;
3. Terkel’s interview of “Ernest Bradshaw”, as quick review.

B . Friday evening

1. The opening devotion may well take the form of the Lord’s Supper (without a sermon) preceded by corporate confession and absolution.

2. The “sermon” comes after the service in the form of an all-group discussion, students and leader reflecting together upon the Confession, Absolution and the Sacrament through which they have just come – preferably with open hymnals still in hand. The discussion might use the following outlines from the Catechism as a guide:

a. What was there in our celebration of the Lord’s Supper just now which showed

- i) What it is,
- ii) What its benefits are, and
- iii) Who is to receive it? (§ 1-37)

b. How did the pre-service of Confession and Absolution “take care to keep the two parts clearly separate”? And in proper priority? (“A Brief Exhortation to Confession,” §§ 15-19)

C . Saturday morning

1. Class begins with a short quiz covering all the material of the course.
2. The quiz is graded on the spot to see which weak spots still need further attention. These problem areas, together with the three or four questions which had been forwarded from Session Three – plus any other high- priority issues which the group may adopt – provide the agenda items for Saturday morning's discussion. In the course of the discussion frequent reference should be made to the relevant pages and passages in the Large Catechism.

D . Saturday afternoon

1. Begin – following an ample leisure period after lunch – with an all-group walk-through of the Ernest Bradshaw interview, stopping here and there to comment on those statements by Bradshaw which call to mind themes we have touched upon earlier in the course.
2. Next, use Bradshaw's own experiences to illustrate:
 - a. The various obstacles which, as the Catechism shows, prevent Christians from receiving the Lord's Supper as freely or as frequently as they ought; (§ 39-87)
 - b. The various answers which the Catechism might give to Bradshaw to counter those resistances of his to the Lord's Supper (§ 39-87)
 - c. The different ways which are provided in the church for Bradshaw to make confession and receive absolution, (§ 8-14) and what might actually be said, back and forth, in such transactions in his own case;

d. How Bradshaw, thus seen as waging “the good fight”, might have possibilities as a Christian “confessor”.

E . Saturday evening

Conclude with the Lord’s Supper.

1. Let the sermon in this final service be preached by one half of the class as follows: each student, in turn, “confesses” one brief sentence apiece, a sentence which sums up some one thing which that student has most prized in a particular “part” of the Large Catechism. Thus the first student will take his/her one-sentence confession from some favorite though in “First Part: The Ten Commandments”. The second student’s confessional sentence will be based on “Second Part: The Creed”. And so on, until one half of all the students have had their turn.

2. At that point in the service where the General Prayer is ordinarily prayed, let the second half of the class take over, each student – with one brief sentence apiece – praying for some one need, remembering to do so in the Christian way which the Catechism’s discussion of the Lord’s Prayer had encouraged.

Robert W. Bertram
Christ Seminary–Seminex
St. Louis, MO 63103
March 1979

[what_lutherans_confess \(PDF\)](#)