**Confirmation Class**

*Lesson 1 – September 4th, 2019*

*Introduction to Class*

1. Tell me your:
   1. Name
   2. Grade and School
   3. Favorite verse/passage of Scripture?

*Why are you here?*

1. QUESTION & ANSWER
   1. QUESTION: Why do you take every Wednesday night for the next two – three years to come here? (Take 2-3 minutes to discuss with a partner)
   2. ANSWER: I’m concerned with converting your sinful heart from unbelief to faith in the crucified Christ.
2. Thoughts
   1. As Christians, we’re disciples of Jesus – catechumens – for life.
   2. Not just for a few years of instruction.
   3. From God’s Word we learn we learn:
      1. we’re sinners who need to repent and confess our sins.
      2. to trust in the crucified Christ for the forgiveness of sins.
      3. to live our faith in our vocations in life.
   4. The crucified – risen – ascended Christ is the object of our worship and the source of our life and salvation.
3. Catechesis Isn’t the Same as Education
   1. Catechesis involve teaching, but it’s not the same as education.
   2. Education is concerned with:
      1. passing on a body of information.
      2. developing the intellect or skills.
   3. Catechesis again:
      1. concerned about converting the sinful heart from unbelief to faith in Christ.
      2. I’m not just giving you more information.
      3. As Christians, we’re both sinner and saint. We must daily drown the Old Man so that the new man of faith come forth and walk in newness of life.
      4. I’m concerned about your eternal life.
      5. Apart from Christ, there’s only death.

*Catechesis – the Word of God*

1. How do we go about catechesis?
2. The Word of God
   1. Every class, every lesson centers on Holy Scripture, the Word of God.
   2. It’s God’s very words to us. He speaks we listen.
   3. From Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, God’s the author and speaker of every word.
   4. In these words, the Triune God speaks to us.
   5. While men physically wrote the words down, God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, gave them both the thoughts and words to write and speak.
   6. Again, He speaks and we listen and we go forth confessing these truths.
3. Support
   1. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
      1. “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”
   2. QUESTION & ANSWER
      1. QUESTION: Who does Paul say the author of Scripture is?
      2. ANSWER: God.
      3. QUESTION: What is the inspired word used for?
      4. ANSWER: Teaching – Reproof – Correction – Training in righteousness.
         1. These four chief duties of the inspired Scripture make us wise unto salvation.
         2. The inspired Word of God speaks to us in words of Law – revealing to us our sin.
         3. The inspired Word of God speaks in words of Gospel – reveals Christ crucified for sinners.
4. Ultimately
   1. God speaks. We constantly listen and go forth living our lives with these truths.
   2. The devil’s sole focus is to steal away the seed that is the Word of God, so that we may not believe and be saved.

*Catechesis – The Small Catechism*

1. The Word of God verses the Small Catechism?
   1. We said the primary means of catechesis is the Word of God.
      1. It’s inspired by God himself.
   2. The Small Catechism is written by Martin Luther (1483-1546).
      1. This is the 16th Century Theologian.
      2. Not the 20th Century Civil Rights Activist – Martin Luther King Jr.
      3. Written by Martin Luther, the SC isn’t inspired by God.
   3. QUESTION & ANSWER:
      1. QUESTION: Why do we use the Small Catechism in catechesis if it isn’t inspired by God?
      2. ANSWER: It is a faithful exposition/explanation of Scripture.
2. Historical Context
   1. False Teaching:
      1. During the 1500s, many in the Church believed that Jesus is God, He alone can’t save us. We need to help Him by doing our part.
   2. Reformers
      1. Martin Luther, a German Theologian, and other reformers discovered the truth about what Christ has done and continues to do for us.
      2. During the period of the Reformation, Luther and other reformers wrote down these truths based on God’s Word.
      3. These documents were adopted by those reformers and were collected into what is called the Book of Concord (concord means “agreement”).
         1. Luther’s Small and Large Catechism are two of these books.
3. Handout
   1. [Distribute SD FC Handout]
   2. Read to how the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord (Rule and Norm) describes the Small and Large Catechism.
      1. “Sixth, since these highly significant matters also concern the common people, the laity (who, for the sake of their salvation, must distinguish between pure and false teaching), we also pledge ourselves unanimously to the Small and Large Catechism of Dr. Luther, as they were written by him and incorporated into his collected words, because they have been unanimously approved and accepted by all the church of the Augsburg Confession and are officially used in the churches, schools, and homes, and because these Catechisms summarize Christian teaching from God’s Word for the simple laity in the most correct and simple, yet sufficiently explicit fashion.” (para. 8)
   3. QUESTION & ANSWER:
      1. QUESTION: Who’s the SC and LC for? (A: Laity)
      2. QUESTION: Why would they need it? (A: Distinguish between pure and false teaching for their salvation.)
      3. QUESTION: Where is it to be used? (A: Churches, schools, and homes).
      4. QUESTION: Why use it everywhere? (A: Drawn from God’s Word, it summarizes the Christians teaching.)
      5. QUESTION: Is it complicated? (A: No! It’s for the simple laity in the most correct and simple, yet sufficiently explicit fashion.)
   4. Additional Thoughts:
      1. Put another way, the Small Catechism has been referred to as the Layman’s Bible. The central articles of Scripture are captured in the words.
      2. Throughout class, we’ll use the Small and Large Catechism because they are faithful exposition/explanations of God’s Word.
4. [Catechism Is a Prayer Book and Handbook for the Christian Faith]
   1. [Skip this section for this year]
5. Learn by Heart
   1. As the Small Catechism contains the central articles of faith…
   2. It is to be learned by heart, word for word, so that it can be used for the rest of their lives.
   3. Memorization of text isn’t part of our modern culture and is deem unimportant, but this is.
   4. We know of no Jesus except that Jesus who is revealed to us in sacred Scriptures.
   5. The catechism gives us the most important texts and primary vocabular of the Scriptures.
6. Additional Thoughts:
   1. Small Catechism vs. the Explanation
      1. [Point out what is Small Catechism and what is the LCMS explanation of the Small Catechism].
   2. Large Catechism
      1. Assignments will require reading parts of the Large Catechism.
      2. To help save you money, I’m not requiring you to purchase this book.
      3. You can find the LC for free online. However, you will need to have access the internet. Let me know if this will be an issue.

*Catechesis – Divine Service*

1. God’s Word and the Small Catechism
   1. In our classes, we hear what:
      1. God’s Word says about us.
      2. The Small Catechism teaches us.
   2. In our classes, catechumens will be given:
      1. Scripture passages and Small Catechism to learn by heart.
      2. All to aid in the instruction of the faith.
   3. It doesn’t stop here.
      1. Catechesis doesn’t stop once the kids leave the school.
2. Divine Service
   1. QUESTION & ANSWER
      1. QUESTION: What is worship? (Take 2-3 minutes to discuss.)
      2. ANSWER:
         1. People often think worship in the church service is about what we do for or toward God. The reality is quite different.
         2. In the Divine Service, God comes to serve us. Christ comes among His gathered church to teach and feed us, to forgive and free us to serve and honor Him in our vocations in life.
         3. At the center of human history was Christ’s service to us on the cross. The center of our present lives is Christ’s ongoing service to us in Word and Sacrament.
   2. Attending the Divine Service
      1. Parents and Children attend the Divine Service because here:
         1. Learn to confess their sins.
         2. Learn to receive absolution, this is forgiveness.
         3. Listen to preaching
         4. Learn to call upon God in prayer.
         5. Learn to live in one’s calling in life.
   3. Scripture Support
      1. Matthew 20:28
         1. Jesus’ service on the cross provided redemption, forgiveness of sins, to us sinners. Only the God-Man Jesus Christ could serve us in this way.
      2. Acts 1:1-2; Matthew 18:20
         1. Acts 1:1-2 - speaks of what Jesus “began” to do and teach before His ascension. The clear indication is that the doing and teaching which Christ “began” before His ascension is still going on.
         2. Matthew 18:20 – To come together in Jesus’ name means to gather together in keeping with His person and work and Word. The living Christ is indeed still present to serve His people.
   4. The Divine Service
      1. QUESTION & ANSWER
         1. QUESTION: Without looking at your hymnal, what are some parts of our liturgy? What do you notice?
         2. ANSWER: See Hymnal…
      2. Additional Thoughts:
         1. The formal liturgy we use here at Bethlehem isn’t made-up but is derived directly from Scripture. We follow a historic order that has been used by the church throughout the centuries. We follow this order because it clearly and beautifully serves the purpose of the Divine Service, which is to deliver the gracious gifts of God.

*Catechesis – At Home*

1. Not Just for Class
   1. Again, instruction in the Word of God isn’t just for class
   2. It takes place in the Divine Service
   3. It takes place in the home.
      1. In fact, God has primarily given the task of catechesis to you the parents.
2. Support:
   1. Ephesians 6:1-4
      1. QUESTION & ANSWER
         1. QUESTION: Who first and foremost is given the command to bring children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?
         2. ANSWER: The Father.
            1. By God’s ordering, God looks to him as the head of the household.
            2. The Father is to teach their children the faith.
            3. This is what Luther writes in the Small Catechism: “As the Head of the Household should teach…”
            4. The Father teaches his children both Law (God’s Commands) and Gospel (God’s Forgiveness for Christ’s sake).
            5. Mothers support and encourage this instruction.
3. Additional Thoughts
   1. I love to teach!
      1. I love studying God’s Word.
      2. I love studying our Lutheran treasures.
      3. I love teaching others these things (ie – like this class).
   2. But…
      1. It begins with you.
      2. To delegate the time and task of catechesis to others when it is your responsibility is a sin against the 4th Commandment.
      3. To often Sunday mornings have been viewed as a time for Jesus while the rest of the week has scarcely been sanctified by God’s Word and prayer.
      4. The key is the home.
      5. It’s in the home that God places us for the most time.
      6. It’s in the home where we struggle between saint and sinner.
   3. Ultimately
      1. This isn’t an either/or
         1. Picking the church over home, or vis versa.
      2. What takes place in the Divine Service is essential.
         1. You need God’s gift of forgiveness, life and salvation for Christ’s sake that takes place here.
      3. What takes place in the home is essential.
         1. You need God Word as you battle the world, the devil, and the sinful flesh who seek to destroy your faith.
4. Practically, what does this look like?
   1. Congregation at Prayer
      1. Always printed in our bulletin.
      2. Daily Scripture readings.
      3. Daily prayers for our brothers and sisters in Christ.
      4. Focus on the Small Catechism
      5. Memory Work
      6. This is central to Catechesis here at Bethlehem.
   2. Handout
      1. See “Establishing the Family Altar”
      2. Offers practical tips on how to integrate a daily prayer life into your family.
   3. Online
      1. Small Catechism App
      2. LibriVox – Download for Free the Small Catechism (Audio).
      3. Issue Etc. & KFUO
      4. Amazon Prime
         1. Martin Luther – Hymns, Ballads, Chants, Truth
         2. Heirs of the Reformation – Treasures of the Singing Church
      5. Others?
   4. Attending…
      1. Church Bible Studies
      2. Instructions here Wednesday night. Parents are always encourage to attended.

*Class Review*

1. Why are you here?
   1. The catechesis that takes place here is concerned with converting the sinful heart from unbelief to faith in the crucified Christ for the forgiveness of sins.
2. What reveals this to us?
   1. The inspired Word of God.
   2. The Small Catechism and Large Catechism that faithfully draw upon these truths of Scripture.
   3. Divine Service
   4. Instruction in the home

*Class Schedule and Expectations*

1. Need name, phone number, and email address.
2. Hand out and review class schedule.

*Dismissal for Closing Devotions*