

ELCA500

'With New Voices': leaders guide

Group questions

In summer 2017, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton began sharing short videos on social media addressing individual commandments based on the Small Catechism. These videos are part of her fall 2016 "With New Voices" invitation for all to study the Small Catechism.

The following questions are intended to support small group discussion when used with the videos, as they address specific points made by Bishop Eaton. While only a beginning for discussion, you are welcome to modify or add questions to foster a deeper conversation.

Currently, six videos have been posted to ELCA500.org and to [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/) for easy access. Additional videos and supporting questions will be released in tandem through the end of 2017.

Commandment #1: You shall have no other gods

As Bishop Eaton suggests, there are two things she often experienced when she taught the Small Catechism:

- Sometimes we don't understand that there are things that draw our attention away from God.
- There can be confusion about fearing and loving God at the same time.

1. What draws your attention away from God, and how is your attention drawn away? What are some ways that we can find God at the center of these things instead of ourselves?
2. What do you think about Bishop Eaton's explanation that fear means "awe or wonder"? Are there examples from your life where you have experienced this concept?
3. As Bishop Eaton suggests, the Ten Commandments are not rules to follow; they are a way of life. How can we more clearly see them as an invitation to seek God's call for us in the world?

Commandment #2: You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God

1. As Bishop Eaton suggests, we might not be using the name of God the way it is intended. What has created this culture, and how can we work to honor God's name and be more mindful of its use?
2. Bishop Eaton talks about using the phrase "O.M.G." She notes that the phrase is so easy to use but is counter to how we are called to use God's name (prayer, thanksgiving, lament). How might you find more reverence, joy or power in using God's name? How could you use that thought or experience to only call upon God in purposeful and positive ways?

Commandment #3: Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy

As Bishop Eaton suggests, the Sabbath is an invitation intended for two things:

- A day of rest for all of creation.
- That we might hear God's word gladly and learn it.

1. What do you think of when you read this commandment? Do you hear it as Bishop Eaton does: a joyful invitation to all of creation to rest, to remember we are finite and to hear God's word? Or do you hear it another way?



Commandment #3: continued

2. Have you ever felt like the Duke University student in Bishop Eaton's story? If so, how? If not, why?
3. Recalling that Bishop Eaton suggests that the Sabbath is a day to hear God's word and a time to expect something to happen, how might you reframe how you think about your Sunday in or out of church?

Commandment #4: Honor your father and your mother

1. As Bishop Eaton notes, our elders and our families are gifts and places where much-needed nurture and wisdom is passed on. How do you see the relationship between elders and families in our community? Is there strong respect for elders or not? How might this be helping or hurting our community? What could you do to improve these relationships?
2. Paul said, "Parents, do not provoke your children." Bishop Eaton notes that blind obedience should not exist. Rather, respect should be given when respect is due, while at the same time respecting those who are in authority and are serving wisely, with humility and with faithfulness. How do you discern the difference between earned and due, particularly with those in authority?

Commandment #5: You shall not murder

1. Have you ever been like one of the confirmation students Bishop Eaton mentions who thought they had never broken this commandment? Bishop Eaton notes ways that the catechism expands this commandment to include doing good for our neighbor. What do you think about this?
2. Bishop Eaton notes that conserving resources is a way we can honor this commandment. What are some ways you or your community can better conserve resources?
3. Have you ever wished ill on another person? If so, what did you think about Bishop Eaton's explanation that this commandment is meant to protect us from ourselves? How does this commandment fit in with the concept that humans were given the commandments to help us create positive and flourishing communities?

Commandment #6: You shall not commit adultery

1. What did you think of Bishop Eaton's explanation of adultery? Is this a new way of thinking for you?
2. What does giving of your whole self and not asking for anything in return look like in your relationships? What does giving of your whole self in your relationships require of you (time, vulnerability or other)? What are some ways to implement this view of the commandment in your life?

