

Memory Work

how to learn the faith... by heart!

"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."
— Deuteronomy 11:18-19

Why memorize the faith?

First, because our Lord has told us to do it: "*Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds*" (Deut. 11:18a). And second, because life itself comes to us through the word of God: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4)

What is the goal?

The goal is to have these words permanently fixed in our hearts. There are members of Bethlehem and St. John in their eighties and nineties who even now know their catechism— some of them in the German! You too will be one of these people. Seventy years from now the words we learn this year will be with you, in your minds and in your hearts. They will be God's gift for your Christian life... a well of understanding for your walk with the Lord.

Can YOU memorize?

Yes. Anyone can... you too! Most likely you have not been given much memory work in your study at school. But you will succeed! The Lord himself will give you the words to learn and the strength to speak them. I am sure of it... and *I am sure of you!*

How do we do it?

The best way to learn the catechism by heart is by daily speaking the words out loud. The key to memory work is discipline and repetition. There are lots of different ways to do it, but by far the most effective is the "family prayer method": in this method, you gather together each morning as a family for prayer. This could take place at the breakfast table, before the meal. (An order of Daily Prayer, which includes a reading from the catechism, is provided in your materials.) Each evening do the same, before you go to sleep. Make the sign of the holy cross, sing a hymn together if you like, read aloud from the catechism, and pray with one another.

In this way, as a family, you will speak the assigned catechism reading twice each day in prayer to God. Without ever sitting down to actually "memorize," you will learn it by heart. It will be memorized! If not, a noon study at school, or a writing out of the catechism once a day, will benefit those who need more effort. Above all else, remember the key to memorizing without work is daily. A little bit each day will enable you to permanently memorize. It will be yours for life.