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## Two Ways to Use

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### Small Catechism Memory Cards

#### Introduction

It is a privilege and a pleasure to provide these convenient Small Catechism memory cards in a free download for you.

These handy cards are a great way for yourself and your whole family to memorize and review the Small Catechism individually or together.

This document tells:

- How to create the Small Catechism memory cards. It's simple.
- A first way to use the cards, in a simple circle.
- A second way to use the cards, using the Charlotte Mason memory box method. This method enhances retention, so that our memory does not slip away. This too, after a bit of explanation, is easy enough.

#### Download, Print, Cut or Snap Apart

Creating the Small Catechism memory cards is simple. Simply download the file, print it onto letter sized card stock, 8½" by 11", and cut the cards apart. Card size is 3" x 5".

If you prefer, you can print them on Avery product number 5388. These white index cards are pre-perforated. Avery supplies a Microsoft Word template to match the cards on its product 5388, and that is what we used to create the file.

#### First Way to Use – Simple Circle

One way to use these memory cards is in a simple circle.

The cards are numbered. The numbers track through the order of the version of the Small Catechism printed on the cards. Begin with No. 1. Read it over and again for about 5 to 10 minutes once or twice each day. After a while, look only at the title, such as, “The Third Commandment,” or the question, such as, “How can water do such great things,” and then try to recite the answer.

Whenever you can recite the answer with confidence, cycle that card to the bottom of the collection, and repeat the process with the next card from the top. When you have reached the first card again, going around the circle again will pay rich dividends by building memory retention.

This can be a family activity. As the words become familiar, the family members should join in saying the parts they know. Continue the one or two readings a day until all family members can recite the answer on the current card together with confidence.

Don’t worry about how many days it takes for everyone to memorize the selected portion of the Catechism. Learning the Catechism is not a race. It is a lifelong habit.

## **Second Way to Use – Charlotte Mason Memory Box**

A chronic problem of memorization is short retention. We can memorize something, like Bible verses or parts of the Catechism, and retain it for a time, but then memory fades. Charlotte Mason worked to solve this problem.

Charlotte Maria Shaw Mason was a British educator and author who invested her life in improving the quality of education in England at the turn of the twentieth century. Her methods are popular with homeschooling parents in the United States and Canada.

Christian homeschoolers have adapted her memory box system to memorizing Scripture. There is even an app for smartphones that implements the memory box for Scripture memory. From there, it is a small step to adapting it to memorizing the Small Catechism.

The memory box is simply a standard index card box, but with the cards arranged in a way that makes it easy to follow a pattern of repetitions for reinforcement.

The cards are divided into two basic groups:

- Cards that have not been memorized yet.
- Cards that have been memorized, and need to be repeated to reinforce retention.

The group that has been memorized before is divided into subgroups where a card is to be repeated either:

- Every other day.
- Once a week.
- Once a month.

Every day, you work on a new card that has not be memorized before, and you review and refresh three other cards: one every other day card; one once a week card; and one once a month card.

## Charlotte Mason Card Box Instructions

Step One:

Get an index card box and forty-one tabbed dividers that fit inside it. It doesn't matter if the dividers have words, letters, or numbers on them. You can flip them over and use the other side for labeling.

Step Two:

Label the dividers as follows and place them in the box in this order:

- 1 divider — Daily (for the new card)
- 1 divider — Odd (for a card to be refreshed every other day)
- 1 divider — Even (for a card to be refreshed every other day)
- 7 dividers — Days of the Week (Sunday, Monday, etc.; for cards to be refreshed once a week)
- 31 dividers — Date of the Month, numbered 1-31 (for cards to be refreshed once a month)

LutheranCatechism.com provides another provided PDF file that lets anyone print index box divider cards for use with the Charlotte Mason system. Other simple methods to label the dividers include:

- Write on precut tabs. Smead, for example sells Card Guides, No. 523, 1/3 cut.
- Write on adhesive tabs that can be applied to standard blank index cards. 3M sells Post-It Durable Tabs 686L-GBRT that work well.



#### Step Three:

Put the Small Catechism memory card Number 1 behind the Daily divider. This will be the portion of the Catechism you'll work on memorizing first.

Stack the rest of the cards to be learned in front of the Daily divider to learn at a later time. To begin with, you will be working on only one card, the first card, the card you placed behind the Daily divider.

At the beginning, you won't have any cards in the Odd and Even, Days of the Week, or Date of the Month slots. They will fill in as you go.

#### Step Four:

Each day you will say the cards behind four dividers:

- Daily

- Odd or Even
- Day of the Week
- Date of the Month

For example, if today is Tuesday, the 3rd, you will say the cards behind Daily, Odd (because 3 is an odd number), Tuesday, and 3. The next day (Wednesday, the 4th), you will say cards behind Daily, Even, Wednesday, and 4.

Notice: Only the card behind Daily is a new one that you are memorizing. If that were all you did, you would be following a simple circle. The review of the others in the Odd or Even, Day of the Week, and Date of the Month is where Charlotte Mason’s retention-building system kicks in

#### Step Five:

When you have learned the card behind the Daily divider, advance that card and move the replaced cards farther back in the box.

When you have memorized a Daily card, move it behind either the Odd or Even divider. Move the card that was in that Odd or Even slot back to a Day of the Week slot. Move the card it replaces in the Day of the Week slot back behind a numbered divider. Put a new card to memorize behind the Daily divider. Then you are ready to go again.

You will review a new card every day, and then graduate that card to every other day, once a week, and finally, once a month. Use the system every day of the month and you will review all the cards you know every month of the year.

Not all months have 31 days. The cards behind 31 will be reviewed seven months of the year. It might be a good idea to put cards you know quite well behind that number since it gets reviewed less frequently.

When you have advanced enough cards that you have at least one placed behind each numbered divider, start at 1 again and add another card to each numbered slot.

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