

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	
			Genesis & Exodus 1-20	
	The Bible		Scripture	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	
	N/A	Practicing	Fasting & Feasting	
			Musical Worship	
			Praying in Tongues	
Public Reading of Scripture				
Psalms		The Psalter		
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, humbly 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.

(Psalm 104; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; John 1:1-14; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16)

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.

(Psalm 2; Deuteronomy 32:4-9; Matthew 6:6-9; Galatians 4:1-7)

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.

(Psalm 139:1-9; Isaiah 40:12-26; Luke 1:34-37; Revelation 4:8-11)

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.

(Psalm 104; Genesis 1:1-2:7; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16-18)

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.

(Psalm 33:6-8; Genesis 1:1-8; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16)

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.

(Psalm 14:1-3; Genesis 3:1-8; Matthew 15:18-20; Romans 1:18-32)

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.

(Psalm 51:3-5; Genesis 3:16-4:26; Romans 3:23)

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.

(Psalm 2; Malachi 3:1; John 1:118; Philippians 2:511)

What does Christ mean?

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

(Exodus 40:1216; Psalm 89:1929; Luke 3:2122; Hebrews 4:145:10)

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.

(Genesis 3)

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.

(Psalm 2:712; John 1:1418; Colossians 1:1315)

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; Matthew 7:21-23; Colossians 1:16-18)

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.

(Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-20; Luke 1:26-38)

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.

(Luke 2:41-52; Hebrews 2:17-18)

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.

(John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-8)

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.

(Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30; John 15:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

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.

(1 Samuel 16:13; Psalm 143; Joel 2:28-29; John 15:26)

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; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

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.

(Job 27:24; Matthew 10:19-20; John 14:12; Romans 8:15-27)

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.

(Galatians 5:22-23)

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; Luke 11:13; 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.

(Exodus 19:46; Psalm 22:2223; Matthew 28:1920; 1 Peter 2:410)

Why is the Church called the body of Christ?

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

(1 Corinthians 12:1227; Ephesians 1:2223; Ephesians 5:25-30)

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.

(Exodus 19:36; Psalm 15; John 17:1719; 1 Corinthians 3:1617)

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

What do you mean when you say Trinity?

Does the Trinity mean we worship three Gods?

Can we say that the Trinity is just God revealed in different forms?

That's modalism, Patrick!

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 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?

Prayer is an act in which I turn my heart to God. In that turning I listen to his voice and speak to him.

How does the Spirit help you when you pray?

I do not often know what to pray for, so the Spirit helps us by enabling us to understand both for whom, what, and how prayer is to be made.

For whom are we to pray?

We should pray for the whole Church, for those who govern us, and for those who minister to us. We should pray for ourselves, our friends and family, and especially for our enemies.

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 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.

Why should you practice the Lord's Prayer?

I should pray the Lord's prayer because it teaches me to pray the way Jesus taught us to pray and to it forms me into desiring what the Father wills.

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

The Lord's Prayer demonstrates prayer that is first praising God, then interceding for his rule, petitioning for his provision and protection, trusting in his abundance, and confessing our own sins. The Lord's Prayer, in its use of the word "us" reminds us that we pray in community, not only for ourselves. I should regularly pray in all of these ways.

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?

The Lord's Prayer begins: "Our Father, who art in heaven."

Why do we call God "Father"?

We call God our Father because Jesus taught his disciples to call God Father and that we are God's children.

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

Jesus teaches us to view ourselves as members of a community and great big family, not merely as individuals. We pray what we believe to be true about our relationship to God.

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

It means that we approach God with humility, never believing ourselves greater than he. We submit to his wisdom, like children trusting a parent for things they do not yet understand.

How is God like an earthly father?

Like all loving and sincere earthly fathers, God loves us in our weakness, provides for our needs, teaches us in our ignorance, and corrects us when we go astray.

How is God unlike an earthly father?

Unlike our earthly fathers, our heavenly Father loves us perfectly, is capable to care for us in all things, makes no errors in judgment, and disciplines us only for our good.

What is heaven?

Heaven is the place where God dwells. It is the place of his presence, power, and glory and it exists alongside, though separate, from all things visible. From heaven God hears the prayers of his children.

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?

The first petition of the Lord's Prayer is "hallowed be thy name."

What is God's Name?

God's Name as revealed in Scripture is YHWH. The Name means I AM WHO I AM, indicating that God is self-existing, that he alone is truly God, and that there is no other who is like him.

Why do we refer to God as Lord?

Lord has two particular meanings. In the first it was used as a sign of reverence without using God's personal Name (YHWH), so as to not accidentally blaspheme his Name. In the Hebrew Bible you will often encounter Lord as LORD .

Lord in the New Testament often refers specifically to Jesus. In this way we proclaim him as not only the second person of the Trinity (and therefor LORD himself), but also that he is king (or Lord) over the whole world.

How does God hallow his name?

God's Name is holy in itself. God glorifies his Name by redeeming fallen humanity, by building his Church, by establishing his kingdom in this world and in the age to come, and by placing his Name in Jesus.

How can you hallow God's Name?

I can honor God's Name as holy by worshipping him alone, by serving others, and by living in obedience to his teaching as a child and citizen of his kingdom.

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?

The second petition of the Lord's Prayer is: "Thy Kingdom Come."

What do you mean by the Kingdom?

The kingdom of God is the just and peaceful reign of Jesus Christ over all the world, especially in the lives of his faithful people, through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is also the soon coming physical reign of Christ to be established at the end of all things.

How has God's Kingdom already come?

God's kingdom has already come in the person of Jesus Christ and it advances through his Church.

How has God's Kingdom not yet come?

God's kingdom has not yet come in the sense that we still anticipate the resurrection of the body, the life everlasting, the restoration of all things, the coming of the New Jerusalem, and the physical reign of Jesus here on earth.

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

When I pray for God's Kingdom to come, I am praying that the whole world would soon be renewed and restored and that its rightful Lord is installed as king. I am also praying that in whatever way possible, these ends would be advanced now, even ahead of his coming at the end of all things.

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

I am invited to live in God's Kingdom now first through accepting the grace of salvation and of baptism, through the regular participation in the communion of the saints and the Lord's supper, through service to the vulnerable, and through prayer and worship.

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

During the season of Advent, beginning four Sundays preceding Christmas, we pray specifically for Christ's return. During this we prepare our hearts to worship him in remembrance of his first coming at Christmas, but also to pray that he hasten his coming to set all things right.

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?

The third petition of the Lord's Prayer is: "thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

What is God's will?

God's will is to reconcile all things to himself in Jesus Christ and to establish his kingdom on the earth. His will is revealed in the whole of Scripture and especially in Jesus Christ. I am called to serve and imitate Jesus with my whole life.

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

It means that God has broken the dominion of sin, death, and the devil. It means that God's justice has been established and that the plans of the wicked are thwarted. It means that God's Church is strengthened and that his kingdom has been extended, through grace, to all people.

Can human beings frustrate the will of God?

Human beings do not frustrate the ultimate will of God, though they may, through their own choice, choose to deny the goodness of God's will in their own lives. In this way humans reject restoration, regeneration, and the reign of God.

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

In heaven, God's name is hallowed and his will is obeyed perfectly and completely. I pray that his kingdom will be established on earth fully, so that his will may be accomplished here and that his name may be perfectly hallowed on earth.

When will God's perfect will be fully realized?

God's perfect will shall be realized at the end of all things, when God restores all creation, conquers sin and death once and for all, and establishes his throne here on earth.

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?

The fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer is: "give us this day our daily bread."

What is meant by "our daily bread"?

Daily bread is all that we need to live, both physically and spiritually. This may be more than nourishment, but also clothing, shelter, and comfort as we have need.

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

The prayer for daily bread reminds us of God's provision for his people in the wilderness when he provided manna (flaky bread from heaven) for their needs daily. They had no need to sow or reap, nor were they to over consume, they were given precisely what they needed for nourishment.

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

The prayer for daily bread reminds us of the Lord's supper, and ultimately, to Jesus Christ himself. Jesus described the bread of communion as his own body, which was broken for us. Spiritually we receive this sacrifice when we take communion, and are reminded of the ways in which God provides for us out of his abundance both physically and spiritually.

Why do we only now pray for our daily bread?

In praying for our daily bread only after praying for God's glory, kingdom, and will, we are reminded that it is God who provides for all our needs, not we ourselves.

Why does God provide our daily bread?

God gives me daily bread because he is a good and loving Father, who gives good things to all his children, sustains us in life, and desires that we grow daily in his grace.

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

When we petition God for our daily bread we do not ask only for ourselves. We pray "give *us* this day," not "give me this day." And so we join in agreement for those who are hungry that God would provide for them, especially those of us who already have food handy in our cupboards.

5.24 Lesson Twenty-Four: Forgive Us Our Trespasses

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?

The fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer is: "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

What does it mean to trespass?

A trespass is a wrong done to someone. We often call these wrongs sins, especially when, in thought, word, or deed, we offend God's holy character and violate his teaching. Many of the sins we commit also cause injury to our fellow humans, and so are doubly harmful.

How do you sin against God's teaching?

I sin against God's teaching when I choose my own selfish will over the will of God, when I place myself above others, and participate in projects of evil.

What is God's forgiveness?

God's forgiveness is his merciful pardon of the sins and offenses we have committed toward him. Any guilt laid on us by our own disobedience is removed by God's grace.

How do we seek God's forgiveness?

I ask God our loving Father to forgive me through his Son, Jesus Christ, who bore my sins upon the Cross, so that through faith and Baptism I can receive his righteousness.

Why should we forgive others?

I should forgive other because while I was still a sinner, God forgave me through Jesus Christ. Failing to forgive denies God's own forgiveness extended to me and provides a foothold for more evil to abound.

Will forgiving others always lead to reconciliation and restoration?

No, forgiving others may not always lead to reconciliation and restoration, but in the forgiving we extend God's own healing grace to those who have harmed us. Despite this, I am still called to forgive.

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?

The sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer is: "lead us not into temptation."

What is temptation?

Temptation is any enticement to turn from God's instruction, follow your own definition of right and wrong, and so participate in the project of evil.

What causes temptation?

I am tempted by false promises of the world, the selfish desires of my own flesh, and the lies of the devil. All of these things are at war against God and his good will.

Should you say that God is tempting you?

We should never say that God is tempting us nor do we say that he is the cause for sin. He will allow me to be tested however, so I may grow in obedience and faith to him.

How can you defend against temptation?

I may avoid temptation by praying for protection and strength to withstand, by confessing my sins to God and fellow Christians, by meditating on God's word, by avoiding situations which may stir temptation, and by surrounding myself with the community of believers.

How can the Church help you defend against temptation?

In the fellowship of Christ's Body, I can find companionship, support to resist ungodly influence, wisdom to guard me, teaching to grow in holiness, and discipline to correct me

when I fall into error.

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?

The seventh and final petition of the Lord's Prayer is: "deliver us from evil."

What is evil?

Evil is the willful rejection and work against God's good will. Evil defies God's holiness, denies the dignity of humanity, perverts God's teaching, enslaves humanity to sin, and corrupts and harms all creation.

Why does God permit evil?

God permits the activity of evil for a time so that the good may not be destroyed with the evil until it is mature. Though God did not create evil, his good creation has turned sour by participating in a project of evil which attempts to thwart his will and bring violence, destruction, and death.

What is the Devil?

The Devil is the accuser and adversary of all humanity. It is a created being in rebellion against God from the beginning of creation until the end. At the end of all things it will be destroyed along with sin and death.

What are demons and the forces of evil?

Like the Devil, demons are created beings who are now in rebellion and open opposition to God. They now cause spiritual and sometimes physical harm to human beings, and they sow lies that lead to confusion, despair, sin, and death.

What are angels?

Angels are rational, spiritual beings created by God. God's holy angels joyfully serve him in heavenly worship, and God appoints them to act as messengers, bringing words of guidance and assurance to the faithful, and assisting and protecting them.

What is the ultimate weapon of evil?

The ultimate weapon of evil is the sword: the ability to extinguish life as a demonstration of power and force.

How did Jesus triumph over evil?

Jesus triumphs over evil by showing that the ultimate weapon of evil is powerless in light of God's power of life and resurrection. In his death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus shows that death has no power over the people of God.

How does God deliver you from evil?

Jesus has conquered the dominion of darkness and now grants me victory over sin and evil through the Holy Spirit. He transforms my mind and heart to see and oppose evil, and gives me the power to overcome it. He gives me strength to endure my trials gracefully and may even remove them from me. Should I ever suffer martyrdom, I do not have to fear as the weapons of the enemy are meaningless in light of the resurrection.

5.27 Lesson Twenty-Seven: Fasting and Feasting

What is fasting?

Fasting is the intentional practice of denying something required for nourishment or pleasure in order to rely fully on God's care and abundance.

What is feasting?

Feasting is the intentional practice of enjoying the riches of God's good creation while recalling and celebrating specific times in which he has demonstrated his faithfulness or majesty.

Are Christians commanded to feast or fast?

Christians are not commanded to feast or fast, though throughout both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament we see both practices as integral to a fully orbed human life as the people of God.

Why should we fast?

We fast in order to remember that it is God who provides and to break our reliance on ourselves to provide.

Why should we remember to feast?

As Americans, we are all too familiar with overindulging often for no reason. Feasting provides intentionality and balance all the while shaping us to know the story of God and to thank him for his goodness.

What seasons of fasting has the Church historically taught?

The Church has primarily taught the season of Lent, a 40 day period preceding Easter, as a season of fasting. In this time we walk with Jesus through his 40 days in the wilderness in which he was tempted on our behalf. We also prepare our hearts to solemnly remember

his sacrifice during Holy Week and wait with expectation to celebrate his resurrection on Easter Sunday.

What seasons of feasting has the Church historically taught?

The Church has most prominently taught the season of Christmas and Easter as seasons in which we feast. In the first we celebrate the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the very start of the Gospel. On Easter, we celebrate God's power over death, the inauguration of the kingdom, and the fulfillment of the Gospel.

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?

Worship is the act, conscious or unconscious, of giving worth and praise to something or someone.

Can you only worship God with music?

No, you can worship God with your time, money, acts of service, and prayer.

Why do we worship God with music?

Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, especially the Psalms, we see a pattern of God's people lifting up both their voices and their instruments to praise God. We follow this pattern as it glorifies God and forms our mind and our ear into learning the nature and story of God.

How does Flatland Church organize corporate worship?

Flatland Church begins each service with a teaching from Scripture. At the conclusion of the lesson, the whole congregation is given the opportunity to respond to what they heard in the message through musical worship. The music chosen is intentional to help us correctly respond to God in what we have learned.

What benefit do we gain from musical worship?

In worship we proclaim God's glory and majesty. We also find that in singing, our hearts and minds are shaped by the music. Music will often say twice as much and be remembered twice as long.

How does worship challenge the liturgies of our culture?

Our culture has developed practices that center us as individuals in how we interact with the world, especially in how we consume media. In public musical worship, we remove

ourselves from patterns of living which center ourselves and join with our community to extol God.

5.29 Lesson Twenty-Nine: Praying in Tongues

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

When I say "praying in tongues" I mean praying in a language which is foreign to me.

How does praying in tongues help your prayer life?

When I pray in tongues, I am allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through me. The Holy Spirit teaches me what to pray for even when I do not know what I should pray.

What is the appropriate role of tongues in corporate worship?

In corporate worship tongues are appropriate when they are given in an orderly fashion. If a word is spoken in tongues in a public gathering, it *must* also be accompanied by an interpretation either by the person speaking in tongues or by another so prompted by the Holy Spirit. Paul warns that this must be done carefully and that we should not let our corporate worship become chaotic lest it become a hindrance for non-believers.

What types of tongues are given?

There are two types of tongues given to believers. The first is the gift of speaking in the languages of other nations. We see this gift given to the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost when they were able to preach the Gospel, through the power of the Spirit, in the native languages of every nation present.

The second is the gift of speaking in the tongues of heaven. We believe that while speaking in the tongues of men is less common, the gift of speaking in the tongues of heaven is a gift available for all believers.

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

The two functions of tongues are to edify the believer and to provide a means to allow the Holy Spirit to pray on our behalf.

Should we pray in tongues regularly?

Yes, it is good for us to make praying in tongues a part of our daily exercise of prayer.

5.30 Lesson Thirty: Public Reading of Scripture

How were the Scriptures first meant to be enjoyed?

The Scriptures were first meant to be enjoyed in community, read aloud. Likely the oldest writing in Scripture, the Song of Moses, would have been sung aloud in the community following God's victory over the Egyptians at the Red Sea.

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

Near the end of Deuteronomy, Moses commands the priests to read aloud from the teaching of Moses every seven years at the festival of booths. In a similar fashion, every year at Passover, the Israelites were to recite the story of God's deliverance in Egypt.

(Deuteronomy 31:9-13)

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

Paul exhorts Timothy to devote himself to the public reading of Scripture and to prayer.

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

In the public reading of Scripture we hear the word of God with our ears. This is deeply formational, and over time changes the way we think and act. Scripture is meant to be meditated upon over a lifetime.

Why is formation a necessary aspect of Christian life?

Paul writes throughout his letters of the importance of Christians to be formed into the image of Christ. A necessary part of the Christian life is sanctification in which we become more and more like Christ. This process occurs through formations, which is in part renewal, in part new learning, and in part transformation.

(Romans 8:29)

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

Though we live in the so-called information age, our culture has lost the ability to remember. We want what is new, fast, and easily consumed. The Bible is none of these things. In reading the Scriptures aloud publically, we begin to chew on the difficult bits of Scripture and become shaped by its Source.

5.31 Lesson Thirty-One: The Psalter

What is the Psalter?

The Psalter is the name given to the book of Psalms when used as a prayer or hymn book.

What is contained in the Psalter?

The Psalter consists of five collections or books of Psalms. The first two books contain primarily Psalms attributed to King David. The third book is a series of deep mournful laments contrasting the hope of a new messianic kingdom with the exile and downfall of David's kingdom. The fourth book are songs primarily attributed to Moses, reflecting on YHWH as king over the whole world. Book five is a hopeful book full of praise, exalting God and looking forward to the Messianic king. The book concludes with a series of five Psalms which begin and end with "Hallelujah."

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

We should receive the Psalter as the prayerbook of the Messiah, as it contains his prayers first. As his people, we join with him in their prayers.

What three major types of Psalms are there?

The three most common types of Psalms are praise, thanksgiving, and lament.

Why should Christians offer praise?

Christians should offer praise to God because he is worthy of praise. He has demonstrated his faithfulness to his people, he has glorified his Name in Jesus Christ, and he sits enthroned above all creation.

Why should Christians offer thanksgiving?

Christians should offer thanksgiving for the many things God has done on our behalf. Not only our rescue from sin and death, but the many mundane areas of our lives in which God has demonstrated his love for us.

Why should Christians offer lament?

Christians should offer lament because we are still on this side of the end of all things and the restoration of all creation. Until that great day, we lift up our voices with the saints, the martyrs, and the oppressed, crying for God to make right the things which are wrong. In this we hope for the day of his coming and participate in his work of restoration.

What does the Psalter teach you about God?

In the Psalter we see the majesty of God. We discover that it is God who is our rescuer and our king. At first we may lament in the trials of our enemies and the downfall of those things most important to us, but when we remember that God reigns as king over all creation, we cannot help but praise him.

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?

The first commandment is: "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?

In defining who he is, God is defining the nature of the covenant: it is a relationship with himself.

Why does God remind us of his mighty deeds?

God reminds us of his mighty deeds so we

What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?

In the first commandment we are forbidden from denying God and from all forms of idolatry.

Why should we have no other gods?

We should have no other gods because there should be nothing more important in our lives than God himself and the obedience to his will. We should worship him alone, loving, revering, and trusting him above all else.

What are we taught by the first commandment?

We are taught that God has done great things, he is holy, and is worthy of all praise. We learn that he alone should be worshipped and we ought always to follow his teaching.

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?

The second command is: "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them."

(Exodus 20:4-6)

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

God has demanded no image of himself be crafter for worship for two reasons. The first reason is that it would degrade God's character to belittle him to a created thing. The second is that God created images of himself in the beginning. In the beginning, God created humanity in his image.

What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?

Among the sins forbidden by the second commandment are the crafting of images of God for the purpose of worship. Additionally, crafting images of any foreign deity for worship, or keeping, honoring, or using existing symbols, icons, flags, or other imagery for the purposes of worship or devotion.

How did God's people first violate this command?

God's people quickly violated this command by crafting for themselves

How does God describe Himself in reference to this commandment?

God describes himself as a jealous God.

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

Provided that the art itself does not become the object of worship but rather a means of looking through to see or imagine God, then it is not a violation of the second commandment.

What are we taught by the second commandment?

In the second commandment we learn that God is not made by human hands but wholly transcendent beyond the created order. Furthermore, God has created human beings to be the proper bearers of his image, and so we do not need to make any image of God in order to worship or reverence him.

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?

The third commandment is: "You shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in vain."

(Exodus 20:7)

What are the sins forbidden in the third commandment?

The sins forbidden by the third commandment are any uses of God's Name, or the name of any person of the Trinity, in an abusive, ignorant, vain, irreverent, or superstitious way. In addition, doing evil or disobeying the teachings of God in his Name constitute a violation of the third commandment.

What are we taught by the third commandment?

We are taught that God's Name is holy and deserves to be hallowed.

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?

The fourth commandment is: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh is a Sabbath to the LORD your God."

(Exodus 20:8-10)

What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment?

The sins forbidden on the Sabbath are the aims to continue to accumulate wealth and to put those under your employ to the same task. In addition, doing evil on the Sabbath so as to profane the Name of God.

Was humanity created for the sabbath?

No, humanity was not created for the Sabbath. Rather, the Sabbath was created as a gift for humanity. God anticipated the endless cycles of work and pressure to produce and created a day holy to himself in which humans were free of the burden of heavy labor.

What time does the sabbath point back to?

The Sabbath points backward to the Garden of Eden in which the man and his wife were cared for by the earth and in which they had rest with their Creator.

What time does the sabbath point forward to?

The Sabbath points forward to the day of resurrection in which all things will be made right. In that day we will find ultimate rest for our souls.

How did Jesus teach us to keep the Sabbath?

Jesus taught us to keep the Sabbath by doing good and not evil on that day. We should not seek to apply a heavy burden in which we micromanage every item of our Sabbath day, but rather we should be welcomed into the rest it brings and encouraged to acts of service in Jesus' Name.

How does rest form us as Christians?

Through rest we counter the rhythms of empire whose constant drum beat of production urges us forward. We are formed knowing that God is our provider, not we ourselves.

What do we learn about God in our resting?

In our resting we learn that God is our provider and that he operates in an abundance, not scarcity, mindset.

5.36 Lesson Thirty-Six: Honor

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

What is the fifth commandment?

The fifth commandment is: "Honor your father and mother so you may live long in the land LORD your God is giving you."

What are the sins forbidden in the fifth commandment?

Contempt and ill treatment of parents, elders, and authorities are forbidden by the fifth commandment.

What are we taught by the fifth commandment?

We are taught that God has established authorities here on earth that we may be taught humility and that right ordered peace may abound in our communities.

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

We are commanded to honor those in authority over us because they have been set in place by God.

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

The duties of those under authority is honor, respect, and, as much as it agrees with God's teaching, obedience. In addition, it is the duty of those under authority to be in regular prayer for those in authority over themselves, and to serve their authority as they would Christ.

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

How did Jesus keep the fifth commandment?

Jesus honored his earthly parents, Joseph and Mary; he ensured that his mother, a widow, was cared for after his death on the cross; he obeyed civil and religious authorities; and in all things sought to obey his Father's will.

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?

The sixth commandment is: "you shall not murder."

What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?

The primary sin forbidden by the sixth is murder in any form: vengeance, infanticide, abortion, suicide, and euthanasia are all forms of murder. In addition, that violence which is rooted in a murderous or contemptuous heart and bears no dignity for the human person is likewise sinful and like unto murder.

What are we taught by the sixth commandment?

We are taught that God has a high regard for human life and that all people are worthy of honor, respect, and dignity.

What has Jesus taught us about the sixth commandment?

Jesus taught that the sixth commandment extends to unjust anger that diminishes the dignity of another person. A heart may become inclined towards murder when it breeds hatred, contempt, or violent thoughts, all of which are counter to God's life-affirming love.

Is all anger sinful?

Anger which is a response to injustice or wickedness is not sinful, but too often our anger stems from pride, fear, or contempt. Therefore, we must be slow to anger and quick to forgive.

What does it mean that humans are made in God's image?

It means that all of humanity is equal in dignity and honor before God. None, by nature of race, position, gender, or office is imbued with greater dignity than another. It also means that all people are representations of God.

How Christians understand the value life?

Christians should understand that all life belongs to God and begins with God. Since all things are made by God, all things are worthy of care and respect, but especially our fellow image-bearers.

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 seventh commandment?

The seventh commandment is: "you shall not commit adultery."

What are we taught by the seventh commandment?

In the seventh commandment we are taught of God's high regard for sexual purity for those within a marriage and for those who remain unmarried or have not yet married.

What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment?

The sins forbidden by the seventh include any sexual activity with another person outside of a marital relationship, this extends even to illicit communications with someone who is not one's spouse. In addition, engaging with pornography, sexually explicit music, other forms of sexually charged media should be strongly avoided.

What does Jesus teach us about adultery?

Jesus teaches that while adultery is a sin, so is lusting after an individual, so as to have committed adultery with them in your heart and mind.

What does it mean for you to be chaste?

Whether I am married or single, it means I will acknowledge the image of God in all people, not as objects of sexual gratification.

What are the benefits of chastity?

Chastity gives freedom in establishing wise and healthy boundaries between myself and fellow humans.

What is marriage?

Marriage is a covenantal union between a man and a woman made without compulsion under God and before humans. In marriage a great mystery occurs, the two similar (in nature) but different (in sex) creatures become one flesh.

Why did God ordain marriage?

God ordained marriage for the mutual comfort and friendship of one another; for the procreation and godly raising of children; for defense against sexual immorality; and for the benefit of family, church, and society.

Is divorce ever permitted?

Jesus taught that there is only one scenario by which divorce is permitted, and that is in the case of marital unfaithfulness. However, even this is not a command, but rather a concession made due to the hardness of the human heart since we know that God hates divorce.

(Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:1-12; Psalms 45)

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 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.

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