

Two Quotations to Consider...

Pastor: As you bring your children to receive the gift of Baptism, you are entrusted with responsibilities:

To live with them among God's faithful people,
Bring them to the word of God and the Holy Supper,
Teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments,
Place in their hands the holy scriptures,
And nurture them in faith and prayer,
So that your children may learn to trust God,
Proclaim Christ through word and deed,
Care for others and the world God made,
And work for justice and peace.

Do you promise to help your children grow in the Christian faith and life?

Parents and Sponsors: I do.

- Baptismal Rite, Evangelical Lutheran Worship p. 228

This sermon has been undertaken for the instruction of children and uneducated people. Hence from ancient times it has been called in Greek, a "catechism" — that is, instruction for children. Its contents represent the minimum of knowledge required of a Christian. Whoever does not possess it should not be reckoned among Christians nor admitted to a sacrament, just as a craftsman who does not know the rules and practices of his craft is rejected and considered incompetent. For this reason young people should be thoroughly instructed in the various parts of the Catechism or children's sermons and diligently drilled in their practice.

Therefore, it is the duty of every head of a household to examine his children and servants at least once a week and ascertain what they have learned of it, and if they do not know it, to keep them faithfully at it. I well remember the time when there were old people who were so ignorant that they knew nothing of these things — indeed, even now we find them daily — yet they come to Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar and exercise all the rights of Christians, although those who come to the sacrament ought to know more and have a fuller understanding of all Christian doctrine than children and beginners at school. As for the common people, however, we should be satisfied if they learned the three parts which have been heritage of Christendom from ancient times, though they were rarely taught and treated correctly, so that all who wish to be Christians in fact as well as in name, both young and old, may be well-trained in them and familiar with them.

- Luther's Preface to the Large Catechism