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HOW TO BE A GREETER

People coming to church want someplace to belong and a community into which they can fit. Your job as a greeter is to be a friendly face that notices everyone who comes to worship and to welcome them.

1 Define your perimeter and make sure you have all zones covered.

Assess all points of entry to your church and deploy greeting units to cover each point whenever possible. Make this your watchword: “No one gets in without a smile from us!”

2 Familiarize yourself and your squad with the layout of the building.

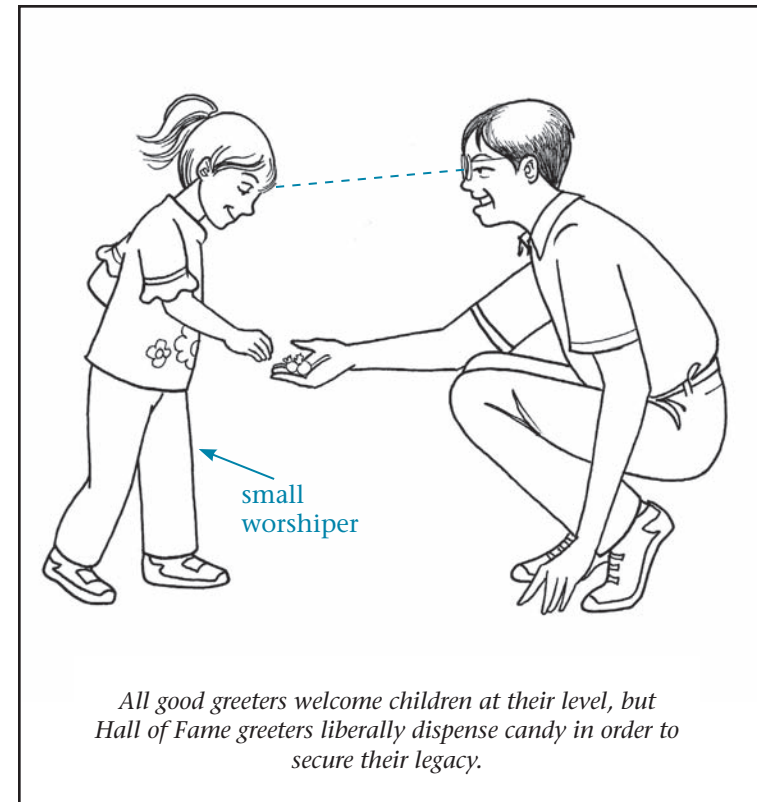
Knowing where the bathrooms and the nursery are will enable you to direct worshipers to those places quickly. Arm each squad member with a map of the building, if necessary.

3 Deploy for maximal contact.

When the worship time arrives, position your team at entry points well in advance of their approach. When a worshiper arrives, keep your body in an open stance, with your center of gravity low, and make good eye contact with a friendly smile. If they attempt to breach your perimeter in a group (as, say, a family might do) re-deploy yourself so that you can greet each person.

4 Make appropriate physical contact.

Once within reach, offer an open hand ready for the shaking. Be genuine in your gestures and your speech, as you grip firmly and speak words of greeting, like, “Good morning!” or “Welcome to _____ (name of church).” Gently place any appropriate printed material—bulletins, announcements, and so on—in their hands.



All good greeters welcome children at their level, but Hall of Fame greeters liberally dispense candy in order to secure their legacy.

5 Greet children on their level.

Where miniature worshipers are in tow, get down to their eye level and greet them in their own language. Make sure parents know where the busy bags are and how to find the nursery in a pinch.

6 Read the worshiper's eyes and adapt to overcome.

Some folks are not interested in being overwhelmed with smiling sunshininess first thing in the morning. Avoid causing them to flinch by lashing out with a boisterous handshake if they don't want one. Your objective is not a direct assault but simply containment and safety. A silent smile and a nod is all the greeting that most non-morning people require.

Be Aware

- The key to an effective greeting team is good training. Professional greeting teams often run drills during off-hours to prepare for every eventuality.
- Consider purchasing walkie-talkies with headsets for your squad to ensure maximum communication capability.
- Hall of Fame greeters are known to have kept a pocketful of small, individually wrapped candies and dispensed them liberally to children.
- The snack table is a security zone. Establish a perimeter around it and allow only small children to filch before the fellowship hour officially begins.

FIVE COMMON WORSHIP PRACTICES AND WHY LUTHERANS DO THEM

While some language and gestures during Lutheran worship can seem bizarre to the uninitiated, they do not indicate cultism. There is a solid, biblical reason for each one and knowing the reason can add meaning and satisfaction to your worship experience.

1 Passing the peace.

It might seem like your weekly chance to say hello to everyone, but passing the peace is more than hand shaking and small talk. "Peace be with you" was the greeting of the risen Christ to his disciples (see John 20:19) and sharing the peace extends Jesus' blessing. The practice grew out of the "kiss of peace" (see Romans 16:16), an ancient ritual symbolizing one's close relationship to another person.

2 Taking an offering.

Lutherans collect an offering as a tangible response to God's blessings to us. God's people for centuries have been challenged to return a 10th of their possessions (a "tithe") to the service of the Lord. An offering goes far beyond money and includes our time, energy, talents, and the use of our material possessions. We are called to offer *everything* that we have to God. But the money's pretty important.

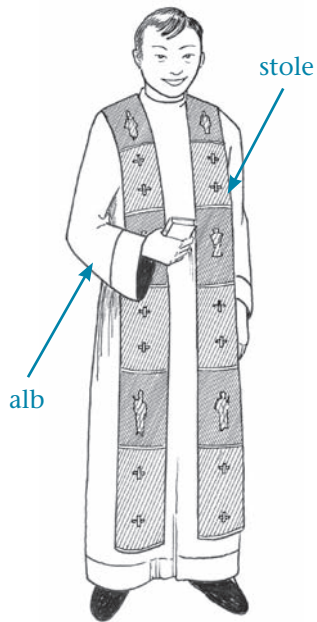
3 Saying, "And also with you."

The congregation generally provides this response after the worship leader gives a blessing (such as "The Lord be with you") before a prayer. To respond, "And also with you," returns the blessing to the leader, giving the message, "We're in this together."

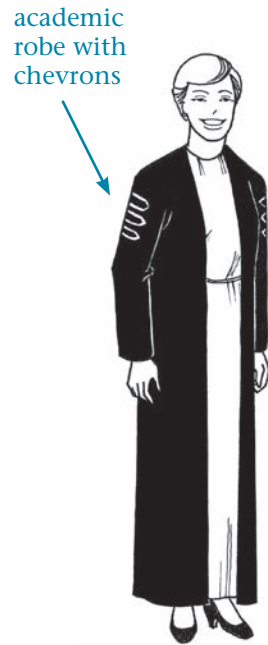
COMMON TYPES OF LUTHERAN CLERGY GARB

Clergy in different Lutheran traditions wear different clothing in their work. Each serves a particular function.

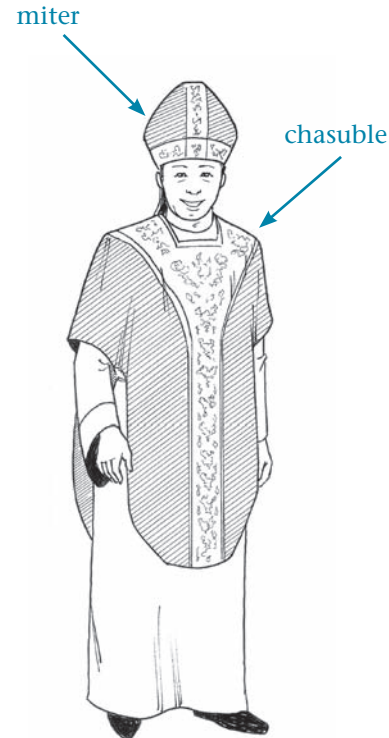
The alb and stole represent the Holy Spirit's presence and the yoke of Christ.



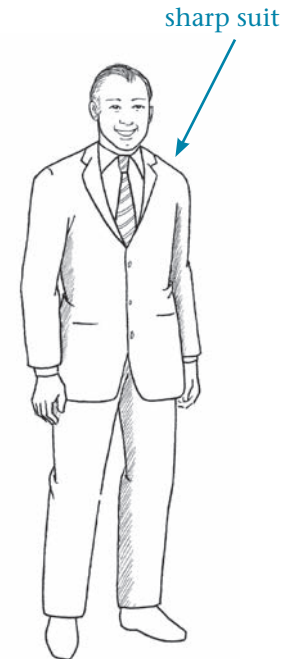
In some traditions, clergy emphasize the academic side of pastoring and interpreting the Bible, often wearing academic-style robes.



In some traditions, a clergyperson of higher authority, such as a bishop, may wear a miter. The chasuble typically is worn for celebrating the Eucharist.



To signify their role among their congregants and the universal nature of Christian ministry, some clergy dress in sharp suits.



HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHEAP GRACE AND REGULAR GRACE

The Lutheran understanding of grace is often summed up by Ephesians 2:8–9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.” The term “cheap grace” applies when a person knowingly uses God’s grace as a justification for sin—by commission or omission. The following rationales usually signal the presence of cheap grace:

1 “I know God will forgive me, so I’m going to _____ anyway.”

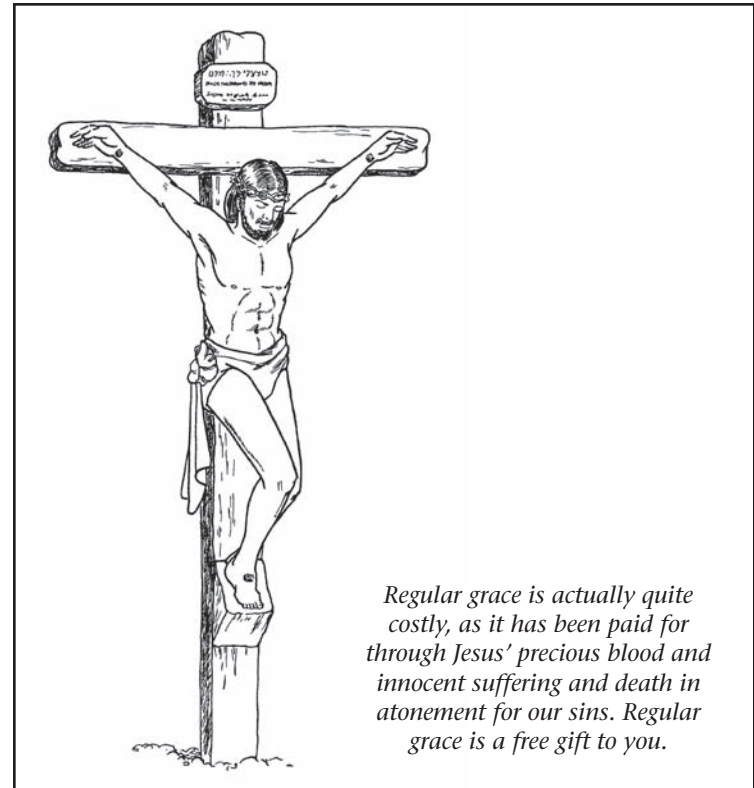
No sin is unforgivable. However, as Paul writes in Romans 2:4, “Do you realize that God’s kindness is meant to lead us to repentance?”

2 “Jesus threw out the old law and made a new law.”

Jesus conquered sin, death, and the power of the devil when he died and rose again. However, the law still applies. Jesus addressed this in his Sermon on the Mount, when he said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17).

3 “It’s easier to ask for forgiveness than permission.”

If so, you’re probably looking for a helping cheap grace. Isaiah 66:2 says God looks to the “humble and contrite in spirit.” God doesn’t call us to go through the motions of asking forgiveness as a formality. People aren’t truly “contrite” if they knew in advance they were about to do something wrong.



4 “Sin boldly.”

Many well-meaning Lutherans invoke this partial quote by Martin Luther to justify their sins. In fact, Luther intended to refute cheap grace when he said, “Sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly, for he is victorious over sin, death, and the world.” Your identity in Christ is the critical thing; glossing over sin with half-truths only obscures this.

Be Aware

- Humans manufacture cheap grace. Regular grace pops out of nowhere, undeserved, uncontrived, and dismantles all your self-justifications before Christ because it comes straight from God.
- Paul reminds us in Romans 6:1–2, “What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it?”
- *Antinomian* is a fancy word for someone who indulges in “cheap grace.” (Anti = “against,” Nomian = “law.”)



HOW TO REPENT

Christians regard repentance as a fundamental benefit of the Christian life. Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15). The New Testament word for repent means “to change one’s mind,” as in to change one’s heart and life completely. The Old Testament word for repent means “to turn,” as in to turn away from sin and back to God.

Repentance is about turning away from sin and turning back toward God. God calls us to repent both “once” in our lives and also “every day.” Those who don’t know the Lord repent “once”—to turn toward the Lord and be saved by God’s grace. Those who already know the Lord repent “every day”—to turn away from the evil and sin that tempts us, and turn back to God. In both cases, the method of repentance is the same.

1 Hear God’s Word.

God’s Word instructs us about the sin in our lives. The Word shows us those things about us that are not of God. God’s Word comes to us through Jesus, through the Scriptures, and through preaching.

2 Recognize and admit your sin.

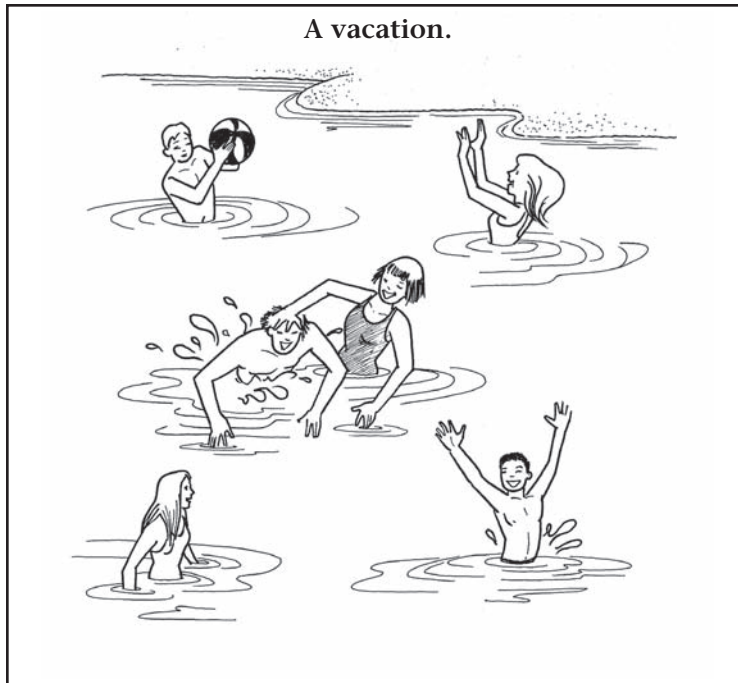
Part of repentance is acknowledging our sin and being sorry for the wrong we do: “Godly sorrow brings repentance” (2 Corinthians 7:10). Tell God you know you sin and that you are sorry for your sin.

3 Ask the Holy Spirit for help turning back to God.

A person cannot repent or turn to God on his or her own. Ask God for help. Pray in the name of Jesus that the Holy Spirit would come to you and turn you back to the Lord.

HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A “VOCATION” AND A “VACATION”

Martin Luther’s doctrine of vocation is radical because Luther says that a holy *calling* (which is what the word *vocation* means) is not limited to people who are pastors or missionaries. Rather, any job or career is holy when a Christian performs it as part of her or his baptismal call from God to serve others.

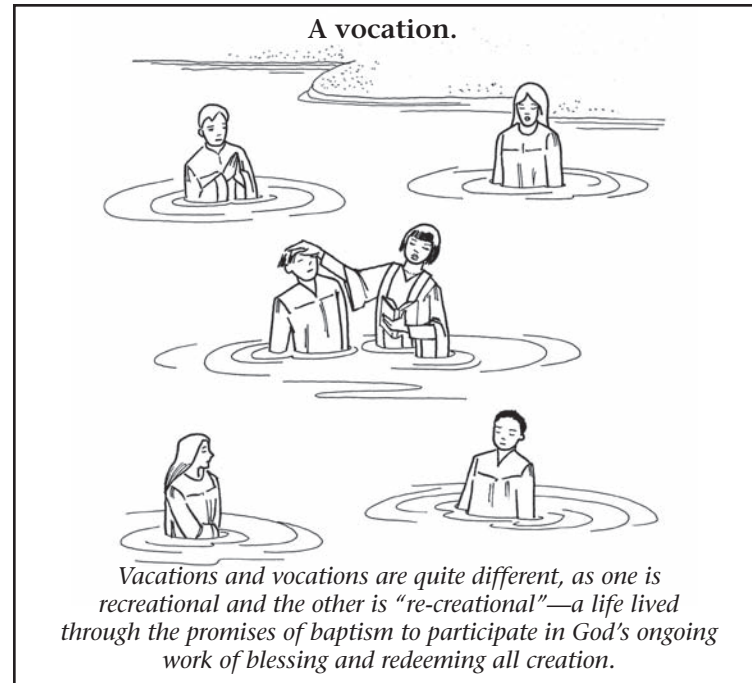


1 Consider the role of money in the context of the activity.

If someone is paying you (however little) rather than making you pay for the opportunity to do the activity, you may be living a vocation, rather than being on vacation.

2 Assess the measure and type of fatigue that results from the activity.

If you are working very hard and getting very tired, but you are not exhausted or downcast, you may be living a vocation rather than being on a vacation. This is a point where vocation and vacation may overlap; discern carefully.

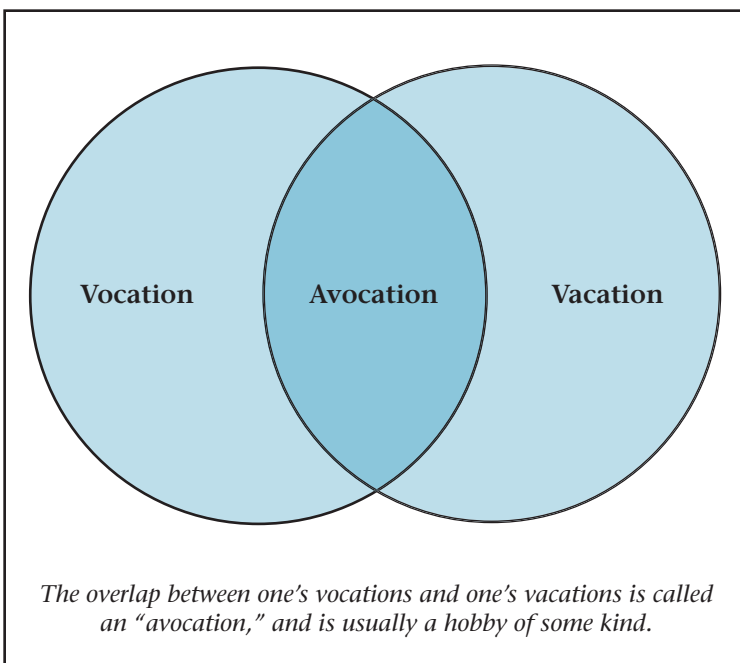


3 Check nearby tables for beverages with little umbrellas in them.

If you are serving others rather than being served by others, you may be living a vocation rather than being on vacation. Most employers do not cater to their employees with beverage cart service to their cubicles.

4 Discern your impact on the people around you.

If people are genuinely grateful for your presence, rather than just saying so to get a bigger tip, you may be living a vocation rather than being on vacation.



5 Measure the level of challenge you experience during the activity.

If challenged at multiple levels—intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual—by what you do each day, you may be living a vocation, rather than being on vacation. While hiking or surfing may be challenging in a physical way, hiking and surfing are probably not vocations for most people.

6 Differentiate between your level of fulfillment and your level of relaxation.

If you find fulfillment in what you do beyond mere relaxation and enjoyment, you may be living a vocation, rather than being on vacation.

Be Aware

- The Lutheran doctrine of vocation encompasses careers and roles outside of workplace employment. Father, mother, sister, brother, friend, and colleague are just a few of the vocations to which Christians are called.
- Vocations of the paid, workplace variety can change. God may choose to call you into many different vocations of this kind during your lifespan.
- Discerning to which vocations God is calling you is among the most important—and ongoing—challenges you face as a Christian.
- The overlap region between vocation and vacation is typically called an *avocation*, which means “a hobby or minor vocation.” Avocations show many characteristics of both vocation and vacation, but they have their own name so folks should use it.

4 **Marcionism.**

Marcion, a notorious heretic, dismissed the Old Testament God as mean and judgmental—a God only of the law. Marcion insisted that God was all love and cut the Old Testament out of his Bible. While Lutherans tend to prefer love to judgment, and gospel to law, without the law to reveal our sin and serious need for God, even a loving God is unnecessary. *Note:* Like Marcion, well-intentioned Lutherans also are sometimes guilty of picking and choosing what scriptures they will accept as authoritative, which is not the same thing as Luther’s understanding of the “canon within the canon.” (See page XX.)

5 **Not-so-real presence.**

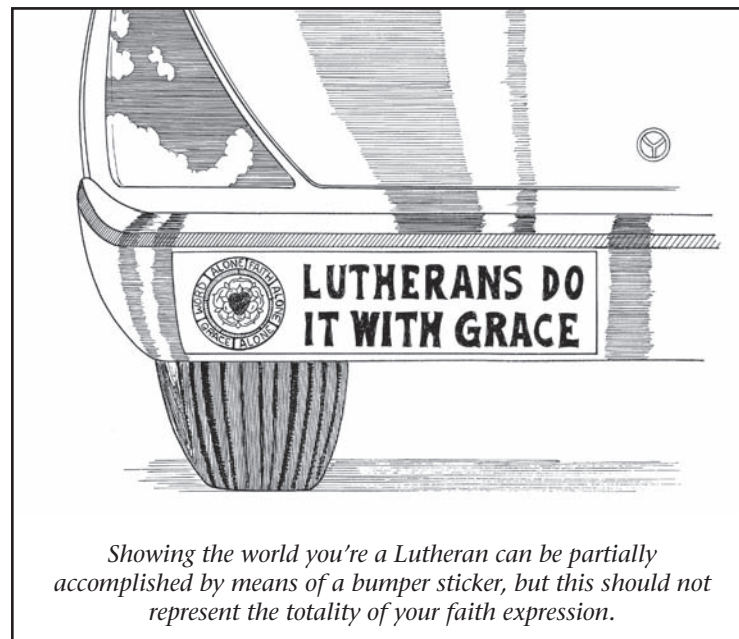
Lutheran doctrine speaks of Jesus’ “real presence” in Holy Communion. That means Jesus’ body and blood are truly present “in, with, and under” the bread and wine that are “given and shed for you.” We simply take Jesus at his word when he says, “This *is* my body.” Some Lutherans, however, mistake this real presence for a symbolic presence, a memorial representation of the Last Supper intended *only* as a remembrance. This is regrettable, since it cuts them off from a promised point of contact with Christ.

Be Aware

- Capital punishment is no longer a threat against heresy in most places, as it was in Luther’s time when the church often burned heretics at the stake—even though some people still wish it were today.

HOW TO SHOW THE WORLD YOU’RE A LUTHERAN WITHOUT BEING FLASHY OR BORING

There are dozens of Christian traditions in North America, each emphasizing a slightly different aspect of the Christian faith, and many more people of other faiths. While Lutherans tend toward humility and prefer to avoid the spotlight, we should not be shy about sharing our Christian faith or our Lutheran way of understanding and living that faith.



1 Strive always to see the divine in things the world considers to be mundane, boring, or weak.

Lutherans are famous for finding pearls hidden among swine and strength hidden in weakness. Adopting this philosophy equips you with the ability to dethrone worldly powers and proclaim Christ.

2 Confess your faith status in plain language, unostentatiously and without fanfare.

When talking with someone about faith or religion, simply say, “I am Lutheran,” or “I am a Lutheran Christian.” (You should be ready to explain what being Lutheran means to you, in case someone asks.)

3 Consider adorning yourself, your home, or your vehicle with simple Lutheran accoutrements. Avoid garish colors and bold fonts where possible.

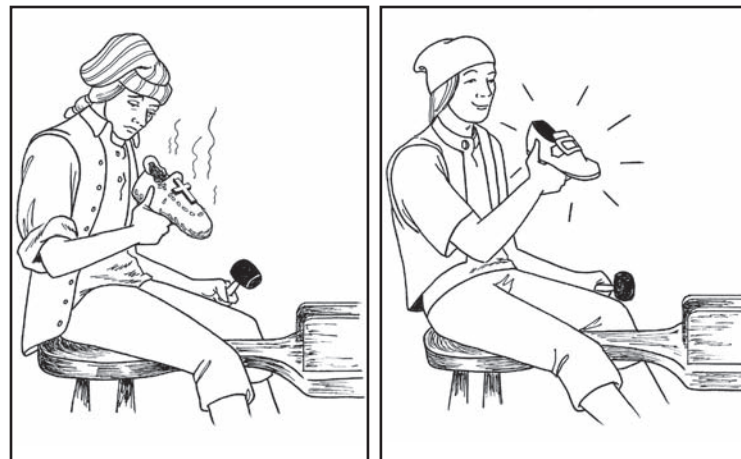
Wear a Luther’s Rose pendant or display the Luther’s Rose at your home in the form of a cross-stitched mural, in your office in the form of a paperweight or on your e-mail signature, or on your car in the form of a bumper sticker.

4 Adopt a policy of celebrating life events with a note of service to the neighbor.

For a friend or family member’s next birthday, make a gift to a Lutheran social service agency (such as Lutheran Disaster Relief or Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in that person’s honor. *Note:* Some non-Lutherans may not “get” the value of this kind of celebration; consider also giving that person a gift card to their favorite fast food restaurant to avoid hurt feelings.

Be Aware

- Martin Luther wrote that what makes a Christian shoemaker Christian is *not* that he puts crosses on his shoes, but that he makes good shoes. In this way, Luther cautions us that being Christian is not about the signs, symbols, or even the words we use, but about the way we live our lives.
- Many Lutherans live in ways that other Lutherans would call flashy, and vice versa. It’s really a matter of perspective.
- Most non-Lutherans automatically associate the word *Lutheran* with the word *boring*. If you err to one side or the other, be flashier rather than more boring.



Martin Luther wrote that what makes a Christian shoemaker Christian is not that he puts crosses on his shoes, but that he makes good shoes. Being Christian is less about the symbols we use to adorn our lives, but the way we live our lives.

HOW TO MEMORIZE LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

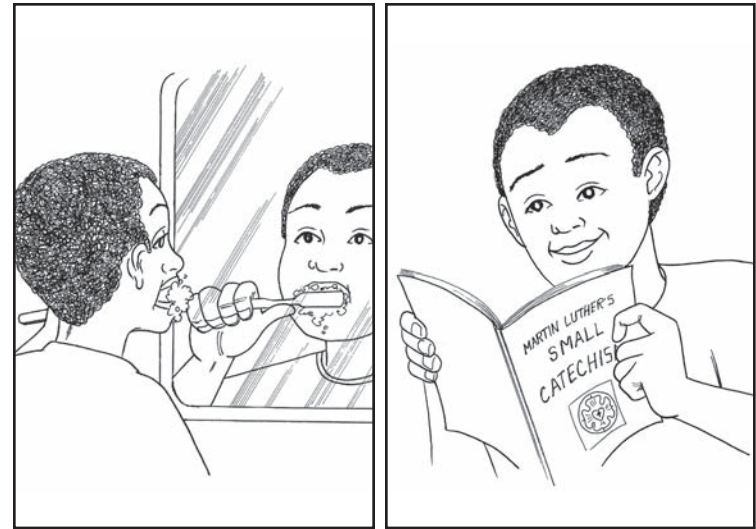
Most people don't often think about the studs within the walls of their homes or the framework in the ceiling, but if these structures are not in place and true the whole house will come crashing down. For Lutherans, Martin Luther's Small Catechism serves a similar purpose; Christ is our true foundation and the Catechism provides a solid, user-friendly, time-tested framework for the household built on this foundation.

Even Luther said: "I study it daily and remain a pupil of the Catechism ... and I am convinced by experience that God's Word can never be entirely mastered" (*Luther's Works* 14:8). Here are a few tips to make sure your framework is in place and sturdy.

1 Make a daily investment of time with the Catechism.

The Small Catechism cannot do its work in the dusty past or buried in a desk drawer. Spend a few minutes each day reciting a section of it out loud. Schedule a routine time and stick to it. Also keep copies at your bedside, on your table, on your toilet tank so you can read it on a regular basis.

Note to the technologically adept: Consider recording yourself reading the Catechism aloud as a digital sound file and transferring it to your mp3 player to further facilitate your daily reading/hearing.



There are many things Lutherans do every day. A few minutes each day with the Small Catechism can facilitate memorization and deepen your faith journey at the same time.

2 Segment your readings into digestible bits; avoid doing too much at once.

Even though it is "small," cramming in the whole Catechism is not advisable. Learn a section by heart, then go on to another. For example, start with the Ten Commandments themselves (just a few at a time) and then go back and learn their meanings.

3 Keep a sense of humor about the work of memorization.

Avoid allowing the Catechism to become a burdensome law to you. A long-term relationship with it is your primary goal, so keep things light as you go and stay consistent. (This is especially true for those who have children. At any age, kids need to get silly and playful. They may want to race through the words or sing them or pronounce them with a funny accent. THIS IS GOOD.)

4 Find a verbatim musical version of the Catechism and learn to sing it.

Music is probably the most effective mnemonic device for memorization. A simple Internet search will reveal multiple options for purchase, some of which can easily be transferred to a computer or mp3 player.

5 Explore the possibility of a regular Small Catechism/worship connection.

If your congregation doesn't already use the Small Catechism in worship in some way, talk to the worship committee or your pastor about giving it a try. For example: the explanation of one of the articles of the creed makes a great confession of faith. Deeply rooted Lutheran congregations often make booklet copies freely available to members and visitors alike.

6 Endeavor to maintain a lifelong relationship with the Small Catechism.

As Luther says, we are never finished learning from the Catechism. To keep the framework of your internal faith structure sturdy and true, recite it aloud your whole life. Another way to do this is to pray the Catechism (a prayer version is available too).

Be Aware

- While many Lutherans maintain other daily disciplines, such as tooth brushing and gargling, they eschew daily routines around faith practices. The Small Catechism can become a foundational bulwark against faith decay and should not be underestimated as a personal resource.
- Parents are the primary teachers for their children and should avoid neglecting their calling. The best place for faith learning to happen is in the home, at the dinner table or bedside, wherever daily life and relationships are processed. The Small Catechism provides an exceptional framework for those conversations against which decisions and behavior can be measured and adjusted.

