

Confirmation Catechism

For the Diocese of the West

To be learned by every person baptized as a child, before being presented for Confirmation.

The young person who is a candidate for Confirmation should be tested in this instruction by the Minister or by a Catechist appointed by the Minister. It is advisable that the candidate learn the answers by heart and have a basic understanding of them, with a clear commitment to their moral and doctrinal content.

This Catechism is primarily based on the shorter catechism included in the 1662 and 1928 Books of Common Prayer, as adapted for modern English by Dr. Peter Toon in 2008. Additional questions have been included as being of special importance for general knowledge in our diocese with respect to the basics of Christianity and Anglican practice in North America. It is suggested that catechists focus on one or two questions each week to cover the catechism over the course of the year, while reciting either the full catechism or the individual section prior to discussing the week's focus question(s). Suggested hymns have been included as relating to the theme of each section. Opening and closing classes with a song is an ideal tool to aid the memory and for building community among the catechumens. The hymn numbers from the 1940 and 1985 hymnals have been included, though these hymns can be found in many other hymnals as well. Finally, it is recommended that each class be concluded with the closing prayer at the end of the catechism.

Introduction.

Suggested Hymn: At the Name of Jesus (#356, 1940; #425, 1985)

Question. What is your Christian Name?

Answer. My Name is N.N.

Question. Who gave you this Name?

Answer. My Parents, Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism, wherein by God's grace I received the sacrament of new birth, entered the family of Christ's Church, and became an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

Question. What did your Parents, Godfathers and Godmothers do for you at your Baptism?

Answer. They promised and made vows concerning three things in my name. First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomp and vanity of this wicked world, and all sinful lusts. Secondly, that I should believe in Jesus Christ and all the articles of the Christian Creed. And, thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and Commandments, walking in them all the days of my life.

Question. Do you think that you are now committed to believe and to do, as they have promised for you?

Answer. Yes, I truly do, and, by God's help, I will. And from the bottom of my heart I thank our Heavenly Father, that he has called me into this enjoyment of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Savior. And I pray to God to give me his grace, that I may continue in this faith to the end of my life.

Question. How do you become a Christian?

Answer. When the Lord calls and awakens me by his grace, I become a Christian by repenting of my sins, believing in Jesus Christ for my Salvation, and following him in obedience as my Lord.

Question. How do you grow in your faith in Christ?

Answer. I grow in my faith by exercising the Spiritual Disciplines of Prayer, Reading and Studying the Scriptures, worshiping the Lord by myself and with the Church, partaking of the Sacraments, and serving others in Christ's name.

The Creed

Suggested Hymns: *Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty (#266, 1940; #362, 1985)*

Holy God we Praise Thy Name (#273, 1940; #366, 1985)

Minister/Catechist. Recite the Apostles' Creed, the Articles of Faith.

Answer. I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. And I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Question. What important teaching do you learn from these Articles of your Faith?

Answer. First of all, I learn to believe in God the Father, who has made both me and all the world.

Secondly, to believe in God the Son, who has redeemed both me and the whole human race. And thirdly, to believe in God the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies both me and all other Christian people.

The Commandments

Suggested Hymns: *Hail to the Lord's Anointed (#545, 1940; #616, 1985)*

Christ for the World we Sing (#537, 1940; #537, 1985)

Question. You stated earlier that your Godfathers and Godmothers promised on your behalf that you would keep God's Commandments. Tell me, how many are there?

Answer. There are ten and they are recorded in the twentieth chapter of the book, Exodus.

Question. What are these Ten Commandments and how are they presented in Exodus?

Answer. We read: God spoke these words and said: I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;

(1) You shall have no other gods but me.

(2) You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth below, or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

(3) You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

(4) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is

within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

(5) Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

(6) You shall not murder.

(7) You shall not commit adultery.

(8) You shall not steal.

(9) You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

(10) You shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.

Question. What important things do you learn from these Commandments?

Answer. I learn two basic things: my duty towards God, and my duty towards my neighbor.

Question. What is your duty towards God?

Answer. My duty towards God is to believe in him, to be reverent towards him, and to love him, with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; to worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him in prayer, to honor his holy Name and his Word, and to serve him truly all the days of my life.

Question. What is your duty towards your neighbor?

Answer. My duty towards my neighbor is to love him or her as I love myself, and to do to others as I would have them do unto me. To love, honor, and provide for my father and mother; to honor the civil authorities and obey the laws of the State; to submit myself in the Lord to all who have authority over me in home, church, state, and education; to conduct myself humbly and appropriately in all my dealings with others, especially with those older than I am; to hurt nobody by either word or deed: to be true and just in all my dealings with others; to bear no malice or hatred in my heart; to keep my hands from pilfering and stealing, and my tongue from speaking evil, telling lies, and slandering others; to keep my body under self-restraint, by acting soberly and in purity; not to covet or desire what belongs rightfully to others, and to do my duty where God shall place me today and in the future, and in whatever he calls me to do.

The Lord's Prayer

Suggested Hymn: What a Friend we have in Jesus (#422, 1940)

Minister/Catechist:

You need to know that you are not able to do these things in your own strength, and you cannot walk in the Commandments of God and serve him, without special, gracious help. Therefore, you must learn to ask for this help from God in prayer and especially through the regular saying of the Lord's Prayer.

Question. Can you recite the Lord's Prayer?

Answer. The Lord's Prayer is:

(Traditional)

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us

this day our daily bread; And forgive us your trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For

thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

(Contemporary)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today

our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Question. What do you desire from God in this Prayer?

Answer. I desire my Lord God, our Heavenly Father, who is the giver of all goodness, to send his grace to me, and to all people, that we may worship him, serve him, and obey him, as we ought to do. Also I pray to God, that he will send us all that we need both for our souls and bodies; and that he will be merciful to us, and forgive us our sins; and that it will please him to save and defend us in all spiritual and physical dangers; and that he will keep us from all sin and wickedness, from the snares of the devil, and from everlasting death. And all this I trust he will do because of his mercy and goodness, thought our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore I say, "Amen, So be it, Lord."

The Sacraments

Suggested Hymn: The Church's One Foundation (#396, 1940; #525, 1985)

Question. How many Sacraments has Christ authorized in his Church?

Answer. Two only, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, that are generally necessary to salvation.

Question. What do you mean when you speak of a Sacrament?

Answer. I mean an outward and visible sign, authorized by Christ, of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, a way and means whereby we both receive the spiritual grace, and are also given a pledge to assure us of this receiving.

Question. How many parts are there to a Sacrament?

Answer. Two: the outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace.

Question. What is the outward and visible sign in Baptism?

Answer. Water, in which the person is baptized, "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Question. What is the inward and spiritual grace?

Answer. It is being born again of the Holy Spirit and made a child of God by adoption and grace; that is, it is a dying to sin and a new birth into righteousness.

Question. What is required of persons to be baptized?

Answer. Two things: Repentance, which is a turning away from sin; and Faith, which is steadfastly believing the promise of God concerning Jesus Christ, proclaimed in the Gospel and the Sacraments.

Question. Why are infants baptized when it is clear that they cannot consciously engage in Repentance and Faith?

Answer. They are baptized on the basis of the promises made on their behalf by their Godparents and in anticipation of their sure acceptance of these same promises when they reach maturity.

Question. Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained by Christ?

Answer. For the continual remembering of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits we receive from this sacrifice.

Question. What is the outward and visible part of the Lord's Supper?

Answer. Bread and wine, which the Lord commanded to be received.

Question. What is the inward and spiritual part, that which is signified by the outward?

Answer. The Body and Blood of Christ, which are really and truly received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

Question. What are the benefits received by the faithful by partaking?

Answer. The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, even as our bodies are strengthened and refreshed by the bread and wine.

Question. What is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper?

Answer. They are to examine themselves to be sure that they repent of their sins, are steadfastly intending to lead a new life, have a living faith in God's mercy through Christ, thankfully remember his death, and are loving and charitable to everyone.

Question. Are there other sacraments?

Answer. Other rites and institutions commonly called sacraments include confirmation, absolution, ordination, marriage, and anointing of the sick. These are sometimes called the sacraments of the Church.

Question. How do these differ from the sacraments of the Gospel?

Answer. They are not commanded by Christ as necessary for salvation, but arise from the practice of the apostles and the early Church, or are states of life blessed by God from creation. God clearly uses them as means of grace.

The Church and Ministry

Suggested Hymn: I Bind Unto Myself Today (#286, 1940; 370, 1985)

Question. When were you made a member of the Church?

Answer. I was made a member of the Church when I was baptized.

Question. What is the Church?

Answer. The Church is the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and all baptized people are the members.

Question. How is the Church described in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds?

Answer. The Church is described in the Creeds as One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

Question. What do we mean by these words?

Answer. We mean that the Church is One, because it is one body under one Head; Holy, because the Holy Spirit dwells within it and sanctifies its members; Catholic, because it is universal, holding

sincerely the Faith for all time, in all countries, and for all people, and is sent to preach the Gospel to the whole world; Apostolic, because it continues firmly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship.

Question. What is your binding duty as a member of the Church?

Answer. My binding duty is to follow Christ, to worship God every Sunday in his Church, and to work and pray and give for the spread of his kingdom.

Question. What special means does the Church provide to help you do all these things?

Answer. The Church provides the Laying of hands, or Confirmation. Here, after renewing the promises and vows of my Baptism, and declaring my loyalty and devotion to Christ as my Master, I receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit to give me inner strength.

Question. After you have been confirmed, what great privilege does our Lord provide for you?

Answer. Our Lord provides the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, for the continual strengthening and refreshing of my soul.

Question. What orders of Ministers are there in the Church?

Answer. Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; which orders have been in the Church from the earliest times.

Question. What is the office of a Bishop?

Answer. The office of a Bishop is to be chief Pastor in the Church; to confer Holy Orders; and to administer Confirmation.

Question. What is the office of a Priest?

Answer. The office of a Priest is to minister to the people committed to his care; to preach the Word of God; to baptize; to celebrate Holy Communion; and to pronounce Absolution and Blessing in God's Name.

Question. What is the office of a Deacon?

Answer. The office of a Deacon is to assist the Priest in Divine Service, and in his other ministrations, under the direction of the Bishop.

Question. What are the main seasons of the Church Year?

Answer. The main seasons of the Church Year are:

Advent, when we anticipate the coming of the Lord;
Christmastide, when we celebrate the Nativity of Jesus;
Epiphanytide, when we celebrate the Lord's revelation to the Nations;
Lent, a season of repentance in anticipation of the Resurrection;
Holy Week, when we remember Our Lord's Passion and Death;
Eastertide, when we celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord;
Ascensiontide, when we celebrate Our Lord's ascension into Heaven, and seating at the right hand of the Father;
Pentecost or Whitsunday, when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit;
Trinitytide, when we celebrate the Holy Trinity, and grow in our walk with God.

Question. What are the typical colors associated with these seasons?

Answer. The traditional colors associated with the Church Year are:

Violet for Advent, Lent, Holy Week, and Funerals: a somber color of anticipation and repentance.

White for Christmastide, Epiphany, Eastertide, Ascensiontide, Trinity Sunday, and Funerals: a color of celebration.

Green for Epiphanytide, and Trinitytide: a color of growth and life for “ordinary time.”

Red for Pentecost, Confirmations, Ordinations, and Martyrs’ Feasts: a color representing the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Question. What is the Holy Bible?

Answer. The Holy Bible or Holy Scripture is God’s Word and contains all things necessary for salvation.

The Bible is God’s revelation of himself, tells the story of God and his people, and contains the teachings of Christ and his apostles. Everything we must believe is read in or proved by Scripture.

Question. How many books are in the Bible?

Answer. The Bible includes the 39 Books of the Hebrew Old Testament and the 27 Books of the Greek New Testament. These are the 66 canonical Books, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

A Final Word

Question. What is the vocation of a Christian in this world?

Answer. To follow Christ and bear witness to him; to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.

Every Christian man or woman should from time to time frame for himself a RULE OF LIFE in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the Church; wherein he may consider the following:

The regularity of his attendance at public worship and especially at the holy Communion.

The practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline.

Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into his everyday life.

The boldness of his spoken witness to his faith in Christ.

His personal service to the Church and the community.

The offering of money according to his means for the support of the work of the Church at home and overseas.

Concluding Prayer

Minister/Catechist.

Let us conclude in prayer:

Grant to us, heavenly Father, we humbly ask of you, the spirit to think and to do always such things as are right in your sight. Without your help, we cannot do anything that is truly good, and so we sincerely pray that in your strength we shall be able to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen