

## **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 converted<sup>1</sup>. 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*<sup>2</sup>, 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.

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<sup>1</sup>It 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.

<sup>2</sup>It 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 God<sup>3</sup>.

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.

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<sup>3</sup>For 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 believer<sup>4</sup>.

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.

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<sup>4</sup>This 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 identified<sup>5</sup> 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.

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<sup>5</sup>ACNA 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
			Baptism and Communion
			The Creeds
	N/A		
	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
			Praying in Tongues
			Musical Worship
			Public Reading of Scripture
			The Psalter
	The Daily Office		
	Living	10 Commandments + Sermon on the Mount	Spiritual Life
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 Titus<sup>6</sup>. In addition, the advisements given to the abbot by St. Benedict in his rule<sup>7</sup> 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

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<sup>6</sup>1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9

<sup>7</sup>cite 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 week<sup>8</sup>
- 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

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<sup>8</sup>The 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 others<sup>9</sup>.

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 individual<sup>10</sup>. 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.

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<sup>9</sup>It 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.

<sup>10</sup>cite 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?***

***Why will you die?***

***What is the resurrection of the body?***

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

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

## 5.7 Lesson Seven: Baptism and Communion

*What is an ordinance?*

*What were the two ordinances ordained by Christ?*

*What is the outward and visible sign of baptism?*

*What is the inward and spiritual grace of baptism?*

*What is required of you when you come to baptism?*

*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.

*What is communion?*

*What is the outward and visible sign of communion?*

*What is the inward and spiritual grace of communion?*

*What is required of you when you come to communion?*

## 5.8 Lesson Eight: The Creeds

*What is a creed?*

*What is the purpose of the creeds?*

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

*What creeds are useful for life in the Church?*

*What is the Apostle's Creed?*

## 5.9 Lesson Nine: Genesis and Exodus 1-20

*What is Holy Scripture?*

*What is contained in Holy Scripture?*

*What is the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures?*

*What is the New Testament?*

*What is a covenant?*

*Why do we say the world has fallen?*

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

*What covenants does God make with humans in Genesis and Exodus?*

*What is the promise God makes to Abraham?*

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

## 5.10 Lesson Ten: The Torah (Remaining)

*Why do you call it the Torah?*

*What is contained in the Torah?*

The five books attributed to Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

*What should we learn from the Torah?*

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



*Is the Torah still useful to us today?*

*What did Israel do to merit God's salvation?*

*How was Israel saved of their sins?*

*What is the greatest commandment?*

*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?*

## 5.11 Lesson Eleven: The Histories

*Why do you call them the Histories?*

*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?*

*What can we learn from the Histories?*

*What is the promise God makes to David?*

*What great tragedy concludes 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles?*

*Why is Israel's exile so important?*

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

*Why is Esther a peculiar book?*

## 5.12 Lesson Twelve: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel

*What is a prophet?*

*What is the role of a prophet in Israel?*

*What was the message of Isaiah?*

*What is the promise Isaiah makes regarding the Messiah?*

*What was the message of Jeremiah?*

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

*What was the message of Ezekiel?*

*What do we learn from Ezekiel's throne vision?*

*What can we learn about God from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel?*

### 5.13 Lesson Thirteen: The Minor Prophets

*Why do you call them the Minor Prophets?*

*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 say is the reason for Israel's destruction?*

*How do the prophets still speak to us?*

*What is shalom?*

*How does God's justice bring about shalom?*

## 5.14 Lesson Fourteen: The Wisdom Books

*What is wisdom?*

*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?*

*What is the message of the book of Ecclesiastes?*

*What is the message of the book of Job?*

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

## 5.15 Lesson Fifteen: The Gospels

*What are the books contained in the Gospels?*

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

*What does the word "Gospel" mean?*

*Where does the word "Gospel" come from?*

*What is the Gospel which Jesus preached?*

*Are there more than one Gospel?*

*Why do we have four Gospel accounts?*

*What do we learn about God in the Gospels?*

## 5.16 Lesson Sixteen: The Epistles and Revelation

*What is an Epistle?*

*What is an Apostle?*

*Why did the Apostles write letters?*

*Why should Christians read the Epistles?*

*What is the purpose of the book of Revelation?*

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

*How does the book of Revelation say everything will end?*

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

## 5.17 Lesson Seventeen: 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?*

## 5.18 Lesson Eighteen: 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?*

## **5.19 Lesson Nineteen: 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?*

## 5.20 Lesson Twenty: 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?*



## 5.21 Lesson Twenty-One: 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?*

## 5.22 Lesson Twenty-Two: 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?*

## **5.23 Lesson Twenty-Three: 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?*

## **5.24 Lesson Twenty-Four: 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?*

## **5.25 Lesson Twenty-Five: 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?*

## 5.26 Lesson Twenty-Six: 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)

## **5.27 Lesson Twenty-Seven: 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?*

## 5.28 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: 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?*

## 5.30 Lesson Thirty: 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?*

### 5.31 Lesson Thirty-One: The Daily Office

*What is the Daily Office?*

*When should we pray the Daily Office?*

*Why do we pray the Daily Office?*

*What benefit do we receive from praying the Daily Office?*

*What does the Daily Office teach us about God and prayer?*

*How does the Daily Office challenge the liturgies of our culture?*



## 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 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 maintain someone's dignity?*

*How 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 are leadership roles 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.

## 7 Reference