

WHY A CATECHISM?

Unless you are over 100 years old, the word “catechism” probably smells faintly of all things “ritualistic” and “stodgy”. We tend to associate the word “catechism” with other unpopular words like “liturgy” and “institution”. Catechisms fell out of use in most Baptist circles in the early 20th century but like it says in Ecclesiastes, “What has been is what will be and what has been done is what will be done” (Ecclesiastes 1:9 ESV). Catechisms are back with a vengeance and there is a very good reason for that.

A recent Pew Research study indicates that North American Evangelical teenagers are shockingly ignorant of even the most basic aspects of the Christian faith. Evangelical teens actually finished behind atheists, agnostics and Jews when asked general questions about religion. When the questions were specifically on the content of the Bible, Evangelical teens scored well behind Mormons¹. Sociologist Christian Smith in a similar study stated that Christian teenagers raised in the Evangelical church are “stunningly inarticulate” concerning the actual content of Christian faith². The simple fact is our methods for instruction have failed miserably.

Enter the new/old catechism. The word catechism simply means “instruction” and I think we all agree that it is time to start instructing our children again in the basics of the Christian Gospel. Baptists used to be “catechism people”. Baptist pastors used to understand it as part of their job to prepare fathers to instruct their children in the way of faith. In the early 20th century we began shifting that responsibility from the father to the Sunday School teacher and then later the Youth Pastor and the results have been catastrophic. Parents are primary in the life of the child and it is well past time that parents, and in particular fathers, resumed their responsibility for the Christian instruction of their children. This little book is our effort to help you in that endeavour.

How To Use This Book

This catechism is essentially an update and amalgamation of several of the older versions that were widely used in the 18th – 19th centuries. Older users may recognize echoes of the old “Baptist Catechism” or the “Reformed Children’s Catechism”. Both have been widely used and frequently consulted in the creation of this document.

Catechisms are ideally designed to teach the Gospel to children aged 4-16. The basic catechism method is question and answer. Dad or mom asks a question: “Why did God make you and all things?” The child provides the answer: “For His own glory”. The catechism covers essential topics such as creation, the fall, the plan of redemption, how to show our love for God, how to live as a saved person and how to pray.

A catechism is particularly useful because it teaches dad and mom theology while they are teaching it to their kids. It puts the answers in your hands so that you can be confident you are leading your child in the direction of Gospel truth.

Helpful Hints

Kids like candy. In a fairly exhaustive study published in the Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis scientists demonstrated that when children were given an M&M for every correct answer their I.Q.’s jumped by several percentage points. This has become known in educational circles as “the M&M effect”³. I suggest placing a bowl of M&M’s in the centre of your table after dinner. Slowly read a page of questions and answers from the catechism. Repeat. Then present this challenge: “If you get the gist of the answer you may have one M&M from the bowl. If you get the answer with exactly the right words, you may have two M&Ms from the bowl.” You will be amazed at how fast your children memorize the contents of this book. Try to moderate your concerns about tooth decay and obesity. Brush your teeth and go for a walk afterward, but make sure your children are motivated and eager to learn about the Gospel after each evening meal.

For accelerated results have your children copy out a page of the catechism into their journals each day. We do this with our middle children as a way to teach penmanship and the Gospel at the same time. Children remember more of what they write than what they read so this exercise tends to dramatically increase recall.

Reasonable Expectations

Remember that saving faith involves more than the accumulation of content. The devil knows all the answers to the catechism and he is not going to heaven. That being said, faith is never without content. Faith involves content plus trust but trust without content is called "blind faith" and it is rightly derided as empty and unsaving. Content isn't everything but it is not therefore nothing. Jesus didn't say: "Your sentiment will set you free," he said:

"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
(John 8:31-32 ESV)

This catechism, properly used can help you teach the truth of God's Word to your children. Only the Holy Spirit can open their eyes to see, know, delight and believe. May this resource be one of the ordinary means God uses to do that extraordinary thing. To God alone be the glory.

Pastor Paul
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PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING GOD

1. What is God?

God is a Spirit and does not have a body like men.
John 4:24

2. Are there more gods than one?

No, there is only one God.
Isaiah 44:6b/Jeremiah 10:10/Deuteronomy 6:4

3. In how many persons does this one God exist?

In three persons.
2 Corinthians 13:14

4. Who are they?

The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.
Matthew 28:19/1John 5:7

5. Who is the Holy Spirit?

A Promised Helper that dwells within us who was given to us by God.
John 14:17/Acts 2:4/John 16:13-14

6. Where is God?

God is everywhere.
Psalms 139:7-8

7. Can you see God?

No, I cannot see God, but He always sees me.
John 1:18a/Jeremiah 23:24

8. Does God know all things?

Yes, nothing can be hidden from God.
Hebrews 4:13/Luke 8:17

9.Can God do all things?

Yes, God does all His holy will.

Mark 10:27

PART 2: UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

1.Who wrote the Bible?

Holy men who were taught by the Holy Spirit.

2Peter 1:21 / 2Timothy 3:16-17

2.Where do you learn how to love, glorify and obey God?

In the Bible alone.

Proverbs 30:5-6 / John 17:17

3.What does the Bible teach us?

The Bible teaches us who God is and what He requires of us.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

PART THREE: UNDERSTANDING CREATION

1.Who made you?

God.

Genesis 1:27

2.What else did God make?

God made all things.

Genesis 1:1

3.Why did God make you and all things?

For His own glory.

Romans 11:36/ 1Corinthians 10:31

4.How can you glorify God?

By loving Him and doing what He commands.

Deuteronomy 6:5

5.Why should I glorify God?

Because He made me and takes care of me.

Revelation 4:11

PART 4: UNDERSTANDING ADAM AND EVE

1.Who were our first parents?

Adam and Eve.

Genesis 2:7, 22

2.Of what were our first parents made?

God made the body of Adam out of the ground and formed Eve from the body of Adam.

Genesis 2:7, 22

3.In what condition did God make Adam and Eve?

He made them holy and happy.
Ecclesiastes 7:29b/Genesis 1:31

4.What relationship did Adam have with God?
A relationship of sonship.
Luke 3:38

5.What did God command Adam to do?
To obey Him perfectly.
Genesis 2:16-17

6.What did God promise Adam?
To reward Adam with life if he obeyed Him.
Genesis 2:16-17

7.What was God's threat to Adam?
To punish Adam with death if he disobeyed Him.
Genesis 2:16-17

8. Did Adam obey God?
No, he sinned against God.
Genesis 3:6

PART 5: UNDERSTANDING SIN

1.What is sin?
Sin is any lack of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God.
1 John 3:4 / James 4:17

2.What is meant by lack of conformity?
Not being or doing what God requires.
James 4:17

3.What is meant by transgression?
Doing what God forbids.
James 2:10

4.What was the sin of our first parents?
Eating the forbidden fruit.
Genesis 3:6

5. Who tempted them to this sin?
The devil tempted Eve and she gave the fruit to Adam.
Genesis 3:4-5

6.Did Adam act for himself alone when he sinned?
No, he represented all his posterity.
Romans 5:12, 18a, 19a

7.What effect did the sin of Adam Have on all mankind?
All mankind are born in a state of sin and misery.
Ephesians 2:3b / Isaiah 64:6

8. What is that sinful nature which we inherit from Adam called?

Original sin.

Psalm 51:5

9. Did God leave mankind to perish in a state of sin and misery?

No, God purposed from eternity past to save His people by sending a Redeemer.

Ephesians 1:4-5

10. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

The only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 2:5 / Galatians 3:13 / John 1:14 / Matthew 3:17

PART 6: UNDERSTANDING JESUS CHRIST

1. Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God.

John 20:31

2. How did the Son of God become a man?

He was born of the virgin Mary.

Matthew 1:18b

3. What did the eternal Son of God do for His people?

Christ, the Son of God, became man in order to obey and suffer for us.

Hebrews 2:14 / Isaiah 53:4-5

4. How did Jesus Christ redeem His people?

He kept the whole law for His people and suffered the punishment their sins deserved; our propitiation.

Romans 5:18 / Romans 3:23-25

5. Did the Lord Jesus Christ ever sin as other men do?

No, He was holy, blameless and pure.

Hebrews 4:15 / Hebrews 7:26

6. What offices has Christ?

Christ has the offices of prophet, priest and king.

Revelation 1:5 / Acts 3:22 / Hebrews 5:6 / Psalm 2:6

7. How is Christ a prophet?

He teaches us the will of God.

Acts 3:22

8. Why do you need Christ as a prophet?

Because I am ignorant and sinful.

Romans 3:11

9. How is Christ a priest?

He died for our sins and pleads with God for us.

Romans 8:34

10. Why do you need Christ as a priest?

Because I am guilty.

Romans 3:23

11. How is Christ a king?

He rules over us and defends us.

1Corinthians 15:25

12. Why do you need Christ as a king?

Because I am weak and helpless.

Psalms 56:3

13. What kind of a life did Christ live on earth?

A life of poverty and suffering.

Isaiah 53:3

14. What kind of a death did Christ die?

The painful and shameful death of the cross.

Philippians 2:8

15. Did Christ remain in the grave after His death?

No, He rose from the dead on the third day.

1Corinthians 15:4

16. Where is Christ now?

In heaven, at the right hand of God the Father.

Hebrews 1:3b / Mark 16:19

17. Will Christ come to this earth again?

Yes, He will come to judge the world at the last day.

Revelation 22:12

18. Does Christ care for little children?

Yes; for He says, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 19:14

PART 7: UNDERSTANDING REDEMPTION

1. How does Christ's redemption become mine?

By God's effectual call.

2Timothy 1:9

2. What is effectual calling?

Effectual calling is the work of God in bringing sinners to Christ.

John 6:44

3. Where do sinners hear about Christ?

In the Gospel which freely offers Christ to all.

John 3:16

4. What blessings do sinners who are effectually called receive in this life?

The blessings of justification, adoption and sanctification.

1Corinthians 1:30/1Corinthians 6:11/Romans 8:30/Ephesians 1:4-5

5. What is Justification?

Justification is an act of God's free grace wherein He forgives sinners, declaring them to be righteous.

2Corinthians 5:21

6. What is adoption?

Adoption is an act of God's free grace wherein He receives sinners into His family as His own dear children.

1John 3:1a

7. What is sanctification?

Sanctification is a work of God's free grace wherein He makes sinners holy in heart and conduct.

1Thessalonians 5:23/Ephesians 4:23-24/2Thessalonians 2:13

PART 8: UNDERSTANDING DEATH

1. What becomes of the righteous after death?

Their body returns to the dust and their spirit goes to be with the Lord.

2Corinthians 5:8

2. What becomes of the wicked after death?

They suffer punishment while they are kept by God for the day of judgment.

Luke 16:22b-23a

3. Will the dead be raised to life again?

Yes, all the dead shall be raised when Christ comes again.

1Thessalonians 4:16

4. What will become of the wicked (unrighteous) in the day of judgement?

They shall be cast into the lake of fire, a place of dreadful and endless punishment (hell).

Revelation 20:15 / Mark 9:47-48

5. What will become of the righteous in the day of judgement?

They shall enter the Father's kingdom in the new heaven and new earth.

Matthew 25:34

6. What is the new heaven and new earth?

The place where God will dwell forever with His people.

Revelation 21:3

PART 9: UNDERSTANDING GOD'S LAW

1. What is the duty which God requires of man?

Obedience to His revealed will.

Deuteronomy 29:29/ Micah 6:8 / 1John 5:2-3

2. What is God's revealed will?

God's revealed will is His law, which is holy, just and good.

Romans 7:12

3. Where is God's law summarized?

In the Ten Commandments.

Deuteronomy 4:13 / Exodus 20:1-17

4. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

To love God with all my heart, mind, soul and strength and my neighbour as myself.

Mark 12:29-31/Romans 13:9-10/Matthew 22:37-40

5. Who is your neighbour?

Anyone in need.

Luke 10:25-37

6. What is the preface to the ten commandments?

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Exodus 20:2

7. What does the preface to the ten commandments teach us?

The preface to the Ten Commandments teaches us that because God is the Lord and our Redeemer, we must keep his commandments.

Luke 1:74-75 / 1Peter 1:14-19 / Deuteronomy 11:1

8. What is the first commandment?

"You shall have no other gods before me."

Exodus 20:3

9. What does the first commandment teach us?

To worship and glorify God alone.

Matthew 4:10

10. What is the second commandment?

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image..."

Exodus 20:4-6

11. What does the second commandment teach us?

To worship God in a proper manner and to avoid idolatry (idols).

Deuteronomy 12:32/Deuteronomy 4:15-16/Deuteronomy 32:46

12. What is the third commandment?

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain..."

Exodus 20:7

13. What does the third commandment teach us?

To revere God's name, word and works.

Revelation 15:3b-4a / Psalm 29:2 / Psalm 111:9

14. What is the fourth commandment?

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy..."

Exodus 20:8-11

15. What does the fourth commandment teach us?

To keep the Sabbath holy.

Deuteronomy 5:12

16. What day of the week is the Lord's Day?

The first day of the week.

Acts 20:7

17. Why is it called the Lord's Day?

Because on that day Christ rose from the dead.

John 20:1

18. How should the Lord's Day be spent?

In prayer and praise, in hearing and reading God's Word and in doing good to all, including ourselves through rest.

Leviticus 23:3 / Matthew 12:12 / Mark 2:27

19. What is the fifth commandment?

"Honor your father and your mother..."

Exodus 20:12

20. What does the fifth commandment teach us?

To love and obey our parents and teachers.

Ephesians 6:1-3

21. What is the sixth commandment?

"You shall not murder."

Exodus 20:13

22. What does the sixth commandment teach us?

To love in heart, speech and conduct.

Psalm 82:3-4

23. What is the seventh commandment?

"You shall not commit adultery."

Exodus 20:14

24. What does the seventh commandment teach us?

To be pure in heart, speech and conduct.

Ephesians 5:3-4 / 1 Corinthians 6:18 / 2 Timothy 2:22

25. What is the eighth commandment?

"You shall not steal."

Exodus 20:15

26. What does the eighth commandment teach us?

To be honest and hard-working.

Ephesians 4:28 / Deuteronomy 15:10

27. What is the ninth commandment?

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour."

Exodus 20:16

28. What does the ninth commandment teach us?

To tell the truth.

Proverbs 12:22

29. What is the tenth commandment?

"You shall not covet your neighbour's house, wife, servant or donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbour."

Exodus 20:17

30. What does the tenth commandment teach us?

To be content with what we have.

Hebrews 13:5

31. Can any man keep these Ten Commandments perfectly?

No mere man, since the fall of Adam, ever did or can keep the Ten Commandments perfectly.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 / 1 John 1:8

32. Of what use are the Ten Commandments to us?

They teach us our duty and show us our need for a Saviour.

Romans 3:20 / Psalm 19:7-11

PART 10: UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

1. What does every sin deserve?

The wrath and curse of God.

Galatians 3:10/Psalm 11:6

2. Who will escape the wrath of God?

Only those who repent of sin and put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Mark 1:15/Mark 13:13/Matthew 7:20-23

3. What is it to repent?

To be sorry for sin, to hate it and forsake it because it is displeasing to God.

Joel 2:13

4. What is it to believe or have faith in Christ?

To trust in Christ alone for salvation.

John 1:12/Hebrews 10:39

5. What is meant by grace?

Grace is unmerited divine favour given to us by God.

Ephesians 2:4-10

6. Who will be saved?

Only those who repent of sin and believe in Christ, enduring to the end by God's grace.

Mark 16:15-16/ Matthew 24:13

7. Is there any other way for a person to get to be with God in heaven other than through Jesus?

No; He is the one and only way.

John 14:6/ John 1:12

PART 11: UNDERSTANDING THE SACRAMENTS

1. How many sacraments are there?

Two.

Matthew 28:18-19

2. What are they?

Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Matthew 28:18-19a / 1Corinthians 11:23,26

3. Who appointed these sacraments?

The Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28:18-19a / 1Corinthians 11:23,26

4. Why did Christ appoint these sacraments?

To distinguish His disciples from the world and to comfort and strengthen them.

Matthew 28:18-19/ 1Corinthians 11:23,26

5. What is the Lord's Supper?

The eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup in remembrance of the sufferings and death of Christ.

Luke 22:19-20

6. What does the bread represent?

The body of Christ, broken for our sins.

Luke 22:19-20

7. What does the cup represent?

The blood of Christ, shed for our salvation.

Luke 22:19-20

8. Who should partake of the Lord's Supper?

Only those who repent of their sins, believe in Christ for salvation and are baptized.

1Corinthians 11:28-29

9. What is the proper mode of Baptism?

Immersion in water.

John 3:23

10. What does baptism represent?

Our being cleansed from sin and our union with Christ.

Romans 6:3

11. In whose name are we baptised?

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19

12. Who should be baptized?

Believers only.

Acts 2:38-41

13. What are the duties of those who are baptized?

To join a local church and to walk blamelessly in all the commandments of the Lord.

Romans 6:4

PART 12: UNDERSTANDING PRAYER

1. What is prayer?

Prayer is talking to God and asking God for things which He has promised to give.

Philippians 4:6

2. In whose name should we pray?

Only in the name of Christ.

John 16:23-24

3. What has Christ given us to teach us how to pray?

The Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13

4. How many petitions are there in the Lord's Prayer?

Six.

Matthew 6:9-13

5. What is the first petition?

Hallowed be Thy name.

Matthew 6:9

6. What do we pray for in the first petition?

That God's name may be honoured and glorified by us and all people.

Psalm 67:3

7. What is the second petition?

Thy kingdom come.

Matthew 6:10

8. What do we pray for in the second petition?

That the gospel may be preached in all the world and believed and obeyed by us and all people.

2Thessalonians 3:1 / Romans 10:1

9. What is the third petition?

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6:10

10. What do we pray for in the third petition?

That people on earth may serve God as the angels do in heaven.

Psalm 103:20-22

11. What is the fourth petition?

Give us this day our daily bread.

Matthew 6:11

12. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

That God would give us all things needful for our bodies and souls.

Proverb 30:8

13. What is the fifth petition?

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Matthew 6:12

14. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

That God would pardon our sins for Christ's sake, and enable us to forgive those who have injured us.

1John 1:9 / Psalm 51:1-7

15. What is the sixth petition?

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:13

16. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

That God would help in temptation and keep us from all evil.

Psalms 19:13

PART 13: LEADING A CHILD TO CHRIST

Over the last few years many parents have shared that they are nervous about leading their child to Christ in case they do or say the wrong thing. Below is a quick and simple guide for you to use to assist your conversation called the...
ABC'S OF SALVATION!

ADMIT you are a sinner. "There is none righteous, no, not one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:10,23/Romans 5:8/Romans 6:23

ASK God's forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1John1:9

BELIEVE in Jesus. Put your trust in Him as your only hope of salvation. "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16/John 14:6

BECOME a child of God by receiving Christ. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."
John 1:12/Revelation 3:20

CONFESS that Jesus is your Lord privately and publicly through baptism. "That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."
Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 1:11-14