

Road Plan



“What's This Mean?” Introduction to the Small Catechism

Points of Interest

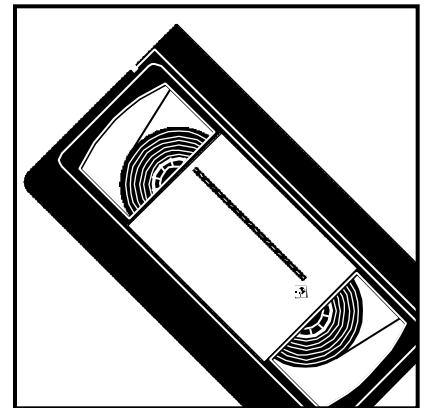
(focus your lesson on some or all of these points):

- Martin Luther (born in 1483; died in 1546) was a pastor and teacher who lived in Germany about 500 years ago.
- Martin Luther was one of the most important leaders of the 15th Century Reformation of the Christian Church.
- Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism for pastors and families to help them teach the basics of the Christian faith.
- “Catechism” refers to a type of learning based on question and answer.
- The Small Catechism is based on the teachings of the Bible.
- The Small Catechism is divided into 6 sections: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, Confession and Holy Communion.

Road Show

(set up the **Road Trip** video with this introduction):

Students have been reading Martin Luther's Small Catechism for nearly 500 years. Today, however, reading is no longer the only option. There's TV, there's radio, there are computers. How can a little book like the Small Catechism compete with all of that? In this video, you'll be introduced to the Small Catechism. Your road trip through the Small Catechism will take you to a number of interesting sites: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Sacraments. But remember, no matter how much we try to appeal to your multimedia tastes-no matter how much cool music and special effects we throw your way-the Small Catechism is meant to be read. So read it, and keep it in your head.



Getting There

(Round out your lesson presentation with some or all of the following):

I D E A # 1

Show a scene from the 1957 movie *Martin Luther* (the one featuring Niall MacGinnis as Luther). If your church doesn't have a copy, a video version is available through a number of sources (including Seraphim Communications). There are plenty of great scenes in this movie (portions of which appear in the Road Trip video). The one to show for this lesson, however, is the "Diet of Worms" scene with Luther's legendary "Here I stand" speech. After watching the clip, review for your students who Luther was. Touch on his career as a Roman Catholic priest, his nailing of the 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenberg, and his excommunication at Worms. Mention Luther's radical ideas about "Justification by Faith" which got him kicked out of the Church. You can further commend the movie by noting that it is a classic and that if your students' parents went through Confirmation, chances are they saw the film themselves.

POINT:

Martin Luther got into a lot of trouble with the Church; the Church has never been the same.

I D E A # 2

Sometimes people mix-up Martin Luther and Martin Luther King Jr. Go to the library and get a picture book about the 1960's civil rights movement and/or about Martin Luther King Jr. Show your students a picture of Dr. King; they should be able to identify him without a problem. Next, ask if anyone knows who Martin Luther King Jr. was named after. A real sharp student will note that he was named after his father, Martin Luther King Sr. Who was the senior King named after? Here, the correct answer is Martin Luther, the 15th Century Reformer.

So what does Martin Luther King Jr. have in common with Martin Luther? Both were pastors. Both had some important things to say about Freedom. Both took a stand for the Truth. Both led a world-changing reform movement. One big difference between the two reformers: Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated and cut down in his prime. Martin Luther, despite many threats to his life, lived to age 62 and died of natural causes.

POINT:

Every once in a while, history gives us someone who makes a major difference.

I D E A # 3

The word Catechism refers to a kind of instruction based on question and answer. More specifically, it's a kind of instruction that relies on the student's ability to memorize and recite the answers to certain questions. Today, about the only time students learn this way is when they learn multiplication tables and state capitols. And yet, it's the automatic response that catechizers like Luther had in mind.

To illustrate the limits of this "automatic response" approach to learning, ask for a volunteer. Then ask, in rapid succession, the following series of questions: (1) What's the opposite of "yes"? (2) What's the opposite of "fast"? (3) What's the opposite of "catch"? (4) What's the opposite of "high"? (5) What do you do at a red light?

POINT:

It's good to know the right answers; it's better to know why the answers are right.

If all goes well (and if done smoothly, it usually does), your volunteer should answer the respective questions with these one-word answers: No, Slow, Throw, Low, and Go. Of course, the first four answers are correct; however, it is not prudent to "go" when you come to a red light. See how many of your students catch on to what happened, before you explain it to them.