Public Examination on Luther's Small Catechism

1. What is the Bible?

The Bible is the Word of God.

2. Why was the Bible written?

It was written to show us our Savior Jesus, so that we would believe in him.

3. Are there any errors or contradictions in the Bible?

No, God cannot make mistakes.

4. What are the two main teachings of the Bible?

The two main teachings of the Bible are the Law and the Gospel.

5. What is the law?

The law is the love that God requires of us, summarized in the Ten Commandments.

6. What is the gospel?

The gospel is the good news that Jesus has saved us from sin, death, and hell.

7. Who wrote the Catechism?

Dr. Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism in 1529.

8. What are the six chief parts of Christian doctrine?

They are: The Ten Commandments; the Creed; the Lord’s Prayer; Baptism; the Keys and Confession; and the Sacrament of the Altar.

9. Why do we believe what the Catechism teaches us?

We believe the Catechism because it agrees with the Bible.

10. What is the first table of the law?\*

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”

11. What is the second table of the law?\*

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

12. Who is the only true God?

The only true God is the Triune God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

13. What does it mean to have a god?

Whatever you fear, love, or trust in the most is your god.

14. How does God want us to use his name?\*

He wants us to “call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.”

15. What does Sabbath mean?

Sabbath means day of rest.

16. How is Christ our Sabbath?

Jesus gives us true spiritual rest by taking away our sin and guilt.

17. How should we receive the preaching of God's word?\*

We should “hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.”

18. Why do we honor our parents?

Our parents are God’s representatives.

19. Why does the Bible call hatred murder?

Sin is every evil desire.

20. Why is abortion a sin?

Abortion is killing a human being made in the image of God.

21. Does the government have the authority to put murderers to death?

Yes, God gives the government the authority to kill criminals.

22. List three purposes for marriage.

a. Partnership under God.

b. Having children.

c. Living a chaste life.

23. Why is marriage a life-long union between a man and a woman?

God joins a husband and wife together to make them one.

24. Why is homosexuality a sin?

God made us male and female to be fruitful. Homosexuality cannot bring life. It can only bring death.

25. To whom does all our property belong?

All our property belongs to God.

26. What should we do to protect our neighbor's reputation?\*

We should “defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.”

27. Why is coveting wrong?

We should be satisfied with what God has given us.

28. What does God threaten to do to those who break his commandments?\*

“God threatens to punish all that transgress these Commandments.”

29. What does God promise to those who obey his commandments?\*

“He promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these Commandments.”

30. Who alone has kept God's commandments?

Jesus Christ is the only one who has kept God’s commandments.

31. What does God's law tell us about ourselves?

God’s law tells us that we are sinners who deserve to be sent to hell forever.

32. What is original sin?

It is the sinful condition that we inherit from Adam.

33. What are actual sins?

They are the sins of thought, word, and deed that we commit every day.

34. How do you know what is and is not sin?

God’s law tells us what is and is not sin.

35. Where alone do we find forgiveness of sin?

We find forgiveness of sin in Jesus Christ alone.

36. What is the relationship between God the Father and God the Son?

The Father has begotten the Son from eternity.

37. From whom does the Holy Spirit proceed?

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

38. Who alone is not created?

God alone is not created.

39. Out of what did God create all things?

God created all things out of nothing.

40. How did God create all things?

God created all things by his word.

41. How long did it take God to create all things?

It took God six days to create all things.

42. Who is the crown of God's creation?

Man, both male and female, is the crown of God’s creation.

43. What is the image of God?

The image of God is to know God rightly and to love God perfectly.

44. What is the main difference between the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of evolution?

The doctrine of creation says we come from God. The doctrine of evolution says we come from animals.

45. What are angels and what do they do for us?

Angels are spirits who serve Jesus and watch over us Christians.

46. Who is the devil?

The devil is a fallen angel who hates God and God’s people.

47. How did Jesus describe the devil?

Jesus called him a liar and a murderer.

48. How does the devil murder souls?

He teaches false doctrine to them.

49. What is God's providence?

God provides for everything he has made.

50. What are the two natures in Christ?

Jesus has both a divine nature and a human nature.

51. How do we know that Jesus is God?

The Bible ascribes to Jesus divine names, works, and attributes.

52. How do we know that Jesus is a man?

The Bible ascribes to Jesus human names, works, and attributes.

53. Why do we call Mary the mother of God?

The Child that she bore was and is God.

54. Whom did Jesus redeem?

Jesus redeemed all sinners.

55. From what has Jesus redeemed you?\*

Jesus has redeemed me “from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil.”

56. With what did Jesus redeem you?\*

He redeemed me “with his holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.”

57. What was Christ's humiliation?

It was when Jesus in his human nature did not always or fully use the divine attributes that he had.

58. Why did your Savior have to be true man?

He had to be true man to become my substitute under the law and to die for me.

59. What is Christ's exaltation?

It is when he always and fully uses all his divine attributes.

60. Why did your Savior have to be true God?

He had to be true God to defeat my enemies: sin, death, and the devil.

61. List four things Christ's resurrection proves.

* It proves that his teaching is true.
* It proves that Jesus is the Son of God.
* It proves that our sins are all forgiven.
* It proves that Christians will rise to eternal life on the last day.

62. Why does the Bible emphasize that Christ's tomb was empty?

The fact of the empty tomb means that Jesus rose bodily from the dead.

63. What is the three-fold office of Christ?

It is his office as prophet, priest, and king.

64. Briefly explain what Jesus does in each of these three offices.

a. As our prophet, Jesus preaches His holy word through the pastor.

b. As our priest, Jesus pleads for us before God.

c. As our king, Jesus rules over His church by His grace.

65. Where is Jesus today?

Jesus is everywhere, especially with his church.

66. What will Jesus do when he returns?

He will judge the living and the dead.

67. What does the Holy Spirit do for you?

He makes me holy.

68. How does the Holy Spirit make you holy?\*

The Holy Spirit makes me holy through the “holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.”

69. Why do you need the Holy Spirit to make you holy?

I am by nature a helpless sinner who can do nothing holy.

70. What is the chief topic of the Christian religion?

The chief topic of the Christian religion is justification through faith alone.

71. What does justify mean?

Justify means to forgive sins or to make an unrighteous person righteous.

72. Whom has God, for Christ's sake, justified?

God, for Christ’s sake, has justified the entire world.

73. Where does God offer justification or forgiveness?

God offers justification or forgiveness in the gospel.

74. What is the only way to receive the forgiveness of sins?

We receive the forgiveness of sins only by faith in the gospel.

75. What is the Holy Christian Church?

The Holy Christian Church is the sheep who hear the voice of the Good Shepherd.

76. What are the marks of the Church?

The marks of the Church are the pure preaching of the gospel and the right administration of Christ’s sacraments.

77. Why do we call them marks of the Church?

We call them marks of the Church because they mark or identify where the Church is.

78. Who alone is the head of the Church?

Jesus Christ alone is the head of the Church.

79. What does false doctrine do to the Church?

False doctrine divides and scatters the Church.

80. How can we defend ourselves from false doctrine?

We must mark and avoid all those who teach false doctrine.

81. What will happen to the saints on the last day?

They will be raised to life and spend eternity with God in the joys of heaven.

82. What will happen to the unbelievers on the last day?

They will be sent to hell where they will suffer God’s anger forever.

83. What is prayer?

Prayer is talking to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

84. Give me two reasons why we should pray.

God commands us to pray and he promises to hear us.

85. Why can only those who know Christ pray to God?

Only Christians can pray because only Christians know God.

86. Does God answer every prayer a Christian prays?

Yes, God answers every prayer a Christian prays but he does so in his own way and time.

87. How does God become your Father?

God becomes my Father when I am born into his kingdom through Holy Baptism.

88. How is God's name kept holy among us?\*

“When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead a holy life according to it.”

89. What is God's kingdom of grace?

It is Christ’s church on earth.

90. What is God's kingdom of glory?

It is Christ’s church in heaven.

91. How can we know God's will for us?

We can know God’s will for us only from what God tells us in the Bible.

92. What is our daily bread?\*

Our daily bread is “everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body.”

92. Why do we forgive those who sin against us?

We forgive others because God has first forgiven us.

93. Why might God test us?

God might test us to drive us to His word and to strengthen our faith.

94. What does “amen” mean?

“Amen” means that it is true.

95. What is baptism?\*

“Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God’s command and connected with God’s word.”

96. What benefits does baptism give?\*

“It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this as the words and promises of God declare.”

97. Why do we baptize babies?

Jesus told us to baptize all nations, Jesus died also for babies, and baptism brings babies to faith in Jesus.

98. What does baptism have to do with your daily life?

My baptism brings me God’s forgiveness every single day of my life.

99. What does confirmation have to do with baptism?

When we are confirmed we publicly confirm and confess the gifts God gave us in baptism.

100. Who earned the right to forgive us our sins?

Jesus earned the right to forgive sins.

101. To whom did he give the right to forgive sins?

Jesus gave this right to his church on earth.

102. Whose sins should be forgiven?

The sins of penitent sinners should be forgiven.

103. Whose sins should not be forgiven?

The sins of impenitent sinners should not be forgiven.

104. What is the Office of the Keys?\*

“It is the special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of the penitent sinners, but to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent.”

105. Who exercises this power as Christ's representative in the congregation?

The pastor exercises this power as Christ’s representative.

106. Who calls the pastor?

God calls the pastor.

107. How does God call the pastor?

God calls the pastor through the church.

108. From whom does the pastor receive the authority to preach, to teach, and to administer the sacraments?

The pastor receives this authority from God himself.

109. What should you do with pastors who teach false doctrine?

You should mark them and avoid them.

110. Why can't we have women pastors?

The Bible says that a woman may not preach or exercise the authority of the pastoral office.

111. What is excommunication?

Excommunication is excluding openly impenitent sinners from the church.

112. What is the purpose of excommunication?

The purpose of excommunication is to lead the impenitent sinner to repentance.

113. What is the Lord's Supper?\*

“It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself, for us Christians to eat and to drink.”

114. How do you know that it is Christ's body and blood?

Jesus says that the bread is his body and the wine is his blood.

115. Who is worthy to receive the Lord's Supper?

“He is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, ‘Given and shed for you for the remission of sins.’”

116. Why do we not give the Lord's Supper to little children?

Little children cannot examine themselves as the Bible teaches we must do.

117. What is the benefit of receiving the Lord's Supper?\*

“That is shown us by these words, ‘Given and shed for you for the remission of sins’; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.”

118. Why should the pastor not give the Lord's Supper to openly impenitent sinners?

They would eat and drink Christ’s body and blood to their own judgment.

119. What is closed communion?

Closed communion is the biblical practice of giving Christ’s body and blood only to those who have been instructed properly in the true Christian faith and who faithfully confess that faith.

120. When we commune at a church, what are we saying about that church?

We are saying that its teaching is in complete agreement with God’s word.

121. How often should we receive the Lord's Supper?

We should receive the Lord’s Supper frequently, because we need it.

Questions that have the asterisk (\*) call for answers that quote directly from the Catechism. These answers should be memorized word for word.