

6.35

Matthew 6:9–13—The Lord’s Prayer in Martin Luther’s *Small Catechism*

The Protestant reformer Martin Luther (1483–1546) wrote a pocket-sized book called *The Small Catechism* for parents to use when instructing their children in the basics of the Christian faith. The *Small Catechism* is divided into sections dealing with the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the Sacrament of Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Altar. Each section features questions and answers on the topics.

For several centuries, Lutheran Christians were expected to memorize all the answers to questions posed in the *Small Catechism* and they were often tested on these in front of the entire congregation before they could be “confirmed” and accepted as adult members of the church. That tradition has waned in the modern day (though it is still sometimes practiced).

Here is an example of the questions and answers Luther’s *Small Catechism* provides concerning the meaning of the Lord’s Prayer (as taught by Jesus in Matthew 6:9–13).

The First Petition

Hallowed be your name.

Q. *What is this? or What does this mean?*

A. It is true that God's name is holy in itself, but we ask in this prayer that it may also become holy in and among us.

Q. *How does this come about?*

A. Whenever the word of God is taught clearly and purely and we, as God's children, also live holy lives according to it. To this end help us, dear Father in heaven! However, whoever teaches and lives otherwise than the word of God teaches, dishonors the name of God among us. Preserve us from this, heavenly Father!