

## ***A Guide for Training Little Christians at Home***

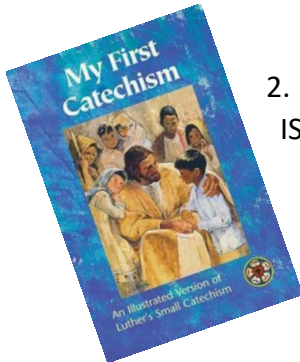
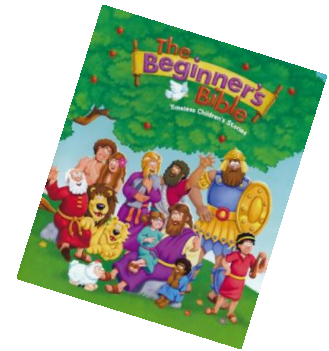
“When should I start teaching my kids about the Bible, prayer, Jesus, the Small Catechism?”

“Where do I begin?”

These are good, preliminary questions, both of which really don’t have a wrong answer. This outline can serve as a guide, but not the rule for families as they strive to keep their promise to raise their children in the Lord.

### **Suggested resources;**

1. A children’s Bible as early as 2 years old. There are a lot from which to choose. We can confidently recommend *The Beginner’s Bible for Little Ones* for ages 2-4 and *The Beginner’s Bible* for ages 2-6,



2. *My First Catechism*, CPH, 2004 version is best. ISBN 0-7586-0790-3. All page references coincide with this resource.

### **Where to start?**

1. Even infants can learn to pray. “And Jesus said to them, ‘Yes; have you never read, “Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise?’” (Matt. 21:16 ESV)  
Practice a prayer posture of bringing hands together and speaking to God. Before a meal, before bedtime. Some great suggestions can be found on p. 100 of *My First Catechism*. As you say these often, your child will learn to say them with you.
2. Say Luther’s Morning Prayer each morning and/or Luther’s Evening Prayer at bedtime each evening. These can be found on pp. 98-99. Over time these will also be easily committed to memory.
3. Using a children’s Bible, read a story when you are together. This can be done after a meal along with a prayer (devotional time), at bedtime, or another time that will work for your routine.

**Next Steps.** These steps will build upon the “Where to Start” phase above or can be a place to start if your kids are older (preschool – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade).

4. Use The Lord’s Prayer when you gather to pray such as at meal time, bedtime, or other times. You can find this on pp. 52-71. As you say The Lord’s Prayer together, you can also learn about each petition. They are nicely divided up with explanations and illustrations. Quality time together takes precedence over quantity of material read. A petition for each time or two is a good pace.
5. Holy Baptism is a gift from God for us to become part of His family. Pages 72-81 help to explain and illustrate what baptism is and how it helps us. Consider reading a page each time you get together and looking at the picture. Ask, “What can we pray to God? Maybe give Him thanks for this gift? Ask that others will also know of the gift of baptism?”
  - a. This is a good time to read about Noah and the ark in your Bible.
  - b. A fun activity you might try can help to illustrate how baptism is like the flood waters and the Ark and Noah’s family (1 Peter 3:18-22). Key – The very waters that harmed those who did not obey God also raised Noah and his family up above the flood, keeping them safe.
  - c. Find a bowl and a cork (or something small and which will float, a marshmallow, leaf, etc.). Put the cork in the bowl. This simulates Noah and the ark. Fill the bowl  $\frac{3}{4}$  with water. Notice how the water raises the cork up on the water, just like the flood waters raised the ark with Noah and his family above the flood waters and kept them safe.
  - d. The waters of baptism also raise us up keeping us safe from the punishment of our sin.
6. Read the story of the Exodus, Passover, and the giving of the 10 Commandments in the Bible.
  - a. Then read about these in *My First Catechism* pp. 90-97. Help your child make the connections to Passover and Holy Communion (Sacrament of the Altar). Ask if they see any connections (blood, obedience, saved from death, led out of slavery, etc.) Don’t worry about getting it all now, these first exposures to the stories will be reinforced and built upon in the years ahead in Sunday School, VBS, Confirmation and various other ways.
  - b. An activity you might do together is to print out the picture of a door post and color or paint red on the top and sides to simulate putting the blood on them in obedience to God’s command.
  - c. Then color or paint red on Jesus’ hands, feet, and side to simulate Jesus giving his blood just like the lamb had to so we could also be saved from death.



7. Read the story of God giving Moses the 10 Commandments at Mt. Sinai. Ask your child to imagine creating a new town. They get to come up with rules so everyone can live together and be happy. What are some good rules to have? You might have to get the creative ideas going by coming up with some; don't steal from each other, don't hurt each other, respect each other, etc. That is what God is doing. He is taking His people who have been told what to do and when to do it for 400 years. That's all they know. Now they are free for the first time in many generations. God is showing them how to live well, to love and obey Him, and to get along with each other.
8. Read *My First Catechism* pp. 6-29. Consider reading about a Commandment each day.
9. Read pp. 30-31. Notice that the first 3 Commandments (First Table) tell us how we can obey and love God. The last 7 show us how we can live well together (Second Table).
10. Confession and Forgiveness pp. 82-89. We read that Confession is first confessing our sins to God and others, the things we do and say that are wrong. But there is a second part, absolution (forgiveness). They go together, like salt and pepper, shoes and sock. What else just goes together? (Table and chairs, night and day). For children, admitting that they have done something wrong is hard. Don't feel you have to hammer this home too hard. It will come with time and maturity. Consider reading each page together and look at the illustrations. It is ok to share times when you had to say you were sorry. This is modeling the Christian life, too.
  - a. Review each of the 10 Commandments. Ask, "What might we have to confess here?" For example, "You shall have no other gods". But sometimes we make ourselves more important than God. In fact, we often make other things more important than God. Maybe getting what I want rather than what God gives me (kinds of food, time to play and time to sleep, what I want to watch).
  - b. Be sure to emphasize the second part of Confession and Forgiveness! There is joy in announcing that God has forgiven you and your child because Jesus has taken away the confessed sin.
11. The Apostles' Creed
  - a. What's an apostle? Someone who follows Jesus' teachings and who Jesus wants to be Christ-like to others.
  - b. What's a creed? A statement of something you believe. "I believe my mom and dad love me," is a statement you believe; it is a creed. What else might you say that you believe?
  - c. The Apostles' Creed is a long statement telling others what we Christians believe. It was written a long time ago and billions of Christians have 'confessed' (said it).

- d. The whole Apostles' Creed is on page 51. Say it together. Have you heard this before? We say it in worship all the time.
12. The Apostles' Creed is explained on pp. 32-50. Consider saying the Creed each time you get together and then 1 page of explanation. By the time you get to page 50 you may just have it memorized.
- a. Keep an eye out for this creed in worship. Point it out to your child when we say it all together so they will also participate in worship.