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INTRODUCTION

You are on a journey. You're on a journey of finding out and experiencing what it means to move from a childhood faith to an adult faith. You've decided that you want to grow in your understanding of the faith into which you were baptized. That you want to identify deeply and personally as a disciple of Jesus and that you want to publicly confirm and claim that identity.

That's no small thing!

This Confirmation Journal is a tool to help you along the way.

As you work through this Journal you'll be exploring what we, as Lutheran Christians, believe and why we believe it.

You'll look at:

- God's word—the Bible
- Luther's Small Catechism and the main doctrines or teachings of the Christian faith
- Faith habits that Christians use to keep themselves growing in the faith

Each lesson in this Journal is made up of four parts:

- 1) **READ** asks you to open your Bible and your catechism and do just that...read. See what's written there, what it says about God and what it says about you.
- 2) **REFLECT** asks you to think about what you've read. What is it teaching you about being a follower of Jesus? How does what you've read compare with your experience in your life?
- 3) **WRITE** asks you to put something—maybe a few verses of the Bible or something from the catechism—into your own words, to capture what's being said but in a way that sounds like you.
- 4) **RESPOND** is where the challenge comes in. Now that you've read and thought about this teaching how will it affect your life? How will you put it into action?

Because each lesson is brief you may find yourself wanting to hurry through and get a bunch done at one time. Try to keep in mind that the goal isn't finishing the Journal. The goal is learning about and exploring your faith along the way. It doesn't work to rush through.

This Journal can be used solo, but this experience will be even more meaningful and rich if you choose to work through these lessons with a parent, God parent, or another adult who has faith you admire.

Before you begin, take a moment to pray. Ask God to open your eyes and your heart to what He would have you see and learn. Then take your time with the lesson. Really thinking through what's being asked will help you gain a deeper understanding of each teaching. And taking the time to write out your thoughts, as opposed to scribbling a few words, will help you retain what you've learned and explored.

As you work through the lessons jot any "A-ha's" or questions you have in the margins of the page. Talk about your questions with someone at home or at church. And share you're "A-ha's" as well. It's exciting when God reveals something new!

At the end of each unit there is a review lesson. Part of the review asks that you talk to someone about their experiences with the subject you've been studying. Faith works best in community and hearing others' faith experiences helps to strengthen your faith.

Enjoy the journey! And be ready...God has some wonderful things in store for you as you explore your faith.

*So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.
- Colossians 2:6-7*

BEING A LUTHERAN CHRISTIAN

When you start reading in your catechism you'll often see this question, "What does this mean?" It's also a good time to ask, "I'm a Lutheran Christian...what does this mean?"

First, a Lutheran is a Christian. Someone who believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

"Lutheran" wasn't ever supposed to be a thing. Martin Luther (1483-1546) was a Roman Catholic priest, theologian and teacher in the early 1500's. The more he studied God's word the more he noticed that the Church of his day was doing and teaching things that were not in line with what the Bible said. For example, the church at that time was selling something called "Indulgences". For a fee payable to the church, you could have the punishment for your sins or the sins of a loved one, living or dead, forgiven. But Luther ran into these words from Romans 1:17, "For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'" And the light bulb went on. It isn't what we do that makes us right in God's eyes. The gospel—the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection—tells us that God gives us Jesus' righteousness by grace through faith. It's not something we have to, or for that matter, could ever earn on our own.

On October 31, 1517, wanting to start a debate, he posted a set of statements calling on the church to return to the Bible as the only source of authority and to teach that people are saved by grace and not by what they do. It didn't go over well. In just a little more than a year he was condemned for teachings conflicting with the church and was excommunicated (kicked out of the church and his role as priest). Later he was put on trial and told to recant or take back his teachings. He ended his testimony with this statement, "Here I stand. God help me. I can do no other." And then he had to run for his life and spent almost a year in hiding in a castle in Germany. But the Reformation had been born.

Today Lutheran churches still hold to the truth that Martin Luther found in the Bible: we are saved by grace, through faith, not by what we have done but by what Jesus has done for us. (Ephesians 2:8-9).

In this Journal you'll work through lessons from a book that Martin Luther wrote called Luther's Small Catechism. In this book he pulled together the main doctrines or teachings of the Christian faith. This Catechism was written to help parents teach their children about faith and living as a follower of Jesus.

But first, a few pages on some uniquely Lutheran ways of understanding God and His word: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH and LAW AND GOSPEL.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

READ

Romans 3:23-24 in your Bible.

JUSTIFICATION by faith is the central teaching of Christianity. To be justified by faith means that we are right with God because of what Jesus did for us in His death and resurrection, not by anything we have done.

***Justified:** being declared righteous...being made right with God.*

Trying to become right with God on our own would leave us hopeless and helpless. There is nothing our sinful selves could do to achieve this rightness. But the teaching of justification by faith says that Jesus takes our sin on Himself and gives us His righteousness.

REFLECT

Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Verses 1-3 show the problem...what is it?

Verses 4 and 5 give the solution...what is it?

Look back at verse 4...why did He do it (two reasons)?

WRITE

Ephesians 2:8-9 speak to something that is at the heart of what it means to be a Lutheran. Write these two verses in your own words.

RESPOND

Make the sign of the cross over your forehead and over your heart and say, "I have been redeemed by Christ the crucified."** Do this every day for the next week (or longer).

***The pastor makes the sign of the cross in this way and says these words whenever he baptizes someone. Doing this helps you remember your baptism and that you have been made right with God through Jesus!*

LAW AND GOSPEL

READ

Questions 10-11 in the Catechism and Romans 6:23 in your Bible.



Here's a piece of useful trivia: a tightrope walker is also called a funambulist.

Funambulists carry long poles to help them keep their balance. The pole makes the tightrope walker “bigger” and “more spread out” making it harder for them to get moved or to fall. It also lowers their center of gravity keeping them balanced (or as the physicists say, in a state of stable equilibrium). Funambulists know that they need help staying in balance. They can't lean too far to one side or the other of their rope or they'll fall. They need balance between both sides of the rope.

Lutherans understand that there is a balance we need to keep when we read God's word: the balance between the Law and the Gospel.

Law: Shows us our sin and our need for a savior

The main job of the Law is to show us our sin. In its simplest sense God's law always points out how we've failed. It's like a mirror that shows us how we really are. Look back at Romans 6:23. The first part, “The wages of sin is death,” is all Law.

Gospel: Shows us our Savior: Jesus

The Gospel on the other hand shows us our Savior. The Gospel always points out what Jesus has done for us. Again look back at Romans 6:23. The second part, “but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord,” is pure Gospel.

Both are important. We need to hear the Law to learn what we are to do and not to do (think 10 Commandments). We need to hear the Gospel to know what Jesus has done for us. We need to hear the Law because it makes us sorry for our sin. We need to hear the Gospel because it gives us comfort in our sorrow. Like the tightrope walker's pole, the Law and the Gospel keep us balanced as we understand ourselves and God.

REFLECT

Describe a time when you did something wrong but instead of being punished you were forgiven. How did that feel?

RESPOND

Your friend Thomas is in an ongoing fight with his parents. They have given him a curfew of midnight on Friday and Saturday nights but he always breaks it. Sometimes by a little, sometimes by a lot, but he always breaks it. They've grounded him, taken away his cell phone, taken away all kinds of privileges but Thomas doesn't care. He says the rule is stupid and so are his parents.

What does Thomas need to hear, Law or Gospel? What would you say to him?

A different friend, Megan, has messed up. Megan told a secret about April that she had promised to keep to herself. As soon as she said it April walked around the corner and everyone looked at her and started laughing. Megan saw the hurt in April's eyes and ran off, ashamed about what she had done. For the whole next week Megan wouldn't go anywhere near April, she was so ashamed. Finally one night April texted but Megan wouldn't even read it. When she finally did it said, "I know what you did...that you told the story about me. I'm embarrassed that people know that about me now. But you are my friend and I don't want this to come between us. I can forgive you, but please, don't avoid me anymore." Megan doesn't know what to do. How could April ever forgive her?

What does Megan need to hear, Law or Gospel. What would you say to her?

THE BIBLE

If someone asked you, “What is the Bible?” how would you answer? You could say, “The Bible...

... is a book of books-- 66 in all—Open up your Bible, how many books are in the Old Testament _____? How many are in the New Testament_____?

... is made up of history and poetry and wise sayings and letters and prophecies and apocalyptic literature (writings about the end of the world).”

... was written by 40 different authors, some of whom are anonymous

... was written over a period of around 1,500 years.”

... is full of stories about miracles and signs and wonders, of kings and prophets, of fishermen and shepherds, of angels and demons.”

And you could go on and on. All of that is true, but the shortest, truest answer is this: **the Bible is the good news of God’s work to reconcile the world to Himself through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.**

Reconcile: to bring back

Throughout Old and New Testaments, the central message of the Bible is the account of how God was preparing the world to receive His Son, Jesus, and then what Jesus did when He was here. It also tells how the church received this message of salvation, and how it grew and spread throughout the known world.

As Lutheran Christians we believe that...

... The Bible is God’s Word. God’s Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible to say exactly what God wanted them to say. Because the Bible is God’s Word we can believe that it is true.

... The Bible contains Law and Gospel (What are these again? Jot your answer in the margin.)

... The Bible isn’t just some collection of principles for daily living. It’s not a textbook that answers every possible question we have. And it’s not a book that predicts every last detail about the future.

... The Bible tells us everything we need to know for our salvation. It doesn't tell us everything about God, no book could do that. But we don't need to go looking for other hidden information about God. The Bible tells us all we need.

REFLECT

Have you had a friendship or relationship that went bad but was fixed? How did it feel to be back in a relationship with that person?

Why would God choose to reconcile or bring back the world to Himself?

WRITE

Look up 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Verse 16 lists some things that the Bible is useful for. What are they?

Verse 17 tells us what the Bible prepares us for. What is it?

RESPOND

Please read the Gospel of John in your Bible. The book of John is 21 chapters long; I would suggest reading a chapter or two a day, rather than reading it all at one time.

We can't walk through every bit of the Bible in this Journal. You'll spend the rest of your life exploring what God has written for you. But over these next few lessons we'll look at some major themes of the Bible focused around its central message of God bringing us back to Himself.

THE BIBLE:

GOD MADE IT GOOD.

SIN MADE IT BROKEN.

BUT GOD IS MAKING IT GOOD AGAIN...

READ

Genesis 1. Especially focus on the words, “And God saw that it was good.” And a good verse that really nails it.

Everything God makes is good. Because He is perfect everything He makes is perfect. So, when God made the world it was perfect. Everything worked together in harmony. There was no pain, no death, no shame, no hurting. Saying it was good almost seems like an understatement.

But now read Genesis 3. The serpent convinces Adam and Eve to do what God told them not to do. As you read chapter three, notice how everything that was good starts falling apart. When sin entered the world, it broke all the good that God had created.

We live there, in the brokenness. You don’t have to watch the news for too long to see example after example of that fact. Sickness, death, pain, all the badness that we see in the world and in our lives is a result of sin.

But look back at Genesis 3:15. Right there, as God is giving the consequences for sin, right in the midst of the brokenness, God makes a promise, albeit a little cryptically. He talks about the woman’s offspring who will crush the head of the serpent (the devil) who talked Adam and Eve into sinning. Right there, in the midst of the brokenness God promises to make it good again. And the rest of the Bible is the story of how He was doing just that.

REFLECT

Where have you seen examples of the brokenness caused by sin?

Where have you experienced the brokenness caused by sin in your own life?

WRITE

Look up Luke 4:14-21. Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. Isaiah was prophesying about the coming Messiah who would make it good again. In verse 21 Jesus is telling the people, "I am the one Isaiah was prophesying about."

Look at verses 18 and 19. List what is broken and what the Messiah will do to make it good again. (Hint: there are four sets to find.)

RESPOND

God gives us the opportunity to be like Jesus and be a part of making it good again. What brokenness do you see in your world? How can you be a part of making it good again?

THE BIBLE:

I WILL BE YOUR GOD, YOU WILL BE MY PEOPLE

READ

Jeremiah 24:7 in your Bible.

If there was one phrase that would give us a look inside God's heart this would be it. There are more than 30 places in the Bible where this phrase (or a version of it) comes up. Over and over again God repeats this desire.

From the previous lesson we could ask the question: why would God want to make it good again? Why not just walk away and leave us in the mess we created? We find the answer here. God's deepest desire is for this relationship, where we belong to each other, where He is our God and we are His people. And all of His work throughout the Old Testament was setting up the final, ultimate act by which He would bring this desire to fulfillment.

Covenant: *an agreement between 2 people or 2 groups of people where both make specific promises*

GOD AT WORK IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

What God does	Why
In Genesis God makes a COVENANT with Abraham promising to make him into a great nation and to bless the world through him.	God chose Abraham to be the beginning of a new people. They would be His people and He would be their God.
In Exodus God rescues His people from slavery to the Egyptians.	So that they would know that He loves them and will save them.
In Exodus God makes a covenant with His people giving them the 10 Commandments and other laws.	To define how His people would live and honor Him as their God.
In Joshua He leads His people into the land He promised to Abraham.	To give them a place to live as His people with Him as their God.

In Judges He saves them over and over again from foreign enemies (and from themselves).	Protecting His people because He is their God.
In the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles He uses earthly kings to rule His people.	The kings were to be God's representatives—leading His people to worship and serve Him as their God. (They didn't do a good job.)
In the books of the prophets (Isaiah-Malachi) He reminds His people of the covenant He made with them and pleads with them to turn away from other gods.	The covenant was the thing that defined the relationship between God and His people. They are not some other god's people and no other god is their God. (For the most part God's people ignore Him.)
Finally, God allows His people to be taken away from the Promised Land and into exile (captured and split up) in Babylon.	He did this in the same way a parent allows their child to suffer from the consequences of not doing what they're told.

REFLECT

When you look at the Old Testament this way what do you notice about God?

When you look at the Old Testament this way, what do you notice about His people?

WRITE

Write a note from God's perspective to your people explaining why you want them to love you and worship you as their only God and why you love them and want them to be your people.

RESPOND

Does your life, your attitudes and actions, show that God is your God and you are His person? What can you do to more clearly show that He is yours and you are His?

THE BIBLE: GOD'S FINAL WORD: JESUS

READ

Hebrews 1:1-2 in your Bible.

When the Old Testament ends, God's people have returned to their land after 70 years in exile (where they were taken captive and divided up into smaller groups and spread throughout cities in Babylon). They've started to rebuild in Jerusalem but there is no king or prophets sent from God. This "silent age" goes on for 400 years.

God had been talking to His people throughout their history. Telling them that He wanted to be their God and have them as His people. Asking them to honor their covenant. For the most part they ignored His words. But all of His words through the prophets had been building up to one final word. One ultimate statement of "I will be your God and you will be My people."

That final word: Jesus.

Jesus was the offspring of Eve promised back in Genesis 3:15.
Jesus is the one who blesses the world as God promised Abraham.
Jesus is the one who sets us free...not from Egypt but from sin.
Jesus is the one who lived the covenant perfectly.
Jesus is the one who leads us into the promised land of heaven.
Jesus protects and saves us from the enemy Satan.
Jesus is the King who rules God's Kingdom.
Jesus is the prophet who reveals God's will to us.

Do you see it? All of the things in the Old Testament were glimpses of what was coming. Finally, in Jesus, God revealed how "I will be your God and you will be My people" could come true.

The Bible is about Jesus.



REFLECT

What does it mean to you that God wants to be your God and wants you to be His person?

WRITE

How would you explain what the Bible is about to someone who asked?

RESPOND

Read Revelation 21:3-4. One last time God says it. Here at the very end of the Bible, in a scene that describes how things will be once Jesus has returned and God has made everything good again it says, "They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."

Thank God for loving us so much that He would make it good again.

THE BIBLE: REFLECTION

Now that you've looked at the Bible a little take some time to reflect on what you've learned...

INTERVIEW

Talk to someone who has been reading the Bible for a long time (parents or grandparents are great options, but any follower of Jesus in your life will do). Ask them some of these questions:

Why do you read the Bible?

What would you say is the main thing the Bible is about?

What is your favorite Bible verse? Why?

WRITE

What do you know about the Bible now that you didn't know before?

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Prayer is important in a Christian's life. Look at the 2nd Commandment in your Catechism. In the explanation of the Commandment we're told to call upon God, to pray, praise, and give thanks.



So, how should we pray? Is there a right way? A wrong way? Do we have to pray in big, formal church words or just with regular words? Out loud? Silently? Only at church or anywhere?

READ

Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4 in your Bible.

In both Matthew and Luke Jesus teaches His disciples to pray. "When you pray, say..." and giving them what we now call The Lord's Prayer, the prayer the Lord gave us. There are other places in the Gospels where Jesus prays, but this is the only time he gives us the words to use. That makes it an important prayer; one we should use often.

Why do you think the disciples wanted Jesus to teach them how to pray?

You'll find the Lord's Prayer and the meanings of each petition on pages 19-22 of your catechism. Pages 231-280 have additional questions and answers and Bible references for each petition.

PRAYER...

...is a conversation with God in words or thoughts...speaking to God and listening to Him

...must be rooted in a desire to be obedient to God: recognizing He commands us to pray to Him and knowing that we need His help to know His will and the strength to trust and follow Him.

...is a gift that God has given us, a way to bring Him our needs, our hopes, our hurts, our joys, we can bring anything and everything to God in prayer.

...is answered by God according to His perfect will and in His own time. We trust in God to answer with what is best for us and His kingdom.

REFLECT

How do you do at praying regularly?

When you pray, what kinds of things do you pray about?

Why is it important to God that His people pray to Him?

WRITE

Write the Lord's Prayer in your own words. Look through the prayer, what concepts or topics does Jesus pray for?

“Whenever a godly Christian prays: Dear Father, let Thy will be done, God speaks from on high and says: Yes, dear child, it shall be so, in spite of the devil and all the world.” Martin Luther, Large Catechism III, 32)

RESPOND

What changes do you want to make to the way you pray? (E.g. how often you pray, your attitude about prayer.)

What are some places (school, car, sports, band) that you never pray?
Pick one and pray there this week.

THE INTRODUCTION:

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN

Imagine meeting an important person for the first time. A politician or celebrity who everyone knows about. Someone who can make important decisions, who can say a word and people jump to do whatever they've said. And imagine, that on meeting this person, they say to you, "Call me by my first name." How would you feel?

READ

The introduction to the Lord's Prayer and its meaning in your Catechism and 1 John 3:1 in your Bible.

These six words not only introduce the Lord's prayer, they introduce us to the one to whom we pray. These words tie two important characteristics of God together:

OUR FATHER	WHO ART IN HEAVEN
He is near	and far away
Comprehensible	Beyond our understanding
He is like us	and completely unlike us
Immanent	Transcendent

In this introduction Jesus tells us that God is not only *His* father, He is *our* Father, too.

REFLECT

Why would the Almighty God invite us to call Him something as ordinary as Father?

What does being invited to call God “Father” say about the relationship He wants to have with you?

How would you describe to someone else this nearness and farness of our heavenly Father?

What kinds of things come with being someone’s child? (Think about similar characteristics and interests, about legal rights, about the potential of an inheritance, etc.)

What comes with being a child of God? Romans 8:14-18

WRITE

Write the introduction to the Lord’s Prayer in your own words.

RESPOND

Does your life—your attitude and actions—show that fact that you are a child of your heavenly Father? What kind of changes might God be inviting you to make?

THE FIRST PETITION

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

The sun never stops shining. Sometimes it's hidden from us like at night or on a cloudy day, but it still shines. The moon, however, has no light of its own. It only reflects the light of the sun. Sometimes it's brighter, sometimes dimmer, but always reflecting the light it receives from the sun.

READ

The first petition and its meaning in your catechism and Psalm 103:1 in your Bible.

Hallowed means holy or sacred or revered. When we pray this first petition we're declaring to God that His name is holy. Holy. As in sinless, perfect, pure, set apart. Now, telling God that His name is holy is not news to Him. As we pray, "Hallowed be Thy name" we're saying, "Your name is Holy; help me to live a life that reflects your holiness, in what I believe, say and do."

God is serious about His name and how we use it. Look at the 2nd Commandment and its meaning in your catechism. When we pray this petition we're asking God to help us keep the commandment as well.

REFLECT

What words would you use to define hallowed or holy?

Why is it so important to God that His people keep His name holy?

WRITE

How can a person in today's world keep God's name holy?

Would people looking at your life see evidence that God's name is holy to you? What would they see?

Write a prayer to God asking Him to help you keep His name holy.

RESPOND

How are you doing at reflecting God's holiness? What specific things can you do to be a better reflection?

“If now you pray for this with your heart, you can be sure that it pleases God; for He will not hear anything more dear to Him than that His honor and praise is exalted above everything else.”
Martin Luther, Large Catechism III, 47)

THE SECOND PETITION: THY KINGDOM COME

Imagine that you've been invited to meet with the most powerful ruler the world has ever known. And not just powerful, but good. The kind of ruler who makes things better, who doesn't want more power but who wants the best for everyone under their rule. *And*, you have the opportunity to ask for something. What would you ask for? Something that would benefit just you? Or something that would benefit lots and lots of people?

READ

The second petition and its meaning in your catechism and Matthew 6:33 in your Bible.

When we think of God's kingdom we can think of it in three ways:

1. His kingdom of power: that He is the ruler of the whole universe.
2. His kingdom of grace: His power at work on earth through the church...all those who believe in Jesus. Disciples following Jesus, reflecting to the world that God is our King and we obey Him above all else.
3. His kingdom of glory: all of heaven, the angels and those who have gone to be with Jesus.

God's kingdom of power is already happening. He's the ruler of all of His creation...everything! In this petition we're praying that God's kingdom of grace would come. That He would use His Holy Spirit to strengthen our faith, to draw others to Himself, and to use us to share His GRACE. We also pray that His kingdom of glory would come quickly and that everyone will be saved and a part of God's kingdom.

*Grace: God's
love for us
even though
we don't
deserve it.*

REFLECT

Where do you see evidence of God's kingdom of power? Of God at work in the world today?

What makes you question God's kingdom of power? (Is there evidence that something/someone else has some authority or power in our world?)

WRITE

If God is all powerful, why does He ask us to pray that His kingdom would come?

How would you explain God's grace to someone who doesn't know about it? (Look up the definition in your Bible/Bible dictionary.)

How are you doing at sharing God's grace with those around you? What is at stake if we ignore this responsibility?

RESPOND

Is there someone you know who needs to hear God's grace? Who? What do they need to hear from you?

THE THIRD PETITION:

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

READ

The third petition and its meaning in your catechism and John 6:40 in your Bible.

The difference between “Thy will be done” and “my will be done” is pretty small when you read it on paper. It’s just playing with one word. But in our hearts the difference is enormous. Because of our sinful nature we tend to live our lives in a “my will be done” mindset. “I’ll do what I want to do. God, you stay over there and let me live life my way. I don’t need or want your help. I’ve got this.”

But praying “Thy will be done” is saying to God, “I trust in You. I know Your ways are perfect and mine are not. You know what is best. Accomplish Your will, God, in me and through me.”

REFLECT

What is most difficult for you in the Thy will vs. my will tension?

The catechism says God’s will is done with or without us, so why is it important for us to pray, “Thy will be done”?

WRITE

Look back at John 6:40. How would you describe God's will according to this verse?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7, what does Paul say God's will is?

What examples of God's will being accomplished in the Bible can you think of?

Where have you seen God's will being accomplished in your life?

A willingness to choose to follow God and choose His will over your will is a sign of spiritual maturity and most likely has grown over time. Can you think of a time in your life when you didn't want to surrender your will for God's will? How did the Holy Spirit change your heart?

RESPOND

In what parts of your life (mind and heart) do you need the Holy Spirit to help you work so that your prayer is "Thy will be done" instead of "My will be done"?

PAUSE

LET'S TAKE A QUICK BREAK HERE AND LOOK AT SOMETHING...

In the introduction and first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer we've focused on God...on Him as our heavenly Father, on His holiness, on His kingdom and His will. In this beginning section of the prayer we've spent our time stating who God is and that we want who He is to be what we're all about. "God, You're holy, be holy in me. God, Your kingdom is perfect let Your kingdom come through me. God, Your will is good and right, let Your will be done through me.

Before we ask for our own things (daily bread, forgiveness, protection from temptation) we're aligning ourselves and our ways with God and His ways.

Just for fun, take a look at the first three Commandments in your Catechism. Notice that they're all about God: His God-ness, His name, and His day.

If you're thinking, "There's a pattern here..." you're right! Acknowledging God and His ways come before ourselves and our needs. Aligning ourselves with God comes before worrying about ourselves. Being connected to Him comes before being connected to our neighbor.

Interesting, isn't it?

OKAY, GET BACK TO THE LORD'S PRAYER.

THE FOURTH PETITION: GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

READ

The fourth Petition and its meaning in your catechism and Proverbs 30:8-9 in your Bible.

This petition isn't just about bread. Daily bread is a term that includes everything we need for our lives. (Everything we *need*...not necessarily everything we *want*.) Here we're looking to God to provide for us like a perfect Father provides for His children. To take care of our daily physical needs. It's interesting that here, in the middle of the prayer, we're asking for something tied to our physical selves. Up to now we've been praying about very spiritual things—God's name, kingdom and will—and next we'll be praying on the spiritual side again—forgiveness, safety from temptation and evil. But right here we acknowledge that God is concerned about the physical us, too. He knows our physical needs and we can trust that He will provide for them.

REFLECT

What "daily bread" things does the explanation to the First Article of the Apostles' Creed say that God provides for us?

Look at Proverbs 30:8-9 again. Why does the writer ask God for only his daily bread? Do you think he's on to something about our sinful nature?

WRITE

Why is God concerned not only for our spiritual selves, but also for our physical selves?

How have you seen God provide for you and for your daily needs?

Why does God want us to trust in Him for everything?

RESPOND

How are you when it comes to being grateful to God for providing for your needs?

What can you do to increase your attitude of gratitude?

Where can you serve and help provide others with their daily bread?

THE FIFTH PETITION:

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US

READ

The fifth petition and its in your catechism and Ephesians 4:32 in your Bible.

This is a petition about honesty, humility, and confidence. When we pray, “Forgive us our trespasses (sins)...” we are honest with God, saying, “I know I am sinful. I admit that I’ve broken Your law and have gone against Your will.” God knows our sin; in this petition we admit to Him that we know it, too. We humble ourselves, recognizing that we are broken and sinful. But we also pray this petition with confidence. We ask for forgiveness fully believing that God will forgive us...not because we deserve it, but because of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

This petition illustrates the pattern of the Christian life as a “because, therefore” pattern.

BECAUSE	THEREFORE
God has loved me,	I will love others.
God has been merciful to me,	I will be merciful to others.
God has forgiven me,	I will forgive others.

REFLECT

When have you experienced forgiveness from someone in your life?

What did that forgiveness do for your relationship with that person?

WRITE

Look up Psalm 32 in your Bible. Write verses 3-5 in your own words.

RESPOND

How are you doing at regularly admitting and confessing your sins to God? Circle a few of the following sins that you need to confess.

judgemental **selfishness** anger **GREED** STEALING **LYING**
MISUSING GOD'S NAME CHEATING **PRIDE** disobeying parents
LAZINESS **LUST** jealousy **HOARDING** being wasteful
DISRESPECTFUL gossip forgetting about God
speaking poorly of others discontentment

Set apart time today to confess these things to God. Read 1 John 1:9.

Who do you need to extend forgiveness to?

THE SIXTH PETITION: AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Back when GPS systems first came out there were lots of funny stories about bad directions given by the GPS voice. People were misdirected onto dead end roads, taken far out of their way, or sent to the wrong destination. While we can blame the GPS for bad information, the user, too, has some responsibility. When following someone's or something's lead you first have to make sure that that person or thing is trustworthy. Getting off track is easy. Staying on track requires diligence, awareness, and above all a trustworthy guide.

READ

The sixth petition and its meaning in your catechism and 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 in your Bible.

Right on the heels of asking for forgiveness for our sins we pray a petition for protection. Putting the two together we're saying, "God, forgive me when I do wrong and protect me from being led to do more."

In Lutheran language you will often hear of three forces that are acting against you as a child of God working to lead us away from Him: the devil, the world and our sinful flesh. We can't dismiss the fact that the devil is the enemy of God and God's people. He will use all his power to try to pull us away from God. The term the world is used often in the New Testament to describe the sinful environment that exists all around us. An environment at odds with God's kingdom. Our sinful flesh is just what we prayed about in the previous petition. The us that is stuck with original sin and can't break the habit of actual sin.

With these three forces working against us we need to pray this petition seriously and often!

REFLECT

Why does Jesus want us to ask God for protection from temptation?

What does He know about us that would make Him add this petition to the Lord's Prayer?

Look at 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 again. What two promises does God make verse 13?

WRITE

What kinds of sinful temptations do you face in your life?

Have you noticed temptations becoming more complicated as you've grown older? Explain.

Have you experienced God's power in helping you stand up to those temptations? Describe.

RESPOND

What specific helps do you need from God to help you avoid the temptations that regularly get to you?

THE SEVENTH PETITION: BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

READ

The seventh petition and its meaning in your catechism and 2 Thessalonians 3:3 in your Bible.

In this petition we're putting forward the ultimate request of a child of God: "Keep me faithful to You here on earth, Lord, so that I may be with You in heaven forever."

We can look at the whole Lord's Prayer as leading to this request. We ask that our heavenly Father's name would be holy in us, that His kingdom would be with us, that His will would be done in us, that He would forgive us and protect us so that we might remain His child now and forever.

And in this petition we recognize that it is God's power alone that can cause all these things to be realities for us. So again, we pray with humility but also with confidence.

REFLECT

Shouldn't disciples of Jesus be exempt from harm or evil?

Why does Jesus add this petition to the Lord's Prayer?

What kinds of evils do you see in the world around you that you need God's deliverance and protection from?

WRITE

The last three petitions of the Lord's Prayer—forgive us our trespasses, lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil—all deal with the same basic theme. How would you summarize that theme?

Why does this theme get so much emphasis in the prayer?

Why does Jesus want us to focus on our heavenly home and not just on the life we live now?

RESPOND

When you feel the badness of the world getting to you, keep the words of Hebrews 10:23 in mind: Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep His promise. (*New Living Translation*)

Write 5 things/people/experiences in your life that remind you of God's faithfulness. Where are you reminded that God has overcome the brokenness of the world?

THE CONCLUSION:

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY
FOREVER AND EVER.

READ

The conclusion to the Lord's Prayer and its meaning and 1 Chronicles 29:11-13 in your Bible.

The Conclusion, or doxology, to the Lord's Prayer is not found in the Matthew or Luke account of the prayer. But its use as the ending of the Prayer goes back to the very early church, sometime before AD 90. It was common to end prayers with some kind of a doxology as a way to lift up and praise God's name and attributes.

This doxology comes from 1 Chronicles 29. It's part of a prayer King David prays as he sets aside resources for the building of the temple and as his son, Solomon prepares to become king.

Notice how it sounds a lot like the first three petitions: hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done. When we pray this doxology at the end of the prayer we circle back from asking for our needs to be met to the beginning, asking that all we've prayed for would be in accordance with the will of our glorious, powerful, loving heavenly Father.

AMEN

Amen means "so shall it be." Ending this way, we're saying, with confidence (notice how that keeps coming up), that we believe that our prayer will be heard by our God who has commanded us to pray.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: REFLECTION

Now that you've worked through the Lord's Prayer piece by piece reflect a bit on it as a whole.

INTERVIEW

Talk to someone who has been praying the Lord's Prayer for a long time (parents or grandparents are great options, but any follower of Jesus in your life will do). Ask them some of these questions:

When do you remember first saying the Lord's Prayer?

Why do you think Jesus gave us this prayer to pray?

What petition or part of the prayer is most important to you or dear to your heart?

What is most important to you about the practice of prayer (not just the Lord's Prayer)?

WRITE

Write the Lord's Prayer in your own words below.

REFLECT

Which petition or part of the Lord's Prayer is most important to *you*?

How has your understanding of the Lord's Prayer changed or deepened after working through these lessons?

RESPOND

Continue to work at being a praying person. Set time aside in your day-to-day life to connect with God in prayer.

A temptation that comes with familiar things is to take them for granted or to let ourselves be distracted (parents driving you places, parents providing food for you, saying your meal prayers, etc.). The Lord's Prayer is often familiar and if we're not careful it becomes something we say without thinking.... how can you fight this?

SIN

READ

The questions about sin in your catechism and Romans 6:23 in your Bible.

God made it **good**, but **sin** made it **broken**. When Adam and Eve sinned God's perfect creation began to die and decay. And we've been stuck in sin...dead in it ever since.

There are two kinds of sin. Original sin is the sin into which we are all born. It's the lasting effect of Adam and Eve's first (or original) sin. Because of original sin, even if we could live perfectly and not commit any sins, we're still broken and removed from God.

Actual sin is the sin we actually commit...every way we disobey God in thought, word, or deed. In the next unit on the 10 Commandments you'll look at God's laws. You'll find out pretty quickly that when we use God's law as a measuring stick, we come up short. We commit actual sins a lot.

Maybe this is a helpful way to think about actual and original sin:

ACTUAL SIN	ORIGINAL SIN
I messed up	We are messed up
Sin I commit	Sin we are born with
I broke the rules	We are all broken

Look back at Romans 6:23 again. Left on our own all we have is the first half of the verse. Our sin earns us death.

But the verse continues on with two incredibly important words: BUT GOD...

Over and over in the Bible the phrase, “BUT GOD...” shows up and changes everything. Alone all we have is sin and death and hopelessness and despair.

BUT GOD...

because of His great love for us, gave us the cure, the way out, the solution: Jesus. In order to truly understand the gift of Jesus we have to truly understand the seriousness of our situation without Him. Sin has a hold on us that we could never break.

BUT GOD...

...is more powerful than sin.

...loves us so deeply that He would not and could not leave us on our own.

...has claimed us as belonging to Him.

...was willing to do whatever it took to bring us back to Him. Including sending His only Son, sinless and perfect, to suffer and die for us.

God made it good. Sin made it broken.

BUT GOD...is making it good again.

RESPOND

Explain the difference between original sin and actual sin.

Write a prayer of thanks to God for His love that conquers and forgives your sin. What would be different if He didn't step in and make a way to rescue you?

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Of all the things in the Bible the 10 Commandments are among the most well-known. Until recently you could find them displayed in many courthouses and public schools (still can in some areas). The American founding fathers knew and quoted them. The 1956 film with Charlton Heston and Yul Brynner won the Oscar for best effects (although if you watch it now they seem pretty low tech).

So how do these commandments, given around 3,500 years ago apply today to you as a follower of Jesus?

1. GOD'S COVENANT

A covenant is an agreement between two people or groups of people that spells out what each side will do and what each side will provide. For example, a parent and their 16-year-old driver might make a covenant. The driver is expected to drive safely, follow the laws, and pay for the gas they use. In return they get the use of the family car. The parent is expected to help the driver learn how to drive and keep the car maintained. In return they don't have to drive the 16-year-old around everywhere anymore.

In this covenant God tells His people, "I am your God and you are My people. So, this is how our relationship will work: I'll bless you and care for you and you'll keep My laws. This is how we'll stay connected. And it's how everyone will know that I am yours and you are mine." That was true for the Israelites then, and it's true for us today, too.

2. AGAINST AND FOR

Most of the commandments are God saying, "Don't do this." A good question to ask is, "If God is against this, what is He for?" When God tells us not to do something it's usually because He wants something else that's better for us. Sure, God is against stealing. But He's also for generosity and being satisfied with what He's given us. Looking at the commandments as asking, "What is God for?" gives us a much more mature understanding of God and what He wants for us.

You'll find the 10 Commandments and their meanings on pages 13-15 of your catechism. Pages 52-127 have additional questions and answers and Bible references for each commandment.

3. FEAR, LOVE AND TRUST

These three words come up frequently in the meanings for the commandments. Think of them like this...

Fear: not being afraid of... but considering God as the most important thing, as the one to devote my life to

Love: to cherish and adore God, to want to please and serve Him

Trust: to rely on God to take care of me and keep His promises

4. THEY POINT US TO JESUS

When you read the 10 Commandments you should be struck at how you fail to keep them. Part of the job of the commandments is to point out our shortcomings. Why would God want to make us feel like failures? To remind us of how desperately we need Him. When we recognize how far we are from being able to keep God's laws on our own it's then that we understand why we need a savior. Jesus kept the commandments perfectly and He gives us His perfection because we can't rely on our own.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS

READ

The first commandment and its meaning in your catechism and Matthew 6:25-26 in your Bible.

In its context, 3,500 years ago, the first commandment was a radical statement. All the world's cultures at the time were polytheistic, they worshiped many gods. They had a god for the sun and a god for the rain, for crops, for love, for war, and on and on. But God says, "I am the *only* God. I am God enough for all your needs. You can look to me for everything. You have no needs for any other gods."

These days we don't worship other gods like they did in Old Testament times. But just like the people of those times, we still look somewhere to find happiness and hope and meaning in our lives.

The first commandment still speaks to us: God is enough. He loves us, cares for us and provides all we need. And His desire is for us to look only to Him and worship only Him.

REFLECT

Are you guilty of having other gods? Think about these situations...

When you're lonely or sad or when you've had a hard day, where do you turn for comfort?

When you're anxious or worried about something where do you look to take away your fears?

Where do you place your confidence? In yourself? Your wealth? Your abilities? In someone else?

Why did God give this commandment first, before all the others?

WRITE

What is God *against* in this commandment?

What is God *for* in this commandment?

Make a list of your top 5 (or more) priorities (things you value, spend time on, invest in, find confidence or worth in) in life right now:

RESPOND

God demands that we fear (take Him seriously), love (cherish and adore), and trust (rely on) in Him above all things.

What gets in the way of you keeping this commandment?

What is God asking you to turn away from in order to keep this commandment more fully? What is one thing in your life that is, has in the past, or has the potential to outrank God in your list of priorities?

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT:

YOU SHALL NOT MISUSE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD

READ

The second commandment and its meaning in your catechism and Isaiah 12:4 in your Bible.

Names are important. Parents spend careful time deciding what to name their child. Our name is what we're known by, it's how people call out to us. Think for a minute how sweet it is to hear someone you love speak your name. Or how much trouble you know you're in when a parent uses your whole name. If you've ever had someone call you names or twist your name into something to mock or hurt you then you know the power of your name being misused.

The second commandment is about more than not using God's name to swear. God's name is powerful and it is personal. God gives us His name so that we can know Him (relationship), be in awe of Him (fear, love, trust), call on Him (pray, praise and give thanks) and so that we can be recognized as His (identity). All of these blessings are wrapped in God's name. Here God invites and asks us to use His name in the way He intended.

REFLECT

Do you consider saying, "Oh my God!" or "Jesus Christ!" or God ____ it!" or "OMG" to be swearing? Why or why not?

When you end your prayers do you ever say, "In your name I pray," or "In Jesus' name I pray"? Why?

Can you have it both ways? Can you say that saying, "Oh my God" is no big deal but then pray in God's name and expect it to be a big deal?

WRITE

What is God *against* in this commandment?

What is God *for* in this commandment?

Look at the meaning to this commandment in your catechism. Write it in your own words.

RESPOND

What do you need to work on when it comes to using God's name properly? Not swearing? Praying more? Seeing yourself as a **CHRIST**ian and acting like it?

What are some steps you can take to make better use of God's name?

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT: REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY BY KEEPING IT HOLY

READ

The third commandment and its meaning in your catechism and Luke 10:38-42 in your Bible.

Our world is going, going, going 24/7. It wasn't too long ago that most stores weren't open on Sundays...these days you can order whatever your heart desires online at any time of day or night. And, in some cases, you can have it delivered to your front door within a couple hours. There is no slowing down for anything.

The problem is that when we don't slow down we miss things. Like trying to read a book by flipping the pages past your eyes with your thumb. You'll catch some of it, but too much will be missed.

God knows us. He knows that we need to be reminded to slow down and to focus on what's important (remember the story of Mary and Martha that you read just now?)

So, God gave us the Sabbath, a rhythm of rest and growth. God knows we need to pull out of our busyness enough to be refreshed and renewed. And He wants us to come closer and closer to Him as we worship Him and find Him in His word. So, from the very beginning of time He set up a way for us to do both. He gave us the Sabbath way back in the Garden of Eden and then commanded us to schedule our weeks around it still today.

REFLECT

Why is it so hard to slow down and rest?

If you had to grade yourself on how regularly you

attend worship ... read the Bible ... pray

What would your GPA be?

What are the things that get in the way of you experiencing rest and growth with God?

WRITE

Look back at the story in Luke. Jesus told Martha that Mary had chosen what was better. What did she choose and why was it better?

What is God *against* in this commandment?

What is God *for* in this commandment?

RESPOND

A two-part experiment in Sabbath moments.

Part 1: Look at your family calendar and write in 10 minutes each day where you're going to pause everything, sit down and rest with God and read a Psalm. Read through it 3 times.

Part 2: Identify one day this week to take a technology break for 3 hours, to intentionally rest and connect with people around you. Maybe even do it as a family!

DAY	PSALM	TIME YOU'RE GOING TO PAUSE	HOW DID IT GO?
Mon	Psalm 1		
Tues	Psalm 19		
Wed	Psalm 32		
Thurs	Psalm 34		
Fri	Psalm 51		
Sat	Psalm 121		
Sun	Psalm 138		

When are you going to do your technology break?

How did the technology break go?

PAUSE

LET'S TAKE A QUICK BREAK HERE AND LOOK AT SOMETHING...

In the first three commandments God describes the way we are to relate to Him: having Him as our only God, keeping His name holy, honoring His day: the Sabbath. Think of this as a vertical or up-and-down relationship between us and God.



In the other seven commandments God describes how we are to relate to other people...honoring parents, not murdering, cheating on, lying about or stealing from. Think about this as a horizontal or side-to-side relationship between us and those around us.



Why did God give commandments that focus both on how we relate to Him and how we relate to others? He doesn't want His people locked away in their own little world ignoring the world around them. Look up Matthew 5:16. What does it say about the effect of a life lived following the 10 Commandments?

By the way, do you remember that the Lord's Prayer was structured similarly, with the first three petitions focusing on God? Interesting.

OKAY, GET BACK TO THE 10 COMMANDMENTS.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT: HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER

READ

The fourth commandment and its meaning in your catechism and Proverbs 23:22 in your Bible.

This commandment is not just about making your bed and mowing the lawn when your parents ask you to do so. It's really about recognizing that God has placed people on earth in positions of authority over us as an extension of His authority, and responding to those authorities as we would respond to Him.

Authority is most often understood as something meant to keep us from experiencing freedom or enjoying life on our own terms. And there's some truth to that. But a bigger, better understanding of authority is a person or institution whose duty it is to keep us safe, to train and equip us to live a productive, harmonious life with others and to help us enjoy life within those boundaries.

The use of the word 'honor' is important to this commandment. Where the word 'obey' deals with doing, 'honor' deals with the heart. Following this commandment isn't just doing what you're told it's making sure your heart is in the right place while you're doing it.

REFLECT

Who are the people in authority over you?

Is it possible to obey them without honoring them? Is it possible to honor them without obeying?

WRITE

Look up Hebrews 13:17. What does this verse say about the responsibility and expectation of leaders.

How would you explain this commandment to someone else?

RESPOND

In light of this commandment, are there authorities in your life that you need to ask forgiveness from?

Does honoring and obeying come easy for you? Heart check: Where do you need to work on your attitude towards authorities?

How can you show your parents that you love them and recognize that they are God's gift to you to love you and raise you?

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT MURDER

READ

The fifth commandment and its meaning in your catechism and Romans 12:20 in your Bible.

This is one of those commandments that, on the surface, seems pretty easy. Don't kill anyone? Okay, no problem. But when we read the meaning of the commandment in the catechism we see that it's not just about not killing our neighbor, it's about helping them, too. God has placed us in this horizontal relationship with our neighbor in order that we might care for, help, support and build each other up.

In the New Testament, in Matthew 5, Jesus broadens the commandment even further. Look at verses 21 and 22. Jesus makes the point that hatred of or contempt for someone is just as serious as murder. And in verses 43-44 He says we have to love our enemies.

A subtitle for this commandment is "God's gift of Life." In this commandment we're confronted with questions of life on topics like war, capital punishment, abortion, suicide, euthanasia. These are difficult issues. Look in your catechism for additional commentary and Bible references on each topic. Lcms.org/life has additional resources on our church body's stance on these issues.

REFLECT

Is life important to our society today? (Think about how life is portrayed in media, video games, news, politics, etc.)

Which of the following issues do you consider a "life" issue:

Suicide...abortion...war...drugs...addiction...bullying...death penalty

Why is life so important to God?

WRITE

Look up Matthew 5, 21-22 and 43-44? Put what Jesus is saying in these passages into your own words.

What is challenging about what Jesus is saying?

What is God *for* in this commandment?

RESPOND

Is there someone you struggle with? Someone who makes it difficult to keep the intent of this commandment? Think about them for a minute and think about these truths...

- Jesus loves them...as much as He loves you.
- He knows they're not perfect...just like you're not perfect.
- Jesus died for them...just like He died for you.
- His forgiveness is available to them...just like it is to you.
- He wants them to be in heaven with Him...just like He wants you to be there.

When you think about it that way, does it change your attitude toward that person? Why or why not?

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

READ

The sixth commandment and its meaning in your catechism and Mark 10:6-12 in your Bible.

When thinking about this commandment, keep this thought in mind: God wants what's best for me. This commandment is about protecting individuals and marriages from the incredibly powerful force of sex and desire.

This commandment is a great example of freedom within boundaries. Within the safe, loving, committed boundary of marriage, sex is a beautiful expression of love and intimacy, it draws a couple closer together and allows a couple to create new life. This is what God knows is best for us.

He also knows that outside of the boundary of marriage sex can cause trouble. Think of the destructive power an affair has on a marriage. Think of the struggles that come from an unplanned pregnancy. Think of the emotional trauma that can occur when a couple has been sexually intimate and then goes their separate ways. Taking advantage of the freedom without submitting to the boundary is a setup for hurt and brokenness.

REFLECT

Is it strange to think about God and faith and the topic of sex and marriage at the same time? Why?

What examples have you seen of the damage unfaithfulness and adultery causes in relationships?

WRITE

Look again at Mark 10:6-9. Describe the relationship God is talking about in those verses.

What is God *against* in this commandment? Give a thoughtful, thorough answer.

What is God *for* in this commandment? Again, be thoughtful and thorough.

RESPOND

Like He did with the fifth commandment, Jesus expands this commandment to include looking at a person of the opposite sex lustfully. (Look up Matthew 5 27-28.)

Why does Jesus equate lust with adultery?

When it comes to the topic of sexuality and lust what struggles do you need help with? In addition to God's help who can you ask to help and support you in those struggles?

God tells His people to not have sex outside marriage...when you're committed and covenanted to that person. What boundaries do you need to help you honor God's plan for you and your future spouse (or someone else's future spouse).

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT STEAL

READ

The seventh commandment and its meaning in your catechism and Ephesians 4:28 in your Bible.

The seventh commandment is one of the commandments that is reflected in our civil laws as well. And it has a pretty simple test: Is it mine? No? Then don't take it. It applies to big things like cars and little things like copyrighted material.

As in the other commandments we're not being told to simply not take our neighbors things, we're also commanded to help our neighbor protect and even improve their things. In commandments 4-10 we're not allowed to just do the right thing and keep to ourselves. God is making it clear to us that we have a responsibility to and for our whole community. A responsibility to build up, look out for, protect, and help those around us. We're called to live with eyes open for opportunities to help.

REFLECT

Agree or disagree:

- The seventh commandment is about whether or not I trust God to provide what I need.
- The seventh commandment is about me reflecting the generosity God has showed me to those around me.

What reasons do you think motivate people to steal the following?

Money

Answers on a test

Treats at home

Plagiarizing in a paper

Music

From a store

WRITE

Look up Matthew 6:21. What is Jesus saying in this verse?

Now look at verses 25-34. What is Jesus saying about trusting in God in these verses?

RESPOND

Where are you tempted to steal? How can you set up boundaries to keep you from giving in to that temptation?

What are some specific ways you will help someone protect and care for their possessions?

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE TESTIMONY AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR

READ

The 8th commandment and its meaning in your catechism and Ephesians 4:25 in your Bible.

The 8th commandment is difficult. It's harder to keep ourselves from lying or saying something bad about someone than it is to keep ourselves from murdering or stealing. Maybe it's because murdering and stealing happen outside ourselves, with our hands, but lying and slander happen in our hearts then come out of our mouth.

The 8th Commandment, in one sense, is as simple as being nice to other people. But on a deeper level it's about extending to others the grace God has extended to us in Jesus. God sees us in the best possible light: as His loved, redeemed children. In this commandment He asks us to think about and talk about others in that light as well.

REFLECT

Who can you think of who has had their reputation damaged by people speaking badly of them?

Why does God want us to speak well of and defend others?

WRITE

You never saw it coming. The whole thing caught you completely off guard. One minute you're talking with a group of your friends about everything and nothing at all...just talking. Then one friend leaned in and said, "Did you hear about Hannah?" She went on to tell about something Hannah—who wasn't there, by the way—had done that was totally embarrassing. It was so embarrassing that you were glad Hannah wasn't there or she would have died. Everybody laughed and then someone else told a story about another person who wasn't there. Pretty soon everybody was telling stories about other people. And each one was more embarrassing and scandalous than the last one.

Then, all of a sudden, they were all looking at you. It was your "turn" to tell something about someone. "Um," you stalled, "Well, uh..." They were all staring, waiting...

What did you do next?

RESPOND

Who can you think of who needs you to speak well of them?

How will you do so?

THE NINTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS

YOU SHALL NOT COVET...

READ

The 9th and 10th commandments and their meanings in your catechism and Psalm 24:1 in your Bible.

Here we are again with commandments that come down to a heart condition. These ask, “Are you content with what God has given you?”

When you look at what you have, do you compare it to what others have? Do you find yourself thinking, “I wish I had more stuff/better stuff/stuff like everybody else has”? If you do, your heart is probably heading down the coveting road. Like the 7th commandment, these two come back to a need for a point of view that says, “God has given me all I have and will provide for my needs.” The person that believes this is content.

REFLECT

Do you think God promises to give us everything we need or everything we want?

What are some reasons people are not content with what God has given them?

Agree or disagree: Not being content with what you have is like telling God that His blessings aren't enough.

WRITE

Look up Philippians 4:12-13. Context: Paul was in prison when he wrote Philippians. It was during a two-year imprisonment. It wasn't dungeons and torture—he was under house arrest—but he wasn't free to come and go and do whatever he wanted.

What does Paul say he has learned how to be?

Does it sound like contentment came naturally or that he had to work at it?

Where did he find the strength to be content?

RESPOND

How can you keep from crossing the line from having wants that are okay into coveting (or focusing too much on what you want)?

How can you be more thankful for and content with what God has given you?

Work to cultivate an attitude of gratitude.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: REFLECTION

INTERVIEW

Talk to someone who has been following Jesus for a long time. Ask them the following questions:

How do the Ten Commandments apply to your life as a follower of Jesus?

Which commandment(s) are easiest for you to keep?

Which are most difficult?

What do the Ten Commandments tell you about God's character?

WRITE

How would you summarize what God *is for* in each of the Ten Commandments? What does each commandment show us about what He stands for?

REFLECT

Which commandment stands out to you as the most important? Why?

How has your understanding of the Ten Commandments changed or deepened after working through these lessons?

What happens to God's people when they fall short, and don't keep all of the Commandments?

RESPOND

Do you want to live your life by the 10 Commandments?
Are you?

Go back through each of the RESPOND parts of these lessons on the 10 Commandments and commit to doing the things you wrote there.

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU DID IT!

You've made it through Part 1 of your confirmation journal.

Please turn in your completed Journal to Shannon Hecksel at Hosanna Main.

In Part 2 you'll continue in the Catechism studying the Apostles' Creed, Baptism, Holy Communion and Confession. You'll also learn about developing habits that will keep your faith growing and maturing. Then you'll work on writing your testimony...the story of how God has been at work in your life. Stop in at church or email Shannon to get part 2.

Make sure you've been completing the check-ins along the way and that you've been in regular attendance in Connect U Small Groups and keeping up with your service hours.

Keep up the good work!