

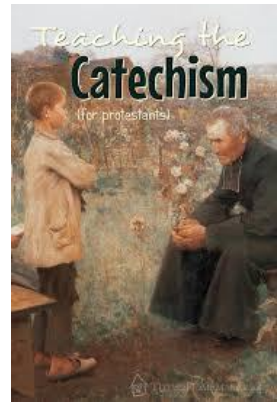
Address: 160 Paya Lebar Road, Orion@Paya Lebar #04-06, Singapore 409022
Sun Worship Service: 10am, Sun School: 11.45am, Wed Prayer Meeting: 8pm
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Catechising our Children for the Newbie

The task of catechising is perhaps not something that all Christian parents are keen to adopt for their family. After all, we lead busy lives and, if we have daily family worship and go through the Bible stories, should we not leave the teaching of the Bible for Sundays (services and Sunday School) and weeknight Bible studies? However, years ago, catechising the young would be part and parcel of families and the life of the church. It was said that the average child during the reformation had committed part of their Bible and catechism to memory.

Basis for Catechisms

Catechism is the practice of explaining the teachings of the Bible through a series of questions and answers. A catechism covers the summary of the Christian faith and gives the child a "compass" to help navigate through the Bible. This basis of this practice can be seen in **Galatians 6:6** "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." The word "taught" in this verse means "To teach by word of mouth" (**Liddell and Scott**) or "to catechise" (**HELPS™ Word-studies**). Elsewhere the use of some form of catechism amongst converts was suggested by the Apostle Paul when he noted that they were given a "form of knowledge" **Roman 2:20** which these converts had "obeyed from the heart... form of doctrine which was delivered you." **Roman 6:17**. Finally, Paul instructed to young Timothy to "Hold fast the form of sound words..." **2 Timothy 1:13**. What is this "form of knowledge", "form of doctrine" or "form of sound words"? This is unlikely to be the entire canon of the Bible, but a discrete, fixed, limited ("pattern or standard of teaching" **Murray, 232**) set of lessons ("gospel or sound doctrine" **Hendricksen, 205**). This practice continued into the early church, who in seeking to evangelise the Jews and heathen, set aside a "catechist" to instruct the "catechumen" the first principles of the Christian faith. Therefore, the use of catechisms is evident, though whether this is through the use of questions and answers is not entirely clear.



Protestantism and Catechisms

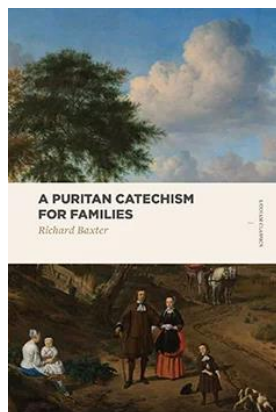
The Reformers and the Puritans were keen to continue that good tradition of using catechisms as a means of imparting Bible doctrine to the young. For example, Richard Baxter and his elders in Kidderminster catechised daily the entire (then) village as did Joseph Alleine for Taunton (**Beeke, 161**). The Erskine brothers also catechised every child in the parish they were serving. They wrote their own catechisms and tested the children's knowledge of the Bible, sermons preached and catechisms (**Beeke, 257**).

The use of catechisms was also popular amongst the Baptists and Charles Spurgeon republished the Baptist Catechism for the use amongst people who attended the New Park Street Chapel. Spurgeon wrote, *"I am persuaded that the use of a good Catechism in all our families will be a great safeguard against the increasing errors of the times, and therefore I have compiled this little manual from the Westminster Assembly's and Baptist Catechisms, for the use of my own church and congregation. Those who use it in their families or classes must labour to explain the sense; but the words should be carefully learned by heart, for they will be understood better as years pass."*

Those who adopted catechisms in their churches and communities believed the use of catechisms, supplements (not replaces) the Scripture memorised, sermons preached and sacraments administered. Furthermore, catechising the children is a form of evangelism as the Gospel, embedded in the catechism, is the seed from which the Holy Spirit uses to promote spiritual life and growth. Finally, by giving the rising generation of young people a suitable grounding in the Christian faith, they would be better equipped to give a defence of the Christian faith against error, as well as to teach their own children the ABCs of Christianity. Let's face it, a good catechism answers the questions that most curious children might ask regarding the Christian faith. In one sense, parents are merely "pre-empting" those questions by asking those questions and answering them first!



**TEACH YOUR KIDS
THEOLOGY**
WITH THE
Children's Catechism

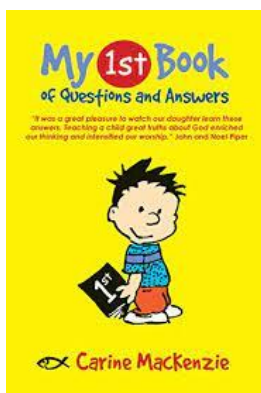
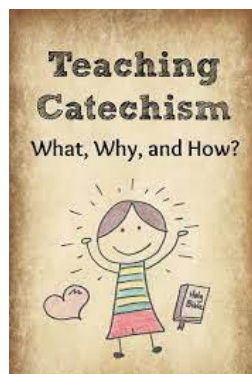


What Catechism Is Not

After all the benefits of catechisms, it is also important to stress that the use of catechisms, however noble a cause, is not the same as Bible knowledge and should not be viewed as a replacement for the Bible. Any catechism represents a framework or skeleton of a body of knowledge i.e. the Bible. A catechism is similar to a lecture in a University, which is an outline to the whole body of information and the student is expected to borrow or buy the textbook(s) and read the relevant chapter(s), in order to supplement what is delivered during the 45-minute long lecture.

Some Suggestions for Catechisms

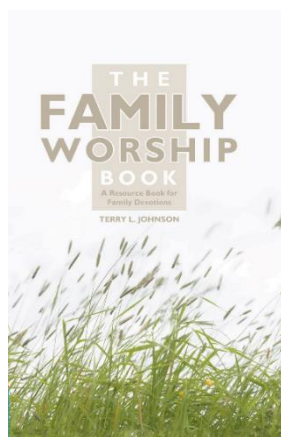
Thanks to the internet, these days it is relatively easy to obtain a suitable catechism. For very young children, some common catechisms include “Children’s catechism” aka “Catechism for Young Children” (*Paedobaptistic*) or “A Catechism for Boys and Girls” (Baptistic) for very young children. For slightly older children, the famous Westminster Short Catechism (*Paedobaptistic*) or Spurgeon’s Catechism (Baptistic) are easily available online. The Heidelberg Catechism is another historic catechism in the Dutch Reformed (*Paedobaptistic*) tradition, warmer and more devotional than the Westminster’s and Spurgeon’s catechisms.



For those of us who prefer a printed version, so as to pass copies to our children or family and friends, those still in print include: “*My 1st Book of Questions and Answers*” by Carine Mackenzie (Christian Focus, ISBN 9781857925708), the Westminster Shorter Catechism (WSC) published by The Banner of Truth (ISBN 9780851512655, with scriptural proofs) and Christian Focus (ISBN 9781857922882, with scriptural proofs and very short notes by Roderick Lawson). The Heidelberg Catechism is still published, though not in low-cost booklet versions, by Banner of Truth (ISBN 9781848712942) and Reformation Heritage Books (ISBN 9781601785190).

A wonderful, all-in-one resource is Terry Johnson’s “*The Family Worship Book*” published by Christian Focus (ISBN 9781857924015) which contains both “Catechism for Young Children”, “Shorter Catechism” and a whole host of helps for family worship.

For our family, our children went through the “*Catechism for Young Children*” when they were very young. They memorized 1-2 questions and answers through the week and we “test” them on Sunday afternoon between the two services. They are now going through the WSC, following the same process. We find grouping certain Q&A together helps with the understanding, for example in the WSC booklet published by Christian Focus, Roderick Lawson helpfully groups Q 4 – 6 under “What God is”.





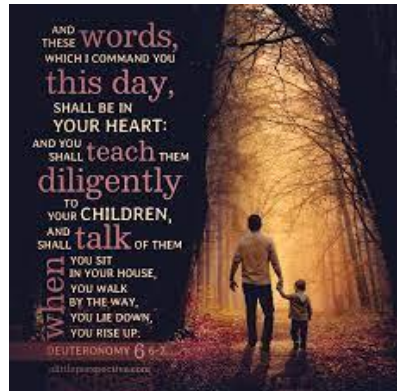
One issue we noticed about catechisms is, while our children knew the “words” to the catechism, they sometimes struggle with the “concepts”. Commentaries explaining the WSC help though we try not to overcomplicate matters. The brief comments from Roderick Lawson were very helpful and we have gone through that booklet about 2-3 times already. There are more substantial commentaries for older children and we are currently using “*Bible Truth Explored: The Westminster Shorter Catechism*” by Murdo A.N. Macleod (ISBN 9781910013199). We found his 1-2 page long comments very profitable for a Sunday afternoon discussion. As concerned Christian parents, we must recognise that memorising the catechism is not to be confused

with genuine Christian conversion, so during these discussions we must try to challenge our children with the Gospel and their need to come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

The use of catechisms is a time-honoured practice of feeding the people of God the kernel of the Christian faith. It has its foundations in the Bible and we trust and pray that this practice will continue for generations to come.

Dr Jenson Lim
 Lecturer in Cell Biology in the University of Stirling,
 Member of Dunblane Free Church
 Stirling, Scotland



References:

- Beeke, Joel R. *Puritan Reformed Spirituality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004.
- Murray, John. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1968.
- Hendriksen, William. *Romans*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982.

(NB: A WCF Catechism Class is conducted every Sunday in SHBPC after worship service for those interested.)



16 - 18 JUNE THU - SAT 2022

CHURCH CAMP

Biblical Precepts for a Vibrant Christian Walk

Camp Speaker: Rev Dr Jack Sin

All attendees must be fully vaccinated

DAY 1 8:30am - 4:00pm

Morning : Message

Afternoon : Workshop

Evening : Free and easy

DAY 2 8:30am - 6:00pm

Morning : Message

Afternoon : Outing to Pulau Ubin

Evening : Free and easy

DAY 3 8:30am - 1:00pm

Morning : Message

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SINGLE ROOM
\$390nett PER PERSON*

We welcome
DAY TRIPPERS!

\$20nett PER PERSON for 3 days

* Stay-in Campers : Camp fees includes breakfast only.
All other meals on our own.

Register by **30 April 2022** with Dn Yue Kay @97450311 or Joseph Wee @90171772

More Greetings for SHBPC 4th Church Anniversary

Praise the Lord on your church 4th Anniversary. May the Lord sustain and protect you and your ministry in your labour of love. May your years ahead be fruitful and His word reach out to many more lost souls for His kingdom. Amen

Eld Willie Low

Calvary Jurong BPC, Singapore

Oh, the Lord be praised for keeping Sovereign Hope BPC for the past 4 years! May He continue to bless the church to shine for Him and in the faithful proclamation of His Word!

Pastor Chong Nam Tuck

First Evangelical Reformed Church, Singapore

Congratulations to Rev Dr Jack Sin, Sister Angie and Sovereign Hope BPC Session and members on your 4th Anniversary. May God continue to bless your ministry and be the vigilant growing church for His glorious kingdom.

Elder Samuel Tan

Life Church Prinsep Street, Singapore

Congratulations on SHBPC's 4th anniversary and milestone! May the Lord continue to use this church for the extension of His kingdom and for His glory!

Dr & Mrs Daniel Lim

Melbourne, Australia

Thank you, Rev Jack for sharing. A blessed anniversary to SHBPC. The Lord continue to bless the church and her ministries for the extension of His kingdom.

Dn Sook Miun

Evangel BPC, PJ, Malaysia

Thank you very much, Bro Jack. We rejoice with you as SHBPC celebrates her 4th Anniversary. Praise God for such a humble beginning and God is faithful in carrying SHBPC through all these years. Praise God in the Highest. Shalom

Surish

Laos

Hi Ps Jack. Blessings on your church's 4th anniversary. Very encouraged to read of your good and faithful work and witness for our Lord. Keep well and keep pressing onward and forward!

Pastor William Wong

Covenant Evangelical Free Church, Singapore

Thank God for a blessed time of rejoicing at the Sovereign Hope BPC 4th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service on 6 Feb 2022.



Memory Verse

Col 2:18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Pastor speaks today on ***“The Perils the Church Faces Today” (Col 2:18-23)***, the quarterly theme of “Christ-Centred Principles for the Local Church”, a study on the Epistle to the Colossians.
3. Rev Nathan speaks next Sunday on ***“Heavenly Precepts for Daily Living” (Col 3:1-11)***.
4. Sunday School classes continues after worship service:
 - WCF Shorter Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
 - Understanding Biblical Eschatology & related Topics – Joseph
 - Studies in Numbers – Dn Kwong Leen
 - Burmese Bible Class - James
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. Included in the programme is a study on Church History in China on alternate Sundays. Join us for a time of profitable learning.
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church.
7. In accordance with the Vaccination-Differentiated Safe Management Measures (VDS) that is effective from 1Feb, our Sunday worship services are for vaccinated worshippers. The measures do not apply to religious classes ie. Sun School and Bible Study classes and hence all are welcome to attend. The church can organize a **monthly worship service with holy communion for the unvaccinated on the 3rd Sat of the month at 4pm in church, limited to 5 worshipers** according to the safety measures. ***Interested kindly inform Pastor by the second Sunday of the month.***
8. Monthly Neighbourhood Bible Class will next meet on **Fri 4 Mar 2022, 7.30pm in church** on the study of 2 Samuel. Come and join us!
9. Those who wish to bring a new friend to the worship service, kindly inform the safety officer Dn Yue Kay or Pastor at least a day in advance.
10. Do kindly observe the safety measures of the church and assist with the weekly cleaning of the premises.
11. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**
