



Praying the Small Catechism with beads



The set of prayer beads used for this meditation is described on www.elca.org and was originally presented as a tool for Lenten discipline. The same beads can be used to learn and meditate on the Small Catechism, a tool for Christian teaching. It may be helpful to have a Small Catechism on hand, if you find yourself unable to pray, or questioning the meaning behind each section, you can refer to the Catechism for explanation.

MEDITATION ON THE CROSS

The cross is the revelation of God's love hidden in human suffering. The meditation begins and ends here, as we are reminded that Jesus' death and resurrection gives us confidence to pray directly to God.

At the **cross** recite this verse: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." –John 3:16

Four small beads- on each bead say this prayer: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." –Luke 23:47 *prayer of the penitent bandit*

One large bead- on the large bead you may recite either the Morning or Evening Prayer, depending on the time of day:

Morning Prayer

My Heavenly Father, I thank You, through Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, that You kept me safe from all evil and danger last night. Save me, I pray, today as well, from every evil and sin, so that all I do and the way that I live will please you. I put myself in your care, body and soul and all that I have. Let Your holy Angels be with me, so that the evil enemy will not gain power over me. Amen.

Evening Prayer

My Heavenly Father, I thank You, through Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, that You have protected me, by Your grace. Forgive, I pray, all my sins and the evil I have done. Protect me, by Your grace, tonight. I put myself in your care, body and soul and all that I have. Let Your holy angels be with me, so that the evil enemy will not gain power over me. Amen.

MEDITATION ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

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

Six small beads: As you reflect on the reception of the Lord's Supper say these words on each bead, "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us."

The large bead: We recall the witness of the evangelists who wrote:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night on which He was betrayed, took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to His disciples and said: "*Take! Eat! This is My body, which is given for you. Do this to remember Me!*" In the same way He also took the cup after supper, gave thanks, gave it to them, and said: "*Take and drink from it, all of you! This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you to forgive sins. When you do this remember Me!*"

MEDITATION ON THE CROSS

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If you wish, you may finish with the Lord's Prayer or a personal prayer of your own.

The large bead: When we rely on ourselves for salvation, we turn away from God. The part of us that wants to do this must be drowned in contrition and repentance, so that a new person can arise and live before God in righteousness. We recall the promise of our baptism: “We were buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” –Romans 6:4

MEDITATION ON CONFESSION

Our Baptism marks us with the Cross of Christ, when we are terrified by our own sins, we can seek assurance that God has selected us for salvation and forgives our sins. Pastors are charged with declaring absolution when a sinner repents of their sins.

Six small beads: On each bead you may say, “For the sake of your name, O Lord, forgive my iniquity, though it is great.” –Psalm 25:11 Or “Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.”

The large bead: Trusting in the mercy of God, assured of the promises already made on your behalf, know that God forgives you. You may say, “When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.” –Luke 5:20



Juncture- The three branches of the beads meet here, and we recall the Trinity, Three-in-one and One-in-three, all eternal and all divine. Pray this prayer: “Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.”

MEDITATION ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

God has chosen us to be the people of God, and promises blessings when we keep the commandments.

Six small beads: We recall that God will judge each of us by the commands we are given. Pray this prayer for each bead “Teach me, and I will be quiet; show me where I have been wrong.” –Job 6:24

The large bead: Recite the Ten Commandments, mindful of what you have done or not done to fulfill them.

1. You must not have other gods.
2. You must not abuse or misuse God’s name.
3. You must keep the Sabbath holy.
4. You must honor your father and mother.
5. You must not kill.
6. You must not commit adultery.
7. You must not steal.
8. You must not lie about your neighbor.
9. You must not desire your neighbor’s house.
10. You must not desire your neighbor’s spouse, employees, or anything that belongs to them.

When you have finished, you may say, “Save me Lord, I am afraid, I have not done all you have commanded.”

MEDITATION ON THE CREED

God does not abandon us, even though we rebel against God's own commands. Jesus' life, death and resurrection show us the depths of God's love and the lengths that God will go to, in order to redeem us. We recall the promises of God, revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

Six small beads: Our old lives are turned upside by the varied revelations of the Triune God, so we might trust God with all our heart. Pray this prayer for each bead "Let every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." -Philippians 2:11

The large bead: Recite the Creed, noticing the gifts of God: all of creation, including your own life; unmerited salvation graciously bestowed through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the sustaining Faith that is given by the Holy Spirit; and a community of believers who console and assist each other.

I believe in God the Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried, descended to Hell, on the third day rose again from the dead, ascended to Heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father. He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the community of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and an everlasting life. Amen.

When you have finished you may say, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" - Mark 9:24

MEDITATION ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

When we are justified by grace, through faith, we can stand before God with petitions for the world. Jesus taught his followers the way to pray.

Six small beads: For each bead you may say "Lord, teach me how to pray." Or, "My soul is in anguish. How long, O Lord, how long?"

The large bead: Drawn into one body by the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us.

Our Father in Heaven,
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done, on Earth as in Heaven.
Give us today, our daily bread.
Forgive our sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us.
Save us from the time of trial.
And deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, now and forever. Amen.

MEDITATION ON HOLY BAPTISM

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word. Christ said in the gospel of Matthew, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." -Matthew 28:19

Six small beads: We recall our baptism, the sign that God has claimed us as children and healed our wounds. For each bead pray these words, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." -Matthew 8:2