



THE JERUSALEM HANDBOOK

JERUSALEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, MORTON GROVE

Our handbook, or *enchiridion*, is a handbook or manual—literally a “little book held in your hands”—derived from the Greek meaning “in the hand” or “ready to hand.” The Evangelical Lutheran Church uses this term to describe a series of questions and answers about the Christian faith that we have and hold. More than a simple manual, an enchiridion is understood as a practical and concise guide intended to shape and support the daily living of a Christian life.

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I. THE COMMANDMENTS

What does the First Commandment teach us?

This commandment teaches us that we should fear, love and trust in God above all things.

What does it mean for a Christian to “fear God”?

It means that a Christian will respect God and his almighty power. It does not mean that we should be afraid of him.

How do we break the First Commandment?

We break this commandment by making other people, other things, other ideas or ourselves more important than God and his Word.

How often do we break this First Commandment and all other commandments?

We break every commandment every day.

Why do we so often break this First Commandment and all other commandments?

We break them so often because we are sinners, and we naturally lack true fear of God and true faith in him and his promises.

What do we deserve for breaking this First Commandment and all other commandments?

We deserve nothing but God's eternal wrath and punishment; eternal death in hell.

Who kept this First Commandment and all other commandments in our place?

Jesus came and fulfilled all of God's laws perfectly on our behalf. God truly gives this perfection to all who trust Jesus as the only Savior.

True or false: I don't need to keep the commandments because Jesus kept them for me. True, we don't have to keep the commandments to earn salvation; Jesus has already done that for us. But Christians will desire to keep God's commandments perfectly to show God their appreciation for his undeserved love. Our greatest desire is to please God with a life of obedience to him.

What does the Second Commandment teach us?

This commandment teaches us that we should not use God's name improperly to curse or swear, to lie or deceive, or use it superstitiously. Instead, we call upon God's name in every trouble and use it to pray, praise and give thanks.

What does the Third Commandment teach us?

This commandment teaches us that we should not despise preaching and God's Word. Instead, we should regard God's Word as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

What does the Fourth Commandment teach us?

This commandment teaches us that we should not disobey or anger our parents and those whom God has placed in positions of authority over us. Instead, we should honor, serve and obey them and give them our love and respect.

Besides our parents, whom else has God placed in authority over us?

God has given positions of authority to government officials and church leaders.

When is the only time we can disobey those in authority over us and not break the Fourth Commandment?

We can only do this when someone in authority over us is asking or commanding us to do something that is contrary to the Word of God. "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

What promise does God connect to the Fourth Commandment?

God promises us that if we keep the Fourth Commandment our lives will go well and we will live long lives on the earth.

What does the Fifth Commandment teach us?

This commandment teaches us that we should not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body. Instead, we should help him and be a friend to him in every bodily need.

Must we physically murder someone before we break the Fifth Commandment?

No. Jesus says that we break this commandment even when we think about hurting our neighbor in some way or by speaking hurtful words to him.

What does the Sixth Commandment teach us?

This commandment teaches us that we should lead pure and decent lives in words and actions and that husbands and wives must love and honor each other.

Can the Sixth Commandment only be broken by married people who have sexual affairs with someone who is not their spouse?

No. This commandment is broken whenever anyone, married or single, has impure sexual thoughts about someone who is not their spouse. It is also broken whenever anyone, married or single, uses inappropriate or lewd language that degrades God's gift of sex. It is also broken whenever anyone, married or single, engages in sexual acts outside the bonds of marriage. In this commandment, God restricts the gift of sex to married couples only!

What does the Seventh Commandment teach us?

This commandment teaches us that we should not take our neighbor's money or property, or get it by dishonest dealing. Instead, we should look for ways to help our neighbor improve and protect his Property.

What does the Eighth Commandment teach us?

This commandment teaches us that we should not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him or give him a bad name. Instead, we should always defend him, speak well of him and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.

What do the Ninth and Tenth Commandments teach us?

These commandments teach us that we should not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house or obtain it by false claims, nor should we force or entirely away from our neighbor his wife, workers or animals. Instead, we should do everything we can to help our neighbor keep his property and urge his wife and workers to stay and do their duty.

What is the "Old Adam" or the "old self"?

This is the sinful nature that we inherit from our parents, especially our first parent, Adam. Our Old Adam tempts us to break God's commands and fall into sin.

Do Christians have an "Old Adam"?

Yes.

Do unbelievers have an “Old Adam”?

Yes.

What is the “New Man” or the “new self”?

This is the new nature that the Holy Spirit works in Christians through the hearing of the gospel. The New Man moves Christians to willingly serve God with their lives.

Do unbelievers also have a “New Man”?

No, they don't. Unbelievers have only the Old Adam. Nothing unbelievers do ever pleases God, because even the “good things” they do are done for selfish reasons and not out of willing service to God.

What do the Old Adam and New Man do inside every Christian?

They fight constantly. The Old Adam wants to disobey God and his commands. The New Man wants to serve God perfectly.

When will Christians be freed from this constant battle?

When Jesus comes again we will be given new, sinless bodies which will no longer be dragged down by a sinful nature. In heaven we will serve God perfectly, without any stain of sin.

II. THE CREED

What is a creed?

A creed summarizes what we believe about God.

How many true Gods are there?

There is one true God.

How many persons are there in the one true God?

There are three persons in the one true God.

Who are the three persons in the one true God?

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

What word or words have Christians come to use to describe the three-in-one God?

Triune or Trinity.

What are some words that the Scripture uses to describe God?

The Scriptures describe God as being loving, just, eternal, omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (allknowing), omnipresent (present in all places)

What does God the Father do for us?

He created us and all that exists and daily preserves our lives both by natural and supernatural means.

How many days did it take God to create everything that exists?

Six days.

Out of what did God create everything?

Nothing. He simply spoke, and his creation came into being.

How does God preserve us on a daily basis?

God preserves us by daily and richly providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, etc., and by protecting us from all danger and defending us against the Devil. He preserves us both through natural means (sending rain, making crops grow, giving us parents) and through supernatural means (the protection of angels)

Why does God do these things for us?

God does these things for us not because we've earned or deserved it but because he is our good and merciful Father in heaven.

What should we do in response to God the Father's kindness to us?

We ought to thank and praise, serve and obey him.

Do we always love and serve God perfectly as he deserves? Why or why not?

No, we don't thank and praise, serve and obey him perfectly as we should because we are sinners.

How long have we been sinners?

We have been sinners from birth, since we inherit a sinful nature from our parents.

How often do we sin?

Daily.

What do we deserve from God for our sin?

We deserve nothing but his eternal wrath and punishment, an eternity in hell.

Who is responsible for my sin?

I am.

Who tempts us to fall into sin?

The Devil, the sinful world and our own sinful flesh.

Who is Jesus?

Jesus is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary.

True or false: Mary and Joseph were Jesus' parents.

False. Mary is Jesus' mother, but God is Jesus' Father.

True or false: Jesus is 100% and 100% human.

True. He is fully God and fully human.

What are some titles that we give to Jesus, and what do these titles mean?

1. **Savior** – he has saved us from our sin
2. **Redeemer** – he has redeemed us (bought us back from our captivity to sin, death and the Devil)
3. **Lord** – he is the ruler of our lives
4. **Christ** – Greek word meaning “the Anointed One.” Kings and priests were anointed in the Old
5. **Testament**; God had promised to send a specially anointed King and Priest, his Son
6. **Messiah** – Hebrew word meaning “the Anointed One”

From what did Jesus redeem us?

Jesus has redeemed us from all sin, from death and from the power of the Devil.

How did Jesus redeem us? What was the price or ransom he paid?

He didn't redeem us with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and his innocent suffering and Death.

Why do we call Jesus' blood “holy and precious”?

Jesus' blood is holy because he is perfect, without sin, and it is precious because his blood is even more valuable than gold or silver. It is the only thing that could make perfect payment for our sin.

What two things did Jesus have to accomplish in order to redeem us?

He kept God's law perfectly on our behalf, and he suffered and died for our sins.

Why did Jesus have to become fully human?

Jesus became fully human because he needed to be just like us in every way so that he could be our perfect substitute and Savior from sin.

What is the only difference between the man Jesus and us?

Jesus is without sin (perfect), and we are sinners.

For whom did Jesus suffer and die?

Jesus suffered and died for all people of all time. He paid for the sins of the whole world.

Why did Jesus descend into hell?

He went to hell to proclaim his victory over the Devil and his evil allies.

What happens when someone dies?

When someone dies, their soul is separated from their dead body.

What happens when someone is raised from the dead?

When someone is resurrected, it means that a person's dead body is given new life and the soul is reunited with the body.

What does Jesus' resurrection from the dead mean for us?

Jesus' resurrection proves that:

1. he has conquered sin and death
2. God has accepted his Son's perfect sacrifice for our sins
3. the sins of the world have been completely forgiven
4. on the Last Day God will raise all people from the dead
5. God will give eternal life to all those who trust in Jesus as the only Savior from sin

When did Jesus ascend into heaven?

Jesus ascended into heaven forty days after he rose from the dead.

True or false: Jesus is a human being right now.

True. Even though Jesus has ascended into heaven, he remains a flesh-and-blood human being.

What does it mean that Jesus is seated at God's right hand?

The "right hand of God" is not a place, so to speak. Instead it means that Jesus has been given all power in heaven and on earth. The right hand is symbolic of power and strength. Before Jesus ascended he told his disciples: "All authority in heaven

and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). A human being is in control of the entire universe.

Is Jesus ever coming back, and if he is, why is he coming back?

Yes. Jesus has promised that he will return on the Last Day to judge the living and dead. He will give eternal life to those who trust in him. He will condemn those who refused to believe in him.

When will Jesus return?

That’s not for us to know, Jesus said. He also tells us that we need to be prepared because his Second Coming will come like a thief in the night (suddenly and without warning).

Who will rise from the dead on the Last Day?

All people will be raised, both believers and unbelievers. Believers will be raised to live forever in heaven. Unbelievers will be raised to suffer eternally in hell.

Do we do anything to deserve the forgiveness of sins and eternal life?

No. God gives them to us as a free gift because he loves us.

What is Christian’s relationship with Jesus?

We trust him, we put our faith in him because of all the wonderful things he has done for us. We also serve him to show our appreciation for all he has done. Jesus actually lives inside of Christians.

How do Christians serve Jesus?

We serve Jesus by serving our neighbor, as he has commanded us. Even though our service to neighbors is less than perfect, all good works done in faith by Christians are perfect in God’s eyes. Through faith in Jesus we serve God in everlasting righteousness (perfection), innocence (sinlessness) and blessedness (happiness).

Will Christians be perfect in this world?

No. We are sinners and will continue to be sinners until the day we die.

When will Christians be sinless?

Only in heaven.

When God looks at those who trust Jesus for forgiveness, what does he see?

He sees the perfection of Jesus instead of our sin. Through faith in Jesus we are absolutely sinless in God's Eyes.

Who has been sent from heaven to help and motivate us in our Christian lives?

The Holy Spirit.

What word do the Scriptures use to describe what the Holy Spirit does for Christians?

Sanctification; the Holy Spirit sanctifies us.

What does "sanctify" mean?

To sanctify means to make holy and to set apart.

How is it that we come to believe in Jesus and put our trust in him?

We cannot by our own choosing or thinking believe in Jesus Christ nor come to him, but the Holy Spirit calls us to faith through the gospel.

What is the gospel?

The gospel is the good news of what God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit has done and continues to do for us and our salvation.

What does hearing the gospel do for us?

The hearing of the gospel strengthens us in our faith and helps us to live holy and God-pleasing lives.

How do we come to hear, understand and trust the message of the gospel?

The gospel is proclaimed to us through God's Word in Holy Scripture and through the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

What other phrase do Christians use to describe the gospel?

We call the gospel “the Means of Grace.” Through the gospel, God gives us his grace (his undeserved love).

Do we have to “make a decision for Jesus” or “ask Jesus into our hearts” in order to become a Christian?

No. The Holy Spirit calls us to faith through the gospel in a mysterious way. God chooses us; we don’t choose him.

What does it mean to put faith in God?

When we put our faith in God, it means that we trust him and his promises to us.

Can we take credit for our faith in God?

No. The Holy Spirit is the one who works faith in our hearts. He calls and encourages us to trust in God.

How does the Holy Spirit work faith in the hearts of Christians?

The Holy Spirit works faith through the gospel, by reminding us of God’s love for us. St. Paul writes: “Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

Do Christians have to do good works in order to be saved?

No. Good works are not necessary for salvation because Jesus has already done everything for our Salvation.

Why then do Christians do good works?

Christians do good works because that’s what Christians do. We don’t do good works because we have to in order to be saved. We do good works because we can’t help ourselves. We are created to do good works in the same way that an apple tree is created to produce apples. We do good works to show love and obedience to our good and loving God.

Can Christians do good works all by themselves?

No. We need the Holy Spirit's help to do good works.

What inspires Christians to do good works?

We are inspired by the gospel, the good news of what God has done for us.

How many Holy Christian Churches are there?

There is only one Holy Christian Church.

Who makes up the Holy Christian Church?

The Holy Christian Church is made up of all those who trust in Jesus as their Savior, both in heaven and on earth.

What do the members of the Holy Christian Church do?

Most importantly, Christians have been called:

1. to proclaim the forgiveness of sins won by Jesus
2. to listen to God's Word and put it into practice in their daily lives
3. to join together in worship
4. to celebrate Holy Communion together
5. to pray together
6. to encourage one another in their lives of faith

Should we do these things listed above with people who don't share our faith in Jesus or who stubbornly reject any teaching of the Bible? Why or why?

No, we should not practice Christian fellowship with those who don't believe in Jesus or who stubbornly reject any teaching of the Bible. God commands us to "watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them" (Romans 16:17).

What will happen to those who stubbornly reject any teaching of the Bible?

God will hold them accountable for their rejection on Judgment Day and threatens them with eternal punishment and death.

III. THE SACRAMENTS OF HOLY BAPTISM AND HOLY COMMUNION

What three things define something as a sacrament?

1. A sacrament is a sacred act instituted by Jesus
2. A sacrament involves the use of earthly elements
3. A sacrament has God's promise of the forgiveness of sins attached to it

According to this definition, what two sacraments has Jesus given his Church?

The two sacraments are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

What is Holy Baptism?

It is water used by God's command and connected with God's Word of forgiveness.

When did Jesus institute Holy Baptism?

He said: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

What earthly element is used in Holy Baptism?

Water.

Does Jesus promise the forgiveness of sins in Holy Baptism?

Yes.

Why does the Christian Church administer Holy Baptism?

The Church administers Holy Baptism because:

1. Jesus has commanded it.
2. through Baptism, God offers and gives the forgiveness of sins.

Who can administer Holy Baptism?

Any Christian can baptize someone in an emergency, but normally a congregation of Christians calls a pastor to administer Baptism on their behalf.

Why is Holy Baptism necessary?

Baptism is necessary because Jesus commands it and offers and gives the forgiveness of sins through it.

Why do we baptize infants?

First of all, we baptize infants because Jesus commands us to baptize “all nations” (including infants). Secondly, since infants are sinners, they are in need of God’s promise of forgiveness. In Baptism infants certainly receive this promise from God.

What blessings does God offer and give through Holy Baptism?

Baptism works for the forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the Devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe, as the words and promises of God declare.

What happens if I receive Holy Baptism but don’t believe the promises God makes me in Baptism?

In this case, Baptism is of no use or benefit to us. In order to receive the benefits of Baptism, we must believe the promises! Jesus said: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

Would a person ever need to be baptized more than once?

No. Holy Baptism is a life-time guarantee of God’s promise of forgiveness and eternal life. God never breaks or takes back his promises, therefore we only need to be baptized once.

Is Holy Baptism a commitment that we make to God or a commitment that God makes to us?

Holy Baptism is God’s commitment to us. In Baptism God promises to forgive our sins and give us eternal life.

What is Holy Communion?

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

When did Jesus institute Holy Communion?

Jesus instituted Holy Communion on the night he was betrayed, the evening before he died.

What earthly elements are used in Holy Communion?

Bread and wine.

What does the Roman Catholic Church falsely teach about Holy Communion?

The Church of Rome falsely teaches that the bread and wine in Communion literally disappear so that what is remaining is only the body and blood of Jesus. They call this Transubstantiation (the substances of bread and wine change into the substances of Jesus' body and blood). This false teaching leads to other abuses in the Roman Catholic Church including the worship of the bread and wine used in Holy Communion, which is idolatry.

What do most other Christian Churches falsely teach about Holy Communion?

Most of Christian Churches falsely teach that the bread and wine in Holy Communion only represent the body and blood of Jesus.

Do the bread and wine in Holy Communion only represent the body and blood of Jesus?

No. Jesus said of the bread, "This is my body," and of the wine, "This is my blood" (Matthew 26:26-28). In Holy Communion we truly receive the body and blood of Jesus along with the bread and wine in a miraculous and mysterious way because Jesus says so.

True or false: Holy Communion is 100% the body and blood of Jesus and 100% bread and wine.

True. We don't understand how this can be true, but we believe it because Jesus says so.

Does Jesus promise the forgiveness of sins in Holy Communion?

Yes. He says that in Communion we receive his body and blood, given and poured out for us for the forgiveness of sins.

Why does the Christian Church administer Holy Communion?

The Church administers Holy Communion because:

1. Jesus has commanded it.
2. through Communion, God offers and gives the forgiveness of sins.

Who can distribute Holy Communion?

Any Christian can distribute Holy Communion in an emergency, but normally a congregation of Christians calls a pastor to oversee the distribution of Communion on their behalf.

Why is Holy Communion necessary?

Communion is necessary because Jesus commands it and offers and gives the forgiveness of sins through It.

What blessings does God offer and give through Holy Communion?

In Holy Communion we receive the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

Should I receive Holy Communion even though I'm not sorry for the sins I've committed?

Certainly not! St. Paul says that "a man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). A repentant attitude is necessary for a proper and beneficial reception of Holy Communion.

What happens if I receive Holy Communion even though I'm not sorry for my sins or don't believe the promises God makes me in Communion?

In this case, St. Paul tells us that we receive Communion not to our benefit but to our judgment (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). It is important to receive Holy Communion with a repentant attitude, trusting in the promises that God makes us through this Holy Supper.

Who is to receive Holy Communion at Jerusalem?

Holy Communion at Jerusalem is reserved for instructed and confirmed members of the congregation who are sorry for their sins and believe the promises that Jesus makes in Holy Communion. We also commune visitors who have been properly instructed about Holy Communion and the rest of Scripture, are repentant, and believe the promises that Jesus makes in Holy Communion.

Why don't we give Holy Communion to anyone who wants it at Jerusalem?

We don't do this because to give Holy Communion to someone who is not properly instructed, who is not repentant, or who does not believe the promises Jesus makes in Holy Communion is dangerous and contrary to Jesus' command. Holy Communion is like prescription medicine: it is helpful to those who understand its use and take it properly, but dangerous and deadly to those who don't.

Is Holy Communion a commitment that we make to God or a commitment that God makes to us?

Holy Communion is God's commitment to us. In Communion God promises to forgive our sins and give us eternal life.

IV. THE KEYS AND CONFESSION

The Scriptures teach us that Jesus gave his Church the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." What did he mean by this? What are these "keys"?

Jesus was talking about the power and ability to forgive sins in his name. He has given to all Christians the power and ability to forgive sins in his name. When we forgive someone who is sorry for their sins, it is as though we are unlocking heaven's door for them.

Who has possession of these keys?

Jesus has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven to all Christians.

According to the Roman Catholic Church, who alone possesses these keys?

The Church of Rome falsely teaches that only the Pope possesses the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In other words, the Roman Catholic Church falsely teaches that only the Pope has the power and ability to forgive sins in all the world. It also falsely teaches that apart from forgiveness granted by the Pope (or one of his representatives) heaven is forever closed.

What should we do when someone sins against us?

Jesus tells us that we should go to that person (and no one else!) and point out that person's sin to them. Our goal is to have the person repent of their sin so that we can offer them God's forgiveness.

What does it mean to repent?

To repent means, first of all, to be sorry for our sin and, secondly, to trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of Sins.

So what are the two parts of Christian repentance?

The two parts of Christian repentance are sorrow over sin and faith in Jesus for forgiveness.

If a person doesn't listen to you when you call them to repentance, what should you do?

Jesus tells us that we should bring others along to confront the impenitent sinner. These others will serve as witnesses in order to encourage the sinner to repent.

If a person still won't repent even after you've brought along witnesses, what should you do?

Jesus tells us that we should tell the congregation (all those Christians who ultimately would be affected by this impenitent person's sin) with the hope and prayer that the sinner will repent and receive God's Forgiveness.

What if the person won't listen to the congregation?

Jesus tells us to treat that person like a pagan or tax collector. In other words, we are to put them out of our Christian fellowship and have nothing more to do with them. Again, even with this action our hope and prayer is that the impenitent sinner will finally recognize his sin, confess it and receive God's forgiveness.

What is always our goal when working with someone who stubbornly refuses to admit their sin?

Our goal is always to lead sinners to repentance so that they will spend eternity in heaven. An impenitent sinner will go to hell; we don't want that to happen.

What's the difference between lovingly pointing out someone's sin and arrogantly judging someone?

The goal of lovingly pointing out someone's sin to them is to lead the sinner to repentance and eternal life. The goal of arrogantly judging someone is to make yourself look and feel better.

What is the ministry of the gospel?

The ministry of the gospel is the proclamation of God's love and forgiveness in Christ Jesus to all the World.

To whom has God entrusted the ministry of the gospel?

All Christians have been called to proclaim God's love and forgiveness.

Does that mean that every Christian has the right to get up on Sunday morning and preach the sermon in church or distribute Holy Communion or administer Holy Baptism in the service?

No, it doesn't. In a congregation or gathering of Christians, God commands the congregation to call (or elect) certain individuals to carry out these responsibilities on behalf of the entire congregation. We call these specially elected people "public ministers."

What is the public ministry of the gospel?

The public ministry of the gospel is gospel ministry that is done on behalf of other Christians.

Why has God instituted the public ministry of the gospel?

God instituted the public ministry for the sake of order. If every Christian did their own thing, the gospel ministry would be chaotic and inefficient.

How does someone become a public minister?

A person becomes a public minister when a congregation of Christians calls that person to proclaim the gospel on their behalf. The congregation issues this Divine Call.

Who serves in the public ministry at Jerusalem?

The pastor is a public minister because he proclaims the forgiveness of Jesus on behalf of the entire congregation. The teachers at Jerusalem Lutheran School are public ministers because they proclaim the forgiveness of Jesus on behalf of the entire congregation. Other examples of public ministers at Jerusalem include the Sunday School teachers, the Vacation Bible School teachers and the church elders. All of these people proclaim the forgiveness of Jesus on behalf of the entire congregation. In order to serve in any of these different roles at Jerusalem the congregation must call you to serve on their behalf.