

A Model of Catechism for Disciple-Making

**As designed for Flatland Church in the tradition of the historic Christian
Church**

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1 Introduction

The Model here described provides a basic outline and lesson plan for the process and content of catechesis at Flatland Church. Jesus commanded his followers to disciple the nations. This command has followed each generation of the Church in an unbroken succession since Christs Resurrection. A necessary component of this discipling is naturally, first, the conversion of people through the power of the Holy Spirit, repentance, and acceptance of Christs kingship.

However, it has become common to spend the bulk of our energy in merely the conversion of people, rather than to the direct discipleship of those converted¹. This is a natural inclination for Christ-followers, as indeed we wish to see all people saved. Yet it seems that over the past half-century, greater emphasis has been spent on bringing sheep into the fold to the neglect of creating resilient disciples. This is certainly why we see a serious decline in Church attendance with a continual downward trend in the West of young people.

If then, the models of Bill Hybels and the Beatles have failed us, we ought to look back to the earliest days of the Church. The early centuries of the Church recognized that there is crucial importance to the instruction of new believers. Of course, head knowledge is not adequate to the creation of resilient disciples. Rather, practices and instruction that capture mind, body, heart, soul, and daily practice are the only things sufficient to properly discipling life-long Jesus apprentices.

1.1 On Catechism

In the early days of the Church, the Apostles crafted a short encyclical for Gentile believers entitled *The Didache*², which served as one of the earliest examples we have of structured teaching of Church doctrine. Within a century or two we would see the rise of several structured instruction manuals for teaching new converts on their way to Baptism. We know from Augustines sermons (late 4th century) that by the time he was in ministry, the Church had a year-long process in which new converts would be taught the beliefs and practices of the Christian faith prior to their baptism.

¹It is worth noting here that if we believe that it is the Holy Spirit who draws all people to Christ, then we must accept to some extent that the Holy Spirit, not the individual, is the primary agent of salvation. To believe otherwise is to venture into a form of Pelagianism or semi-Pelagianism. This is not to say that man has no freewill nor that he has no agency in the choice to become allegiant and repent. Yet if the Spirit is the primary agent, perhaps we ought to have at all times been more focused on the discipleship of the converted than the conversion of the unconverted, not to the exclusion of the latter but certainly recognizing the decades long neglect of the former.

²It is worth noting that at no point during the history of the Church was *The Didache* ever considered part of the Biblical canon, nor was its inclusion considered as far as we are aware. However, we do see references by some fathers as early as the Third Century, and more and more have come to believe that *The Didache* was either written directly by the Apostles or was a compilation by the successors/disciples of the Apostles of the commonly shared teachings of the Apostles.

This practice was known as catechism, from a Greek word that meant, to teach orally. This practice was used throughout Church history to varying degrees. During the Reformation, many reformers sought to develop new catechisms for their flocks to help impart the important truths of the faith, no longer mediated through the Magisterium.

1.2 On the Influences of this Model

The most direct influence of this Model is without a doubt *To Be a Christian*, the catechesis developed by the Anglican Church in North America. It is admittedly tempting to simply port that catechesis to our usage, as it is comprehensive, tradition, yet still incredibly modern (owing to its very recent publication). However, while the structure and motivating documents for that work have been incredibly shaping of this Model, the sacramentology of the Anglican Church is at odds with the view of the ordinances as espoused by the Assemblies of God³.

In addition, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* and St. Gregory of Nyssa's *Catechetical Discourse* have been instrumental in ensuring a fully robust dialogical catechism. The model of following the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle's Creed as a guide to imparting sound teaching has been taken up by the likes of N. T. Wright and Karl Barth in the past, whose influences on this guide cannot be dismissed.

Apart from Scripture, much of the direction on the roles and characters of the various actors in this Model have been drawn in part from *The Rule of St. Benedict*.

Finally, the development of counter-liturgies as taken up throughout the Lessons of the third Content have been heavily influenced by the works of James K.A. Smith, Tish Harrison Warren, and John Mark Comer.

1.3 On Terms

For the purpose of this paper, ancient and perhaps overly traditional terms will be adopted. This is in an effort to aid retrieval, further reading, and greater discovery on the topics here discussed. The purpose of this paper is not to inform terms that should be adopted by Flatland Church in its execution of a model of catechesis, but to develop a program, name players, and demonstrate a pedagogical model for apprenticing new believers as they prepare for baptism leading to life-long resilient discipleship to our Lord Jesus Christ.

³For the sake of transparency, it is worth noting that this author holds to a view of the Sacraments that reflect the historical, orthodox views of the Christian Church as were understood for the first 1500 years of the Christian Church, and carried forward by all but one reformer and one new movement at the time of the Reformation. This view is that the sacraments are a physical sign of an inward grace, that the Lord is truly present in the Eucharist, though not physically, and that Baptism is truly regenerative. The catechism here reflected will however hold to the Assemblies of Gods doctrine on the ordinances, and merely note that both ordinances are a means of grace.

Where a term is explicitly capitalized (e.g. Model, Catechumen), the term is a canonical term of this Model, and may be replaced in all instances with one more appropriate to the ministry context.

2 The Model in Outline

The Model here will be outlined by describing the major actors in the catechesis, the Three Contents, the Lessons, and the Outcomes. Each of these will be expounded in greater depth in the coming chapters.

2.1 The Actors

There are four major parties who participate in the process of catechesis. Each of these persons play a crucial role in the catechesis of the believer⁴.

1. **The Catechumen** - The individual who is being discipled and is preparing for Baptism. This individual, in the context of this particular guide and model, is meant to be an unbaptized, recent convert who is seeking to begin their journey of life-long discipleship to our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. **The Mentor** - This individual is a trained church leader who functions as mentor, spiritual director, and accountability partner for the Catechumen. The Mentor may at times act in the role of instructor (or catechist), though may hand this role to various teachers throughout the program as is appropriate or designated by the Model. They are to be commissioned for a year (48 weeks + Baptism) of service, caring for the spiritual life of the Catechumen until his or her Baptism.
3. **The Instructor** - The instructor may at times be the same person as the Mentor, though many times will be a qualified teacher appointed for specific instruction as designated in the Model.
4. **The Community** - The body of believers to which the Catechumen has entered into. While the role of the Community is largely indirect, the Community is to be about the crucial work of praying for the progress and spiritual life of each Catechumen as he or she begins their walk with the Lord.

It is important that each of these players be clearly identified before the Catechumen begins the catechesis. Further, each player, where appropriate, ought to be well trained and prepared to execute their role in this Model.

⁴This is not to discount the role the Holy Spirit plays in the formation of the believer. However, as we recognize the Holy Spirit is the primary agent of Salvation and Baptism, we recognize that the Lord has commissioned us to the sacred task of discipling and forming the life and practice of believers for the work of the Kingdom and for the coming of our Lord.

2.2 Three Contents

In undertaking the process of catechesis, it is important to understand what the contents of said instruction must be. As noted in *On Catechism* the ancient Church has long held the teaching of the Creeds, the Lords Prayer, *The Didache*, and the 10 Commandments as crucial elements of the teaching of the faithful. To that end, the ACNA Catechesis Task Force identified⁵ three primary contents necessary to a proper catechesis which this Model will readily adopt.

- **Believing** - Here the Catechumen will be introduced to the most basic beliefs of the Church as handed down throughout generations through the Creeds (primarily Apostle and Nicene, with some attention given to the Athanasian Creed). The foundations are by no means a replacement of Holy Scripture, rather act as summaries of the canon which impart the clearest and most important elements of the Faith for the life of the believer. Here also will the greater doctrines of the Church be informed where appropriate.
- **Praying** - Here the Catechumen will be introduced to the Lords Prayer as a model of Christian prayer. Here too the Catechumen will be taught how to build a life of prayer and worship. Emphasis will be given to role of speaking in tongues in personal worship, in keeping with Flatland Churchs Pentecostal distinctives.
- **Living** - Here the Catechumen will be introduced to the 10 Commandments as a basic ethical framework for Christian spiritual practice. Teaching will extend into the Sermon on the Mount as well as specific sundry topics important for building a Christian ethic.

Each of the Three Contents will be addressed in sequence, with Belief taking the first third of the year, Praying the second, and Living the third.

2.3 The Lessons

The Lessons are 48 individual lessons focused on imparting an important aspect of Christian belief, life, or practice. Most of the Lessons utilize a tool, whether from Scripture or Church tradition, to act as a guide or outline. In addition to providing structure, these tools, when committed to memory or regular practice, should aid in the recall and formation of each of the Lessons.

The Lessons are then grouped topically in chunks that extend at fewest two weeks and at most two months. Where appropriate for the Catechumen or the ministry context (say a class or specific group), the groups may be used as broader substitutes for the individual lessons.

⁵ACNA Catechesis Task Force. (2020).

Each of the lessons will be dealt with in depth in the respective section of that Contents chapter.

Content	Tool	Group	Lesson
Belief	The Apostle's Creed	Trinity and Gospel	God the Father
			Jesus Christ
			Crucifixion and Resurrection
			The Holy Spirit
		Christian Belief	The Church
			The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting
			The Trinity
	Baptism and Communion		
	N/A		The Creeds
	The Bible	Scripture	Genesis & Exodus 1-20
			The Torah (remaining)
			The Histories
			Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel
			The Minor Prophets
			The Wisdom Books
			The Gospels
The Epistles and Revelation			
Praying	The Lord's Prayer	Praying	Prayer
			Our Father
			Hallowed Be Thy Name
			Thy Kingdom Come
			Thy Will Be Done
			Our Daily Bread
			Forgive Us Our Trespases
			Lead Us Not Into Temptation
			Deliver Us From Evil
	N/A	Practicing	Fasting & Feasting
			Musical Worship
			Praying in Tongues
Public Reading of Scripture			
The Psalter			
Psalms			
Living	10 Commandments + Sermon on the Mount	Spiritual Life	I am the Lord Your God
			Idolatry
			Bearing God's Name
			Sabbath
			Honor
		Ethical Life	Image of God
			Sexual Ethics
			Economics and Generosity
			Honesty
			Covetousness
	Romans + Psalms		Atonement & Sanctification
			Justice
	N/A	N/A	Spirit Baptism
		Christian Life at Flatland Church	Life Coaching
			Groups
			Ministry
		N/A	Preparation Week
Baptism			

2.4 The Outcomes

- The Catechumen is familiar with basic tenets of the Christian faith as expressed through Holy Scripture and the historic Creeds.
- The Catechumen is familiar with overall shape of Scripture, and has read at least Genesis, the minor prophets, a number of Psalms, and the Gospels.
- The Catechumen understands the value and role of prayer in the life of the faithful believer.
- The Catechumen has developed a rule of life, the foundation of which is prayer.
- The Catechumen understands both the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount as informing the way in which Christians live.
- The Catechumen understands the role Flatland Church plays in their spiritual and community life.
- The Catechumen is prepared mentally, spiritually, and physically to enter into the life of the Church through Baptism in water and Spirit.

3 The Actors

This section will focus primarily on the role and characters of the Catechumen and the Mentor, with only a small share given to the Instructor and Community. As both the Mentor and the Catechumen are the primary players in this Model, they will receive the bulk of the time. Each Actor is described with their specific **qualifications**, **expectations**, and **duties**.

3.1 The Catechumen

3.1.1 Qualifications

A Catechumen is anyone who, having heard the message of the Kingdom, has either recently converted or is exploring the peripherals of the Kingdom. While the content of the Model can support the long-time Christian, it is most useful for the individual who is still quite immature in their faith and especially for those preparing for baptism.

It will likely occur in the course of time that some who have attained a relative level of Christian maturity, doubting their own maturity, seek the role of Catechumen. It should be to those directing this Model to determine when it is appropriate for the relatively mature to proceed as Catechumens, or rather to be thrust into the role of Mentor. Careful regard ought to be given to whether they qualify, as far as the director is concerned, with the qualifications for Mentors stated below, and if in passing these qualifications, are not wholly resistant to this work, humbling submitting to the work of Mentorship.

3.1.2 Expectations

While there is great prudence in allowing a relationship that is self-directed by the mentee, this Model expects the Mentor to provide the sort of guidance and direction that ensures, no matter what, the continued engagement of the Catechumen through to its conclusion. As such, the expectations of the Catechumen are intentionally light:

- Attend weekly meetings with the Mentor (whether physically or remotely)
- Study the previous week's material prior to the following session
- Engage in any supplemental material or training provided by the Mentor in a timely fashion

3.2 The Mentor

3.2.1 Qualifications

Whereas the Mentor is tasked with the care for the spiritual life of the Catechumen, the Mentor should be expected to possess the qualifications of an elder taught by the Apostle Paul to his disciples Timothy and Titus⁶. In addition, the advisements given to the abbot by St. Benedict in his rule⁷ are added where appropriate.

- Blameless
- Faithful to their spouse or their singleness
- If having children, having children who are believers
- A good manager of their household
- Respectable
- Hospitable
- Reputable in the community
- Self-controlled
- Gentle
- Free from love of money
- Skilled in teaching
- Holy
- Disciplined
- Not overindulging in alcohol
- Not contentious
- Not bullying
- Not rebellious
- Not self-willed
- Not ill-tempered
- Not a new convert
- Ready to give account not only for their own salvation but for those under their care

⁶1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9

⁷cite this

3.2.2 Expectations and Duties

3.2.3 Training

As the expectation for providing mentorship is one already possessing a high level of Christian maturity, little training is anticipated. As some mentors have need, training may be offered or resources provided, but for the widest group of mentors here is listed the three recommended trainings provided before engaging in a first Catechumen/Mentor relationship.

1. Introduction to Catechism
2. The Holy Trinity
3. Pentecostal Distinctives

The listed trainings are intended to give an introduction to this Model (1) as well as clarify the more difficult and technical aspects of the faith (2, 3). They ought to be taken as separate trainings, allowing for focused time to impart the materials. It is further recommended that they be held in a seminar style, allowing for the best use of time.

3.3 The Instructor

3.4 The Church

4 General Practices

4.1 Format of Lessons

The word *catechism* means "to teach orally." There has long been a tradition of teaching an overview or summary of Christian doctrine in a format of questions and responses. This Model has adopted this well-used practice with each lesson containing between a half-dozen to a dozen questions followed by answers. The format of a Lesson should place the Mentor in the role of the questioner with the Catechumen acting as answerer. This practice, while in some ways acted out, allows the Catechumen to internalize the teachings of the Faith by professing them to another. This has the added benefit of teaching the Catechumen to verbally articulate the important tenets of our Faith.

While the format listed below is advised, it is not meant to be restrictive. The Mentor may feel free to respond to the needs of the Catechumen, but should endeavor to impart each of the questions/responses before their time is ended.

- Open in prayer
- Review each of the questions from the previous week⁸
- Begin the week's lesson by reading any frontmatter indicated by the Lesson
- Mentor should ask each question with the Catechumen reading the answer back
- Following each question/answer, the Catechumen should feel free to ask for clarification or ask any questions
- Following the question/answer portion, the Catechumen and Mentor may discuss the material, digging into the Scripture or additional resources as they feel fit
- The Mentor may assign any additional reading, viewing, or practice as is fit for the Catechumen
- End in prayer

⁸The Catechumen should not be expected to memorize any of the answers, but should be confident in reading the answer back in response to the Mentor's question and be comfortable affirming the answer as true.

4.2 Catechumen/Mentor Relationship

4.3 Supplemental Teaching

As the number of Catechumens or interest in the Model grows, it may become useful to introduce classes to supplement the teaching of the Lessons. While this Model does not seek to dictate or outline the content or topics of those classes, some suggestions are provided below. As noted throughout however, these classes should not be viewed as replacements for the dialogical mentor-catechumen relationship that this Model sets forth. Rather they should be viewed as a way to go deeper on a specific topic or set of topics.

It is recommended that these be well-timed and coordinated so that Catechumens at the same stage start and end the class at the same time, with enough Catechumens in the class to make it worth an Instructor's time. That is, if there are only two Catechumens at this stage, it is better to let their Mentors impart this material, rather than introducing work for an additional party where the Mentor may be sufficient.

The values added to the Catechumen by such classes should satisfy these to purposes:

1. To provide a group atmosphere where Catechumens at the same stage in instruction can be together
2. A formal classroom environment where materials can be studied at great depth

Class recommendations (Each class would match in length to its respective groups or set of Lessons)

- The Lord's Prayer
- The Old Testament
- The New Testament
- Christian Spiritual Practices
- The Ten Commandments
- The Apostles Creed

4.4 Concerning Supplemental Material

This Model, in keeping with a long history of effective catechisms, is intentionally dialogical. For that reason, the Lessons are designed to operate on their own without the aid of

additional materials (outside of the Scriptures). However, there are many different types of people who will engage with this catechism, and so it is useful to provide a breadth of additional materials for individual Lessons as well as for general reading. These span mediums, from podcasts, to videos, to books and articles. However, at no point should this list be considered exhaustive nor considered required.

The Mentor should take great care to not heap heavy burdens, recognizing that the Holy Spirit is equally (if not more so) involved in this work and for some, it is better to leave the teaching at just the text of the Lessons. The Mentor should also recognize the Catechumen who may wish to pile on themselves heavier burdens than are necessary. The Mentor must be able to discern between the Catechumen in need of greater study and the Catechumen who wishes to work themselves to death.

5 The Lessons

In keeping with the great catechetical tradition lessons are formed from a series of question-and-answer pairs. This has on one hand a great pedagogical benefit. As the Catechumen learns each point in a lesson, the practice of answering the Mentor's question serves to place the Catechumen, temporarily, in the role of the teacher. This fulfills the old truism that the best way to commit a concept to memory is to teach it to others⁹.

As St. Gregory of Nyssa noted in his *Pastoral Rule*, it is imperative that we are aiding in the spiritual education based on the specific needs and life stage of the individual¹⁰. To that end, there are a series of additional resources tailored to each Lesson. These resources are not meant to replace the Lessons, nor are they designed to heap heavy burdens on the Catechumen. They only exist as supplemental materials that may be offered to a Catechumen during the catechesis process for deeper study or challenge, or may be returned to following his or her baptism to go deeper on a particular topic. More resources are listed in the Resources chapter.

As noted in the General Practices section, consideration should be given for developing rolling classes which are well timed to address the content of the Lessons well grouped (for instance, a Prayer or Apostles Creed class). Such classes are neither dictated by this Model nor outlined in the Lessons.

A note on questions

The questions contained herein have been heavily influenced by the catechisms of the historic church. In some cases, the phrasing of a given question has been lifted directly from either the ACNA Catechism or the Westminster Larger Catechism (with modernized language). Given the shorter form of both of those works, and therefore ease of retrieval, attribution for those uses are made here alone to aid in uninterrupted question-answer format in the lessons. In all cases effort has been given to form answers without the direct aid of any catechism.

A note on Scripture references

It is important that the Lessons are faithful to the text of Scripture and are consistent with the historical interpretation of the same. With that in mind, each answer has a list of corresponding verses. It can be easy for lists such as these to quickly turn into proof-texts.

⁹It is important that this practice be done within the bounds of the mentor-catechumen relationship and never outside. Throughout this process the Catechumen may err in recitation or improvise in ways that could be harmful to fellow catechumens.

¹⁰cite this

To prevent this, each question/answer pair will be accompanied by at most four sets of verses: an Old Testament, New Testament, Gospel, and Psalm. This allows the Catechumen to recognize the unity of Scripture in all things, and to see Scripture as a unified story which points to Jesus.

5.1 Lesson One: God the Father

Begin this lesson by first reading the Apostle's Creed. See Resources section for text.

Who is God the Father?

God the Father is the first person of the Trinity, from whom the Son is eternally begotten and from whom the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds.

Why do you call the First Person of the Holy Trinity "Father"?

Our Lord Jesus Christ is only Son of God. He referred to God as Father and taught us to do the same in prayer and worship. God has adopted all believers into his family and now calls us sons and daughters.

Why do you call God the Father "Almighty"?

God the Father, together with the Son and the Holy Spirit, has all the power over he everything he has made in order to accomplish his will. The Father is also all-knowing and all-present.

Why do you call God the Father "Creator"?

God the Father is the creator and sustainer of everything that lives and breathes and has its breath. Together with the Holy Spirit, the Father has created all that exists.

What does it mean that God created both heaven and earth?

It means that God has created everything, both spiritual and physical, visible and invisible out of nothing.

Was the world God created good?

Yes. God created the world and saw that it was very good. However, sin and evil corrupted God's good world through the agency of created beings, and human beings have participated in the project of evil ever since.

If the world was created good, why do we sin?

Adam and Eve, with the help of a created creature, rebelled against God and his vision of right and wrong. This began a project of sin and evil which led to death, chaos, and destruction. I have inherited this nature and often participate in the project of evil.

5.2 Lesson Two: Jesus Christ

Begin this lesson by first reading the Apostle's Creed. See Resources section for text.

Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the eternal son of the Father, the living Word, the Tabernacle of God made flesh, and the second person of the Trinity.

What does Christ mean?

Christ is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew word "Messiah," which means anointed one. The Messiah was to be a future-coming King who would defeat the evil powers and redeem the whole world.

Where in Holy Scripture do we first hear the promise of the Messiah given?

In Genesis 3, God promises that a descendent of Eve will be born who will crush the head of the serpent but in that act, will be struck by the serpent. This is taken to be the first promise of the Messiah, with more promises arriving throughout the rest of Hebrew Scripture and finding their fulfillment in Jesus.

Why is Jesus called the Father's "only son"?

Jesus alone is God the Son, coequal and coeternal with both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He is the image of the invisible Father and is eternally incarnate as a human, bearing with him his human and God-given Name: that name which is above all names.

What do you mean when you call Jesus "Lord"?

I call Jesus Lord because he is sovereign over my life, the Church, all nations, kingdoms, powers, and authorities. I surrender my life to him and declare allegiance unto him, seeking every day to honor him and his ways.

(Psalm 2; Daniel 7)

What do you mean when you say Jesus was "conceived by the Holy Spirit"?

Jesus was not conceived through the normal methods of man and wife, but through a miracle of the Holy Spirit. It was the will of God, not the will of a man, which caused Christ to be conceived.

Why is it important that Jesus was born?

It is important that Jesus was born to demonstrate that he is truly a human: born to a human mother and raised in a human family. He did not masquerade as a human or play a parlor trick, but truly became flesh and dwelt among his people.

What is the relationship between Jesus' divine nature and his human nature?

Jesus is both fully God and fully man. His divine and human natures are eternally united and inseparable, not becoming two persons but two natures, being in every way the same as God the Father and in every way the same as human beings, except having no sin.

5.3 Lesson Three: Crucifixion and Resurrection

Begin this lesson by first reading the Apostle's Creed. See Resources section for text.

Note that the length of the Model requires the lines from "suffered under Pontius Pilate" through "he is coming again to judge the living and the dead" to be condensed into this lesson. Additional time may be spent beyond the questions provided to explore each of these lines in the Creed.

Why did Jesus suffer?

Jesus suffered to fulfill what was prophesied: "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."

(Isaiah 53)

How do Jesus' sufferings help you?

Through the suffering of Jesus I know that God has experienced the vast evils of this world. Jesus is truly able to sympathize with my weakness and pain. Therefore, I should bear my own sufferings with perseverance as I truly come to know Christ through suffering.

What happened at Jesus' crucifixion?

At his crucifixion, Jesus was executed as a common criminal through a horrific, humiliating, and barbarous method. He was crushed under the weight of human evil and violent imagination, and on that cross, he died.

(Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Matthew 26; 2 Corinthians 13)

What did Jesus accomplish on the cross?

Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures by suffering and dying on behalf of his people. Jesus offered himself as a Passover lamb, a willing sacrifice, demonstrating the incredible love of God. On the cross Jesus disarmed the Devil, the evil powers, sin, and death.

What do you mean Jesus rose from the dead?

I mean that Jesus was really dead but God restored him physically to life in a resurrected body. The risen Jesus was seen by his disciples and by hundreds of other witnesses over the 40 days he remained on earth.

(Psalm 23)

Why is it important that Jesus ascended into heaven?

It is important because Jesus did not suffer death again. He died once and was raised to life once. He ascended bodily into heaven to be reunited with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

(Psalm 24)

What does it mean that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father?

The right hand is appointed to operate with the king's authority. So all authority is given to Jesus to judge the nations and rule over the world. As our great High Priest he intercedes on our behalf to the Father. Jesus' seating at the Father's right hand fulfills what the Psalms and Prophets said concerning the Messiah: that God would exalt him to his right hand.

(Psalm 110; Daniel 7; Mark 14:62; Acts 7:56)

What do you mean when you say Jesus will come again?

Jesus will come bodily to restore all creation and judge the Devil, sin, and evil once and for all. When Jesus returns all people will be resurrected, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting death.

(Daniel 12; 1 Corinthians 15)

Can we know when Jesus will return?

Jesus said that no one knows the day or hour of his return but the Father. As we anxiously anticipate that day, we pray, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus."

(Matthew 24:36; Revelation 22)

5.4 Lesson Four: The Holy Spirit

Begin this lesson by first reading the Apostle's Creed. See Resources section for text.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, coequal and coeternal with both God the Father and God the Son, and equally worthy of honor and worship.

What are the ministries of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit gives life to all living things, reveals the word of God, and calls people to saving faith in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit dwells within Christians, uniting them to Christ, convicting them of sin, granting spiritual gifts, and imparting grace.

How do you receive the Holy Spirit?

All who repent and are baptized receive the Holy Spirit, who gives a new birth in Christ, breaks the hold of sin, and begins the work of sanctification.

(John 3)

How does the Holy Spirit strengthen you for life in Christ?

The Holy Spirit convicts me of sin, gives me spiritual gifts, extends graces, draws me closer to Christ, and reveals the Word of God to me.

What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Among the gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. The Holy Spirit imparts these gifts as the Holy Spirit wills for the building up of the body and the mission of the Kingdom. The New Testament also mentions as gifts the specific roles of those who do Kingdom work: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and teachers.

(Psalm 68; 1 Corinthians 12)

5.5 Lesson Five: The Church

Begin this lesson by first reading the Apostle's Creed. See Resources section for text.

What is the Church?

The Church is the whole community of faithful Christians on earth and in heaven, called and unified into one people by God. The Church on earth gathers to worship God, to serve God and neighbor, and to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Why is the Church called the body of Christ?

The Church is unified under Jesus Christ who is our Head and source of life.

What unifies the Church?

The whole Church is unified by the power of the Holy Spirit in the teaching of the Scriptures, in the right understanding of the Trinity, and especially Christ's ministry on earth as expressed by the Apostle's Creed.

Why is the Church called holy?

The Church is holy because the Holy Spirit dwells in it and sanctifies (makes holy) its members. Christians are called, as members of the holy Church, to live godly, upright, and holy lives, to the glory of God's Name.

Who are the saints?

The saints are all baptized Christians, those who are presently living on the earth, and those who presently abide with Christ, awaiting the joyous day of resurrection. The saints who are in heaven, some of whom are martyrs, intercede on our behalf and pray along with us for Christ's swift return. We may at times name some who now dwell with Christ with the title of "Saint," but we do not venerate or pray to the saints.

(Mark 12:26-27; Revelation 6)

To what tradition does Flatland Church belong?

Flatland Church belongs to a cooperative fellowship of churches called the Assemblies of God. This tradition belongs to the Evangelical-Pentecostal stream of churches.

In what historic lineage does the Assemblies of God belong?

The Assemblies of God traces its roots to Charles Fox Parham's Pentecostal revival in Topeka, KS. Parham was an Methodist-Episcopal preacher, which itself has its roots in John Wesley's 18th century renewal movement within the Anglican/Episcopal Church in both England and the United States. The Anglican Church was a distinct child of the Protestant Reformation in the 1500's. In this way, the Assemblies of God is both distinctly Pentecostal while also being historically Protestant.

5.6 Lesson Six: The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting

Begin this lesson by first reading the Apostle's Creed. See Resources section for text.

What does Holy Scripture teach you about your body?

Holy Scripture teaches me that my body was created good, but was tainted by sin by the first humans. As a human, I bear the image of God and every other human is endowed with the same value and dignity. Therefore, all human life from conception through death

Why will you die?

I will die because our human ancestors rebelled against God and chose the way that leads to death. As a result, sin and death now corrupt my mortal body, leading to degeneration and ultimately death. When I die, my soul will be with Christ, and in the end, I will be raised bodily when Jesus returns to judge the living and the dead.

What is the resurrection of the body?

When Jesus returns to restore heaven and earth and judge the living and the dead, I will be raised bodily from the dead, receiving a renewed, resurrected body. The wicked will receive eternal condemnation and the righteous eternal life with God.

(Daniel 12)

How should you live as you await the resurrection of the body?

Because I know that all things in heaven and on earth will be renewed, including my body, I should honor and care for my own body as well as the earthly things I am entrusted with. I should also seek to defend myself and others from those things which cause violence, abuse, or degradation.

What do you know about the unending resurrected life of believers?

They will be fully renewed and glorified in the image of Jesus, perfected after the manner of his own resurrected and ascended body.

(1 Corinthians 15)

5.7 Lesson Seven: The Trinity

5.8 Lesson Eight: Baptism and Communion

What is an ordinance?

An ordinance is a command of Jesus meant to memorialize his life, death, resurrection, and continued presence in our lives.

What were the two ordinances ordained by Christ?

While on earth Jesus prescribed two ordinances: baptism and communion.

What is the outward and visible sign of baptism?

The outward and visible sign of baptism is the immersion of the person in water and the raising of the person back out of the water, preceded by the phrase, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

What is the inward and spiritual grace of baptism?

The inward and spiritual grace of baptism is the death to sin and renewal of life in the Spirit. In baptism we are united to Christ in his death and resurrection. Through baptism I become a member of Christ's body and adopted into God's family.

What is required of you when you come to baptism?

Two things are required of me: repentance and faith. I repent of my sin, which means to turn away from it and move in the opposite direction. I place my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, trusting in the promises of God given in this ordinance.

Should you ever become rebaptized?

All Christians who have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit should not seek rebaptism. Rather I should remember the promises made by God in my baptism and seek to live a Christ-centered life.

What is the outward and visible sign of communion?

The outward and visible sign of communion is the bread or wafer and the juice, which Christ commands us to receive.

What is the inward and spiritual grace of communion?

The inward gift signified is the Body and Blood of Christ, which are truly taken and received in the Lords Supper by faith.

Who may receive communion?

All baptized Christians who have repented of their sins and have professed a faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

What is required of you when you come to communion?

I am to examine myself for any unrepentent sins, ensure I hold no strife with any brother or sister, and enter into communion with a truly thankful heart.

5.9 Lesson Nine: The Creeds

What is a creed?

Creed means "I believe." A creed is a statement which explains the faith as handed down over the lifetime of the Church.

What is the purpose of the creeds?

The creeds exist to be unifying statements of faith which create the boundary for faithful belief in Christ Jesus and allow us to worship him fully.

What does it mean to you to be allegiant to Jesus?

It means that I am faithful to him as my only Lord and God. I reject the way in which empire seeks to draw my allegiance to worldly power achieved through death and violence.

What creeds are useful for life in the Church?

There are three creeds which the unified Church has recognized as being useful for the life of the believer since the writing of each: the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed.

What is the Apostle's Creed?

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
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 is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of the saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

What are the 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God?

1. Scriptures inspired
2. The One True God
3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ
4. The Fall of Man
5. The Salvation of Man
6. The Ordinances of the Church
7. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit
8. The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit
9. Sanctification
10. The Church and its Mission
11. The Ministry
12. Divine Healing
13. The Blessed Hope
14. The Millennial Reign of Christ
15. The Final Judgement
16. The New Heavens and New Earth

5.10 Lesson Ten: Genesis and Exodus 1-20

What is Holy Scripture?

Holy Scripture is the written word of God imparted by the Holy Spirit through prophets and apostles. It details the acts of God in human history and is the final authority for the Church in manners of belief, prayer, and living.

What is contained in Holy Scripture?

The Holy Scriptures contain 66 books in two testaments, Old and New. There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament.

What is the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures?

The Old Testament (or Hebrew Scriptures) is the collected writings of the Prophets of Israel. The canon contains the 5 books of the covenant (the *torah* or Pentateuch) often attributed to Moses, the books of History (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther), the Writings (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Daniel, Lamentations), the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel), and the Twelve (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi).

In the Old Testament we see the creation and fall of humanity, the covenant God makes with a special family, and that family's subsequent exile and return to the land promised to them.

What is the New Testament?

The New Testament is the collected writings of the Apostles and disciples of Jesus. They contain the four Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John), the account of the Acts of the Apostles, the various letters of the Apostles to Churches and individuals (Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude), and the apocalyptic visions of John in the Revelation.

What is a covenant?

A covenant is a formal promise between two parties who both agree on a set of promises so they can work together toward a common goal. There are five major covenants in the Old Testament involving God:

1. God's covenant with Humanity (Genesis 1-3)
2. God's covenant with Noah (Genesis 8-9)¹¹
3. God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12, 15, & 17)
4. God's covenant with Israel (Exodus 19-24)
5. God's covenant with David (2 Samuel 7)

Why do we say the world has fallen?

Because our ancestors, the first humans, rebelled against God and tried to define good and bad outside of God's wisdom. As a result, our relationship with the earth, with one another, and with God has been compromised.

What is the promise given to all mankind after Adam and Eve sin?

The promise to all mankind is was a descendent of the woman would crush the head of the serpent, but he would be struck in the conflict.

What is the promise God makes to Abraham?

God promised Abraham that he would bless him, that his descendents would become a great nation, that he would give his descendents the land of Canaan, and through his descendents would come a blessing for the whole world.

How does God start to fulfill this promise in Genesis and Exodus?

In Genesis, God miraculously gave Abraham a son, even though he and his wife were over 90 years old. Within two generations Abraham's family consists of more than two distinct nations, one of which becomes the nation of Israel with its 12 tribes.

¹¹This covenant is unique in the Hebrew Bible as it was a one-way covenant. YHWH promised never again to flood the earth but laid no expectations on Noah and his family, in fact, YHWH's covenant with them anticipates them screwing up the world further.

At the conclusion of the book of Genesis we see that Israel has become a large family of 70 people now residing in Egypt. One of the sons of Israel, Joseph, is second in command of Egypt, and through him God is beginning to bless the whole world. In Exodus however, we see things start to fall apart. The now numerous family of Israel is enslaved in Egypt. God begins a rescue plan to bring them to the land he promised Abraham.

5.11 Lesson Eleven: The Torah (Remaining)

Why do you call it the Torah?

Torah is a Hebrew word which has no precise English translation. The most appropriate is probably teaching, though historically it has been translated as Law. Sometimes we call this collection the Pentateuch, a Greek word meaning five books.

What is contained in the Torah?

The five books attributed to Moses are contained in the Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

What has the Church said about the Torah in the life of the Christian?

The Church has said that all Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the people of God may be perfect, equipped for all good works. Furthermore, it has affirmed that for the Gentile believers (anyone who is not a Jew), we need not be bound by the individual tenets of the covenant made on Mount Sinai in order to be members of the family of God.

Is the Torah still useful to us today?

The Torah is still useful to us today in instruction and in wisdom and for understanding the character of God. The covenant obligations are not binding on the Christian believer, but nevertheless provide great wisdom and a window into the heart of God.

What did Israel do to merit God's salvation?

Israel did nothing to merit God's salvation from Egypt. God honored his covenant to Abraham, a covenant he entered into of his own volition, by rescuing the nation of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt through mighty works.

How was Israel saved of their sins?

Absolution of Israel's sins were primarily accounted for yearly on the Day of Atonement with the sacrifice of a bull by the High Priest. The High Priest would stand in the role of the LORD and bless the people in this manner. Various other offenses, both moral and covenantal, were similarly absolved through more immediate sacrifices handled by the Levitical priests.

What is the greatest commandment?

The greatest commandment which the Torah teaches and Jesus affirms is to love the LORD your God with all of your heart, soul, and strength. The second commandment is similar to the first: love your neighbor as yourself.

((Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18b; Matthew 22:36-40; Psalm 1))

What does God reveal about himself in the Torah?

God reveals that his name is YHWH. He reveals that he is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in loyal love and faithfulness. He maintains his love to thousands, he forgives wrong doing, transgression, and wrong-doing. But he does not leave the guilty unpunished, inflicting punishment on the fathers on the children to the third even the fourth generation.

((Exodus 34:6-7))

Why should we read the Torah?

In the Torah we learn intimately the character of God as creator, redeemer, and restorer. We also learn of his wise teaching to his covenant nation, and see his faithfulness demonstrated time and again. In meditating on the words of the Torah regularly we are blessed.

((Psalm 1))

5.12 Lesson Twelve: The Histories

Why do you call them the Histories?

In the Histories we see the hundreds of years long story of the Israelite nation from their arrival in the promised land, to their deportation by foreign empires, to their ultimate return to the land.

What books are contained in the Histories?

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

Whose death opens the book of Joshua?

The book of Joshua begins with the death of Moses.

What can we learn from the Histories?

What is the promise God makes to David?

God promises David that he will have a great dynasty and that his throne will be established forever.

What great tragedy concludes 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles?

Both Kings and Chronicles end with the deportation of the southern kingdom of Judah, the last remaining vestige of God's covenant people, to Babylon. The northern kingdom of Israel, which had split off from Judah nearly 400 years before in a bloody civil war, had previously been swept away by Assyria roughly 150 years before Judah, never to return.

Why is Israel's exile so important?

God had promised Israel that if they failed to keep his covenant teachings that he would expel them from the promised land and their choices would lead to death. Israel's ultimate exile demonstrated that God was serious about their end of the bargain, despite hundreds of years of God's action to prevent exile through his prophets.

Exile further demonstrated that even though exile was a consequence of rebellion and disobedience, God was still obliged by his own self to bless the nation of Israel and bring about a blessing for the whole world through them.

What can we know about God given Israel's exile?

There are three things we clearly see in God's exile of his people.

The first is that God hates sins. The people of Israel were expelled for failure to faithfully practice the covenant teachings which God had given them, as well as for idolatry and for mistreatment of the widow, the orphan, the immigrant, and the poor and needy.

The second is that God is slow to anger. He sends numerous prophets over hundreds of years to turn his people back to himself, yet the people did not return.

The last is that God is faithful to his promises. Though he waited many years to finally expel Israel from the land, their expulsion was promised as a curse connected with breaking the covenant.

Why is Esther a peculiar book?

Esther is a peculiar book because God is never mentioned, not by his divine name YHWH nor by any other name. The book is violent, sexually promiscuous, the heroes regularly break *torah*, in stark contrast to Daniel, and ends with a drunken festival in which all the people of Israel crossdress. Yet we see that even in the darkness, God is faithful to his covenant people in spite of their failings.

5.13 Lesson Thirteen: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel

What is a prophet?

A prophet is an individual called by God to enforce the covenant, call the people back to God, speak to the people on behalf of God, and occasionally, provide predictions about future events.

What is different about the writing prophets from other prophets in Israel's history?

The writing prophets are those whose teachings were written down or compiled either by themselves or by their disciples. The three "major" prophets are distinct mainly in their length as well as by the fact that they all have a narrative in which the prophets are called by God.

What was the message of Isaiah?

The message of Isaiah is divided in two halves, the first being written before the Babylonian exile and the second after.

In the first half, the message is about the coming destruction of Jerusalem, but with a hope of a seed which will bring about restoration and freedom from oppression.

The second half is a message of comfort. It tells the people of Israel returning home after decades of exile of a coming servant who will suffer but ultimately inherit God's kingdom and will open the gates to all the nations to become members of God's family.

What do we learn about God from Isaiah's throneroom vision?

We learn that God does not live in or is contained by the Temple. He is so much more transcendent that even the train of his robe can barely be held by the bounds of the Holy of Holies.

(Isaiah 6)

What was the message of Jeremiah?

Jeremiah moves from accusation of infidelity to fulfillment of God's judgement on unfaithful Jerusalem. Despite the many calls of destruction and the ultimate consumation of that destruction, God has a promise of hope for his people that a king would come from the line of David.

What does Jeremiah promise will happen to the hearts of people?

Jeremiah promises that when the Messiah comes, the covenant will be renewed the *torah* will be written on the hearts of God's people.

What was the message of Ezekiel?

Ezekiel primarily presents a two-fold vision of judgement and hope. On one hand, God will judge Israel for their covenant unfaithfulness as well the surrounding nations for their violence and pride. But on the other hand, God promises to restore Israel, defeat the evil among the nations, and create a new temple which will bring hope for all of creation.

What do we learn from Ezekiel's throne visions?

From the Ezekiel's throne vision we learn that God is not bound by any place or worshippers and that idolatry is not tolerated among the people of God. But, despite the fact that he abandoned the central place of his worship, God remains with his people.

5.14 Lesson Fourteen: The Minor Prophets

Why do you call them the Minor Prophets?

In the Protestant canon we refer to them as Minor Prophets because they are a collection of shorter prophetic books than Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. In the Hebrew canon, they are often simply referred to as "The Twelve."

What books are contained in the Minor Prophets?

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah, Obadiah, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi.

What do the prophets collectively say is the reason for Israel's destruction?

Israel is destroyed for their idolatry, for ignoring the covenant, and for their injustice to their own people, especially the widows, orphans, poor, and aliens.

How do the prophets still speak to us?

Through the prophets we witness God's heart for all people, not only his heart for the vulnerable, but his condemnation of wickedness, violence, and empire. The prophets teach us to develop an imagination formed in God's teaching and not in the patterns of the surrounding culture.

What is shalom?

Shalom is Hebrew word which means the peace that comes from everything being in its proper order.

How does God's righteousness and justice bring about shalom?

When God demonstrates righteousness, the vulnerable are fed, clothed, and sheltered. When God judges the wicked, the project of evil is undone and wholeness is restored.

5.15 Lesson Fifteen: The Wisdom Books

What is wisdom?

Wisdom is a grid for understanding and interpreting life.

What is the difference between higher wisdom and lower wisdom?

Lower wisdom is typically formed in truisms in which outcomes are the clear result of the same inputs. The book of Proverbs is fully a lower wisdom book, the few wisdom Psalms are lower wisdom, and the claims of the friends in Job also belonging to lower wisdom.

Higher wisdom is wisdom that is more philosophical or cynical. It is aware of the complexities of life and seeks to grapple with them. It knows that just because you are faithful, bad things may happen. Ecclesiastes, Job, and Song of Songs belong

What books are contained in the Wisdom Books?

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.

What is the message of the book of Proverbs?

The message of the book of Proverbs is that if you seek out wisdom, you are likely to flourish. At the beginning of Proverbs, Wisdom is imaged as a local matriarch who wishes for all people to learn wisdom from her and live.

What is the message of the book of Ecclesiastes?

The message of the book of Ecclesiastes is that life is like vapor, and that in the end, all of our work and striving is like vapor too. But nevertheless, we should seek to fear the LORD and keep his commandments.

What is the message of the book of Job?

The message of Job is that God cares for the individual lives of humans amidst a vast and complex universe. We learn that God orders the world through his own wisdom, though our simple and lower forms of wisdom aren't always going to make sense of his designs or plans.

What can we learn about God from the books of Wisdom?

God has invited us to live by his wisdom, his definition of right and wrong. While things might not always work out precisely as the Proverbs describe, life isn't all bleak as Ecclesiastes suggests. God's wisdom is an invitation to life.

5.16 Lesson Sixteen: The Gospels

What are the books contained in the Gospels?

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

What does the word "Gospel" mean?

Gospel means good news. In ancient times, the word Gospel was specifically connected with the inauguration of a new king or kingdom. When a city fell in battle and a new king was placed over that city, a messenger would run all over the country side shouting, "Good news! A new king has come."

What is the Gospel which Jesus preached?

Jesus taught that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. God was about to enthrone his Messiah as king and begin the process of restoring creation.

Are there more than one Gospel?

No, we have only one Gospel, but we do have four accounts of the same Gospel. They told in different words and from different perspectives, but they all give the same message.

What is the basic story told in the Gospel accounts?

A man named Jesus was born to a virgin named Mary. Following his baptism by a prophet named John, he traveled throughout the countryside preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. He surrounded himself with followers and chose twelve to be Apostles (meaning "those who are sent"). Throughout his ministry he healed all sorts of diseases, taught parables which described the nature of God's upside-down kingdom, and taught about the new type of life people in his kingdom would live.

Jesus' teaching came into conflict with the ruling powers of that day, so they plotted to arrest him and put him to death. During a sacred yearly festival of the Jews, Jesus instituted a special meal that both foretold and reminded his followers of his coming death. That same night, he was arrested and put on trial. The following afternoon, Jesus was executed in the most brutal form: Roman crucifixion.

Three days following his execution, Jesus was resurrected from the dead. He spent 40 days with his friends, teaching them about their mission and God's kingdom, and showing how all of Scripture pointed to and was fulfilled in Jesus. After 40 days with his friends, he ascended into heaven and was seated at the right hand of the Father.

What do we learn about God in the Gospels?

Through the Gospels we discover that God is the primary and sole redemptive agent in all of human history. The promises of redemption, victory, and restoration were all wrapped up in himself. And now God reigns as king.

5.17 Lesson Seventeen: The Epistles and Revelation

What is an Epistle?

In the Bible, an Epistle is a letter written by one of the Apostles either to a specific individual, a specific church community, or to a general audience.

What is an Apostle?

An Apostle was an individual chosen by Jesus or by the Apostles through the Holy Spirit to be Christ's representative and to lead his Church.

Why did the Apostles write letters?

The Apostles were active in the work of planting churches all over the world. Their letters were sent to churches they planted or to churches in need of encouragement. The bulk of the epistles were written to correct false doctrine or discourage specific sinful practices. A handful are more general with broader, but all of them encourage the people of God to live as members of his new kingdom and creation.

Why should Christians read the Epistles?

Unlike the bulk of Scripture which contains narrative or poetry as elements throughout almost every book, the epistles are unique in that they are directed to a specific audience with a clear and specific teaching message the whole way through. The epistles are also unique in that they are the first texts to be directed toward Christians as their first readers, and so contain clear and direct teaching and wisdom for living as the community of Jesus followers.

What is the purpose of the book of Revelation?

The purpose of the book of Revelation is to encourage the persecuted people of God to overcome until the end, whether that end be death or the coming day of Resurrection. It also ends by showing the reader the coming hope of God's justice on evil and his restoration of all creation.

What does the book of Revelation tell us about faithfulness to Jesus?

Throughout the book of Revelation the saints are encouraged to remain faithful to Jesus despite persecution. This may lead to economic insecurity, ostracism, and even death. It will mean rejecting the trappings of evil empires. It may even mean death. But we are reminded that God will vindicate our deaths through resurrection. We are taught to walk in the way of weakness and vulnerability of the Lamb who was slain, not in the way of power of the Dragon.

How does the book of Revelation say everything will end?

The book of Revelation ends with a vision of Christ's return. Once he has defeated evil and vindicated the saints in the resurrection from the dead, and a New Jerusalem will be established. All the earth will be restored and the people will live with God as their king forever.

What do we learn about God from the book of Revelation?

Much like in the Gospels, we see that God is the primary agent of restoration and salvation. We also see that he is faithful, he will keep his promise to return and restore all things.

5.18 Lesson Eighteen: Prayer

What is prayer?

Do you change God when you pray?

If God knows all things, why should we pray?

How has our Lord taught us to pray?

Our Father, who art in Heaven Hallowed be thy name Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done On eath as it is in heaven Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our 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, And the power, And the glory, Forever and ever. Amen.

Why should you practice the Lord's Prayer?

How is the Lord's Prayer a pattern for your prayer life?

5.19 Lesson Nineteen: Our Father

Begin this lesson by first reading or reciting the Lord's Prayer. See Resources section for the text.

What is the preface of the Lord's prayer?

Why do we call God "Father"?

Why did Jesus teach us to pray "Our Father"?

What does it mean for us to approach God with a child-like demeanor?

How is God like an earthly father?

How is God unlike an earthly father?

What is heaven?

5.20 Lesson Twenty: Hallowed Be Thy Name

Begin this lesson by first reading or reciting the Lord's Prayer. See Resources section for the text.

What is the first petition of the Lord's prayer?

What is God's name?

Why do we refer to God as Lord?

What does it mean to "hallow" God's name?

How can you hallow God's name?

5.21 Lesson Twenty-One: Thy Kingdom Come

Begin this lesson by first reading or reciting the Lord's Prayer. See Resources section for the text.

What is the second petition of the Lord's prayer?

What do you mean by the Kingdom?

How has God's Kingdom already come?

How has God's Kingdom not yet come?

What are you asking when you pray for God's Kingdom to come?

How are you invited to live in God's Kingdom now?

During what season do we specifically pray for Christ's return?

5.22 Lesson Twenty-Two: Thy Will Be Done

Begin this lesson by first reading or reciting the Lord's Prayer. See Resources section for the text.

What is the third petition of the Lord's prayer?

What is God's will?

What does it mean for God's will to be done?

Can human beings frustrate the will of God?

Why do you pray "on earth as in heaven"?

When will God's perfect will be fully realized?

5.23 Lesson Twenty-Three: Our Daily Bread

Begin this lesson by first reading or reciting the Lord's Prayer. See Resources section for the text.

What is the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer?

What is meant by "our daily bread"?

To what Old Testament image does the prayer for daily bread point?

To what New Testament image does the prayer for daily bread point?

Why do we only now pray for our daily bread?

Why does God provide our daily bread?

How do we join with those who do not have their daily fill in prayer?

5.24 Lesson Twenty-Four: Forgive Us Our Trespases

Begin this lesson by first reading or reciting the Lord's Prayer. See Resources section for the text.

What is the fifth petition of the Lord's prayer?

What does it mean to trespass?

How do you sin against God's teaching?

What is God's forgiveness?

How do we seek God's forgiveness?

Why should we forgive others?

Will forgiving others always lead to reconciliation and restoration?

5.25 Lesson Twenty-Five: Lead Us Not Into Temptation

Begin this lesson by first reading or reciting the Lord's Prayer. See Resources section for the text.

What is the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer?

What is temptation?

What causes temptation?

Should you say that God is tempting you?

How can you defend against temptation?

How can the Church help you defend against temptation?

5.26 Lesson Twenty-Six: Deliver Us From Evil

Begin this lesson by first reading or reciting the Lord's Prayer. See Resources section for the text.

What is the seventh petition of the Lord's prayer?

What is evil?

Why does God permit evil?

What is the Satan?

What are demons and the forces of evil?

What are angels?

What is the ultimate weapon of evil?

How did Jesus triumph over evil?

How does God deliver you from evil?

5.27 Lesson Twenty-Seven: Fasting and Feasting

What is fasting?

What is feasting?

Are Christians commanded to feast or fast?

Why should we fast?

Why must we remember to feasts?

What seasons of fasting has the Church historically taught?

What seasons of feasting has the Church historically taught?

What do feasts and fasts point to?

In fasting we mourn as we await the return of the bridegroom who comes for his bride. We feast as a foretaste of the great wedding feast of the Lamb. (Matt 9:15; Rev 21)

5.28 Lesson Twenty-Eight: Musical Worship

What is worship?

In what ways does God want you to worship?

Can you only worship God with music?

Why do we worship God with music?

How does Flatland Church organize corporate worship?

What benefit do we gain from worship?

How does worship challenge the liturgies of our culture?

5.29 Lesson Twenty-Nine: Praying in Tongues

What do you mean when you say "praying in tongues"?

How does praying in tongues help your prayer life?

What is the appropriate role of tongues in corporate worship?

What types of tongues are given?

What are the two functions of tongues according to Holy Scripture?

Should we pray in tongues regularly?

How should you respond to one who says tongues have ceased?

5.30 Lesson Thirty: Public Reading of Scripture

How were the Scriptures first meant to be enjoyed?

Where in the Old Testament are you commanded to read the Scriptures publicly?

Where in the New Testament are you commanded to read the Scriptures publicly?

What benefit do we receive from the public reading of Scripture?

Why is formation a necessary aspect of Christian life?

How does the public reading of Scripture challenge the liturgies of our culture?

5.31 Lesson Thirty-One: The Psalter

What is the Psalter?

What is contained in the Psalter?

What is the design of the Psalter?

As people of the Messiah, how ought we to receive the Psalter?

What three major types of Psalms are there?

Why should Christians offer praise?

Why should Christians offer thanksgiving?

Why should Christians offer lament?

What does the Psalter teach you about God?

5.32 Lesson Thirty-Two: I am the Lord Your God

Begin this lesson by first reading the 10 Commandments. See Resources section for text.

What is the first commandment?

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me.

(Exodus 20:2-3)

Why is it important that God first declares who He is?

Why does God remind us of his mighty deeds?

What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?

Why should we have no other gods?

What are we taught by the first commandment?

5.33 Lesson Thirty-Three: Idolatry

Begin this lesson by first reading the 10 Commandments. See Resources section for text.

What is the second commandment?

Why is has God demanded no image of himself crafted for worship?

What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?

How did God's people first violate this command?

How does God describe Himself in reference to this commandment?

What are we taught by the second commandment?

Is art depicting any member of the Trinity a violation of the second commandment?

5.34 Lesson Thirty-Four: Bearing God's Name

Begin this lesson by first reading the 10 Commandments. See Resources section for text.

What is the third commandment?

What are the sins forbidden in the third commandment?

What are we taught by the third commandment?

What does it mean to bear God's name?

Why is it important that the Israelites bore God's name correctly?

How should Christians think of bearing God's name?

5.35 Lesson Thirty-Five: Sabbath

Begin this lesson by first reading the 10 Commandments. See Resources section for text.

What is the fourth commandment?

What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment?

What are we taught by the fourth commandment?

Was man created for the sabbath?

What time does the sabbath point back to?

What time does the sabbath forward to?

How did Jesus teach us to keep the Sabbath?

How does rest form us as Christians?

What do we learn about God in our resting?

5.36 Lesson Thirty-Six: Honor

Begin this lesson by first reading the 10 Commandments. See Resources section for text.

What is the five commandment?

What are the sins forbidden in the five commandment?

What are we taught by the five commandment?

What are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment?

Why does Scripture demand that we honor those in authority to ourselves?

What is required of those under authority to those in authority?

What is required of those in authority to those under their authority?

How did Jesus keep the fifth commandment?

5.37 Lesson Thirty-Seven: Image of God

Begin this lesson by first reading the 10 Commandments. See Resources section for text.

What is the six commandment?

What are the sins forbidden in the six commandment?

What are we taught by the six commandment?

What has Jesus taught us about the sixth commandment?

What does it mean that man is made in God's image?

What does it mean to maintain someone's dignity?

How do Christians understand the value of life?

In what other ways can you obey this commandment?

As citizen of Christ's Kingdom and a witness of the same, I can oppose violence, rest in God for vengeance for wrong doing, defend the unborn, care for the sick, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the refugee, and seeking the well-being of all.

5.38 Lesson Thirty-Eight: Sexual Ethics

Begin this lesson by first reading the 10 Commandments. See Resources section for text.

What is the seven commandment?

What are we taught by the seven commandment?

What are the sins forbidden in the seven commandment?

What is adultery?

What does Jesus teach us about adultery?

What does it mean for you to be chaste?

What are the benefits of chastity?

What is marriage?

Why did God ordain marriage?

Is divorce ever permitted?

5.39 Lesson Thirty-Nine: Economics and Generosity

Begin this lesson by first reading the 10 Commandments. See Resources section for text.

What is the eighth commandment?

What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment?

What are we taught by the eighth commandment?

Why does God forbid stealing?

How should the eighth commandment affect the way we engage in commerce?

What do the Scriptures teach us about God's view of property?

How should Christians hold their property?

What does it mean to be God's steward?

What has our Lord commanded us to give?

What is an appropriate base-line standard of giving?

5.40 Lesson Forty: Honesty

Begin this lesson by first reading the 10 Commandments. See Resources section for text.

What is the ninth commandment?

What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment?

What are we taught by the ninth commandment?

Why does God forbid dishonesty?

In what ways do we practice dishonesty?

Why should we refrain from gossip?

When is it appropriate to speak of your neighbor's sins?

5.41 Lesson Forty-One: Covetousness

Begin this lesson by first reading the 10 Commandments. See Resources section for text.

What is the tenth commandment?

What are the sins forbidden in the tenth commandment?

What are we taught by the tenth commandment?

What does it mean to covet?

What does God forbid coveting?

How can coveting lead to the other sins?

5.42 Lesson Forty-Two: Atonement and Sanctification

Is it possible for you to keep all of these commandments?

Are all sins equally heinous before God?

What makes some sins worse than others?

What is deserving for all those who sin?

What is atonement?

What do you receive through Christ's sacrifice?

What is sanctification?

How does the Church assist in your sanctification?

For what does sanctification prepare you?

5.43 Lesson Forty-Three: Justice

What is God's justice?

What has God told humans good is?

How do we see justice not practiced in the Old Testament?

How did Jesus demonstrate justice?

Why should we seek justice as the people of God?

How does lament help us appropriately seek justice?

5.44 Lesson Forty-Four: Spirit Baptism

What is Spirit baptism?

Where do we see examples of the Holy Spirit coming upon people in the Old Testament?

Where do we see examples of the Holy Spirit coming upon people in the New Testament before Pentecost?

What is the difference between the Holy Spirit's anointing in the Old Testament and the New Testament?

What does Flatland Church teach is the initial evidence of Spirit baptism?

What does baptism in the Holy Spirit produce?

Is Spirit baptism necessary to receive eternal life?

What are the benefits of Spirit baptism?

5.45 Lesson Forty-Five: Life Coaching

How is life coaching different from counseling?

How is life coaching different from mentorship?

How is life coaching different from catechism?

Who is the driver of life coaching?

How does the life coach along with the Holy Spirit help you to become transformed?

What manner of life goals are offered through life coaching?

How often should you be life coached?

5.46 Lesson Forty-Six: Groups

What is community?

How does God's nature teach us the value of community?

How does New Testament speak about community?

What manner of groups does Flatland Church offer?

Who should be a part of a series-based life group?

What value do life groups bring to the believer?

5.47 Lesson Forty-Seven: Ministry

What ways can you engage in the work of ministry at Flatland Church?

How do your gifts serve the body of Christ?

What does it mean to be a church leader?

What are the qualifications for church leadership?

What leadership roles are available at Flatland Church?

How do these roles fulfill the mission of the Kingdom?

5.48 Lesson Forty-Eight: Preparation

In this final lesson the Catechumen should engage in a penitential discipline and commit themselves to prayer leading up to their baptism.

6 Resources

6.1 The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
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 is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of the saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

6.2 The Lord's Prayer

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 our 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,
And the power,
And the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen.

6.3 Books/Articles

All books and articles are arranged by topic which are likely to correspond with either a Group or Tool from the Lessons or dig deeper into the content of a specific Lesson.

6.3.1 The Apostles Creed

Barth, K. (). *Dogmatics in Outline*.

The Didache.

Myers, B. (2018). *The Apostles Creed: A guide to the ancient catechism*. Lexham Press.

Wright, N. T. (). *How God Became King*. HarperOne.

6.3.2 The Trinity

Erickson, M. (). *Understanding the Trinity*.

6.3.3 The Creeds

Know the Creeds and Councils by Holcomb

6.4 Videos

6.5 Podcasts

7 Essays

Whereas the Lessons endeavor to serve as dialogical content free from footnoting or further teaching, and whereas the Resources chapter largely serves as a repository of books, articles, videos, and other content to help further the understanding of various topics, the Essays section is designed primarily for Mentors, Instructors, and those directing this Model to have clarity on various matters of theology or pedagogy. Included are topics that hope to explain reasoning for the inclusion of topics within the Lessons or broader reaching topics of secondary doctrine that is nonetheless useful to the Mentor. These essays will include footnotes, references to scholarship and Scripture, and will occasionally engage in more technical discussion.

The readings of these are meant to be an aid and hopefully to anticipate questions that may arise from Mentors. These are by no means a prerequisite to mentorship.

7.1 On the Ten Commandments

7.2 On the *Torah*

7.3 On the Psalms as Wholly Messianic

7.4 On the Daily Office

7.5 On the Need to Avoid Guess-Work

8 Reference