



WHY DO LUTHERANS MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS?

"In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit." These words begin the orders for Confession and Forgiveness in Evangelical Lutheran Worship. The rubric that accompanies these words says: "The minister leads the congregation in the invocation. The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism."

As this invocation is made, an increasing number of Lutherans trace the sign of the cross over their bodies from forehead to breast, then from shoulder to shoulder; and others trace a small cross on their foreheads.

The sign of the cross, whether traced over the body or on the forehead, is a sign and remembrance of Baptism. The sign of the cross is ecumenical, in that is used by the Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Episcopalians, and is slowly increasing in use among mainline Protestants. It is also a

remembrance of the death and resurrection of our Lord: the center of our faith.

The sign of the cross is a treasured part of our liturgical heritage as Lutherans, because the practice was encouraged and used by Martin Luther himself. Luther made provisions for using the sign of the cross on at least four occasions.

The text of Luther's 1526 Order of Baptism called for the sign of the cross to be made over the candidate as a part of Baptism. "Receive the sign of the holy cross on both your forehead and your breast" (Luther's Works 53:107).

In his order for the Ordination of Ministers of the Word, Luther says of the benediction: "The ordinator blesses them with the sign of the cross" (Luther's Works, 53:126).

Luther instructed his followers to make the sign of the cross at both the beginning and the end of the day as a

beginning to daily prayers. In the Small Catechism, in the section on morning and evening prayers Luther says: "When you get out of bed, bless yourself with the holy cross and say 'In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.'" This same instruction is given for bedtime.

RESOURCE

Find other specific uses in the original article at <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Worship/Learning-Center/FAQs/Sign-of-the-Cross.aspx>

MONTHLY BIBLE VERSE

This Bible verse was selected by Harold Usgaard, bishop of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, for everyone in the synod to study.

"Go therefore 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



ABOUT OUR SYNOD

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod is a faith community of 131,000 baptized people in 185 congregations as well as related institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Its geographic area includes 15 counties in the southeastern corner of Minnesota.

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