

# New City Catechism

Adapted By  
Timothy Keller And Sam Shammas  
From The  
Reformation Catechisms

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<sup>1</sup>See page 5 for further explanation about the children's answers.

A fuller presentation of *New City Catechism* can be found online at [www.newcitycatechism.com](http://www.newcitycatechism.com), with related texts of Scripture, a commentary from various authors, prayer, suggestions for further reading, a video explanation, and songs for kids related to each question. You can also find a link for a well-conceived and executed iPad application.

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- All songs provided by Songs for Saplings, Portland, OR. Songs are from the Questions with Answers series by Dana Dirksen, based on the Westminster Shorter Catechism, 1647. More information is available at [SONGSFORSAPLINGS.COM](http://SONGSFORSAPLINGS.COM).

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# **Preface**



# Introduction

## **Question 1. What is the chief end of man?**

**Answer.** Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

## **Question 1. What is your only comfort in life and death?**

**Answer.** That I am not my own, but belong — body and soul, in life and in death — to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

These words, the opening of the *Westminster* and *Heidelberg Catechisms*, find echoes in many of our creeds and statements of faith. They are familiar to us from sermons and books, and yet most people do not know their source and have certainly never memorized them as part of the catechisms from which they derive.

Today many churches and Christian organizations publish “statements of faith” that outline their beliefs. But in the past it was expected that documents of this nature would be so biblically rich and carefully crafted that they would be memorized and used for Christian growth and training. They were written in the form of questions and answers, and were called catechisms (from the Greek *katechein* which means “to teach orally or to instruct by word of mouth”). The *Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563 and *Westminster Shorter and Larger Catechisms* of 1648 are among the best known, and they serve as the doctrinal standards of many churches in the world today.

## **The Lost Practice Of Catechesis**

At present, the practice of catechesis, particularly among adults, has been almost completely lost. Modern discipleship programs concentrate on practices such as Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and evangelism and can at times be superficial when it comes to doctrine. In contrast, the classic catechisms take students through the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer — a perfect balance of biblical theology, practical ethics, and spiritual experience. Also, the catechetical discipline of memorization drives concepts deeper into the heart and naturally holds students more accountable to master the material than do typical discipleship courses. Finally, the practice of question — answer recitation brings instructors and students into a naturally interactive, dialogical process of learning.

In short, catechetical instruction is less individualistic and more communal. Parents can catechize their children. Church leaders can catechize new members with shorter catechisms and new leaders with more extensive ones. Because of the richness of the material, catechetical questions and answers may be integrated into corporate

worship itself, where the church as a body can confess their faith and respond to God with praise.

Because we have lost the practice of catechesis today: “Superficial smatterings of truth, blurry notions about God and godliness, and thoughtlessness about the issues of living — career-wise, community-wise, family-wise, and church-wise — are all too often the marks of evangelical congregations today . . . ” [Gary-Parrett:2010]

### Why Write New Catechisms?

There are many ancient, excellent, and time-tested catechisms. Why expend the effort to write new ones? In fact, some people might suspect the motives of anyone who would want to do so. However, most people today do not realize that it was once seen as normal, important, and necessary for churches to continually produce new catechisms for their own use. The original Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* included a catechism. The Lutheran churches had Luther’s *Large Catechism* and *Small Catechism* of 1529. The early Scottish churches though they had Calvin’s *Geneva Catechism* of 1541, and the *Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563, went on to produce and use *Craig’s Catechism* of 1581, *Duncan’s Latin Catechism* of 1595, and *The New Catechism* of 1644, before eventually adopted the *Westminster Catechism*.

The Puritan pastor Richard Baxter, who ministered in the 17<sup>th</sup> century town of Kidderminster, was not unusual. He wanted to systematically train heads of families to instruct their households in the faith. To do so he wrote his own *Family Catechism* that was adapted to the capacities of his people and that brought the Bible to bear on many of the issues and questions his people were facing at that time.

Catechisms were written with at least three purposes. The first was to set forth a comprehensive exposition of the gospel — not only in order to explain clearly what the gospel is, but also to layout the building blocks on which the gospel is based, such as the biblical doctrine of God, of human nature, of sin, and so forth. The second purpose was to do this exposition in such a way that the heresies, errors, and false beliefs of the time and culture were addressed and counteracted. The third and more pastoral purpose was to form a distinct people, a counter-culture that reflected the likeness of Christ not only in individual character but also in the church’s communal life.

When looked at together, these three purposes explain why new catechisms must be written. While our exposition of gospel doctrine must be in line with older catechisms that are true to the Word, culture changes and so do the errors, temptations, and challenges to the unchanging gospel that people must be equipped to face and answer.

### A Joint Adult And Children’s Catechism

*New City Catechism* is comprised of only 52 questions and answers (as opposed to *Heidelberg’s* 129 or *Westminster Shorter’s* 107).<sup>2</sup> There is therefore only one question

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<sup>2</sup>Editor’s note: or the ACNA’s 345 questions.

and answer for each week of the year, making it simple to fit into church calendars and achievable even for people with demanding schedules.

It is a joint adult and children's catechism. In other words, the same questions are asked of both children and adults, and the children's answer is always part of the adult answer. This means that as parents are teaching it to their children they are learning their answer to the question at the same time, albeit an abridged version. The adult answer is always an expanded version of the children's answer. In the adult version the children's answer appears in **color**<sup>3</sup> to differentiate it from the longer adult answer.

*New City Catechism* is based on and adapted from *Calvin's Geneva Catechism*, the *Westminster Shorter and Larger Catechisms*, and especially the *Heidelberg Catechism*, giving good exposure to some of the riches and insights across the spectrum of the great Reformation-era catechisms, the hope being that it will encourage people to delve into the historic catechisms and continue the catechetical process throughout their lives.

It is divided into 3 parts to make it easier to learn in sections and to include some helpful divisions:

- Part 1 = God, creation and fall, law (20 questions);
- Part 2 = Christ, redemption, grace (15 questions);
- Part 3 = Spirit, restoration, growing in grace (17 questions).

As with most traditional catechisms there is a Bible verse that accompanies each question and answer. In addition, attached to each question and answer there is a short commentary and a short prayer<sup>4</sup> taken from the writings or sayings of past preachers to help students meditate on and think about the topic being explored. As far as possible a commentary and prayer has been included from the same preacher in each of the 3 Parts so that students can become familiar with their style and work. Those quoted in all 3 Parts are, in chronological order: John Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Richard Sibbes, John Bunyan, Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, Abraham Booth, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, John Charles Ryle, C. S. Lewis, David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and John Stott. Students are therefore able to read 3 commentaries and 3 prayers from each of these preachers. John Owen and Richard Baxter have been quoted in Parts 1 and 3. John Bradford, Heinrich Bullinger, Thomas Brooks, George Whitefield, Charles Simeon, and Francis Schaeffer feature once with a commentary and a prayer from each.

In the children's version the questions and answers are accompanied by the same Bible verse as the adult version. In addition the prayers from the adult version have been adapted, modernized, shortened, and simplified for children.

Also included in the adult version is a further reading<sup>5</sup> section. In order to make this as manageable as possible suggested readings are drawn from only two books:

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<sup>3</sup>Editor's note: in the black & white version, the text is **bolded**.

<sup>4</sup>Editor's note: these prayers and commentaries can be found at [WWW.NEWCITYCATECHISM.COM](http://WWW.NEWCITYCATECHISM.COM).

<sup>5</sup>Editor's note: all additional elements of the *New City Catechism* not included in this document are found on the web site: [WWW.NEWCITYCATECHISM.COM](http://WWW.NEWCITYCATECHISM.COM).

J. I. Packer's *Concise Theology* (published by Tyndale) and Donald Macleod's *A Faith to Live By* (published by Mentor or Christian Focus).

To accompany all this written material there are also short video commentaries from some of the council members of The Gospel Coalition and the pastors of Redeemer Presbyterian Church. As with the textual commentaries from historic preachers, as far as possible, a video commentary from each of the current preachers has been included in each of the 3 Parts. Those featured in the filmed commentaries are, in alphabetical order: Thabiti Anyabwile, Alistair Begg, David Bisgrove, D. A. Carson, Mark Dever, Kevin DeYoung, Ligon Duncan, Joshua Harris, Kent Hughes, Timothy Keller, John Lin, Crawford Loritts, John Piper, Juan Sanchez, Leo Schuster, Stephen Um, and John Yates. The hope is that the textual and filmed commentaries provide complementary insights into the theme of each particular question and answer.

### The Use Of Archaic Language

Although it may make the content seem less accessible at first glance, the language of the original texts has been retained as much as possible throughout the commentaries and prayers.

When people complained to J.R.R. Tolkien about the archaic language he sometimes used, he answered that language carries cultural values and therefore his use of older forms was not nostalgia — it was principled. He believed that older ways of speaking conveyed older ways of understanding life that modern forms cannot convey, because modern language is enmeshed with modern views of life.

As an example, Tolkien points to a passage in *The Lord of the Rings* where members of the Fellowship are choosing weapons and the (archaic) wording runs as follows: "Helms too they chose." Some (wrongly) class the wording as an "inversion", since normal order is "They also chose helmets" or "They chose helmets too." But, Tolkien comments that modern English has lost the trick of putting the word that one desires to be emphasized (for pictorial, emotional, or logical reasons) into prominent first place, without the addition of a lot of little "empty" words. The much terser and more vivid ancient styles often convey gravity and meaning in a way they would not were they modernized. (See Tolkien's letter to Professor Hugh Brogan in *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* [Tolkien:1981].)

For this reason, except in cases where the words are no longer in common use and are therefore incomprehensible (in which instances they often have been replaced with ellipses) the language and spelling of the original authors has been retained throughout the commentaries and prayers. Occasionally this is also true in some of the questions and answers where the more poetic forms aid memorization.

### How To Use *New City Catechism*

*New City Catechism* consists of 52 questions and answers so the easiest way to use it is to memorize one question and answer each week of the year. Because it is intended to be dialogical it is best to learn it in pairs, in families, or as study groups, enabling

you to drill one another on the answers not only one at a time but once you have learned 10 of them, then 20 of them, and so on.

The Bible verse, written and filmed commentary, and prayer that are attached to each question and answer can be used as your devotion on a chosen day of the week to help you think through and meditate on the issues and applications that arise from the question and answer. Note that some of the prayers are not directly addressed to God but are more exhortational in nature. As you read these prayers you can make them your own by praying the petitions to God or by taking the statements and turning them into petitions and prayers. For example if the text says: “I love the Lord for he heard my voice and heard my cry for mercy.” You can pray: “Lord, I love you because so many times, you have heard my voice and my cry for mercy.”

Groups may decide to spend the first 5–10 minutes of their study time looking together at only one question and answer thus completing the catechism in a year, or they may prefer to study and learn the questions and answers over a contracted length of time, for example by memorizing 5 or 6 questions a week and meeting together to quiz one another, discuss them, as well as read and watch the accompanying commentaries.

For families, it is intended for parents to help their children memorize the children’s answer and then for parents to learn the longer, extended adult answer themselves. Parents will have different ways of approaching the memorization process depending on their children and their particular circumstances — so there are no prescribed times of day or particular devotional practices attached. When and how parents use the catechism can be as diverse as during family devotions, at the breakfast table, as part of a longer study including comprehension questions and praying, or as a fun memorization time with flashcards and drills.

## Memorization Tips

There are a variety of ways to commit texts to memory and some techniques suit certain learning styles better than others. A few examples include:

- Read the question and answer out loud, and repeat, repeat, repeat.
- Read the question and answer out loud, try to repeat them without looking. Repeat.
- Read aloud through all Part 1 questions and answers (then 2, then 3) while moving about. The combination of movement and speech strengthens a person’s ability to recall text.
- Record yourself saying all Part 1 questions and answers (then 2, then 3) and listen to them during everyday activities e.g. work-outs, chores, etc.
- Write the questions and answers on cards and tape them in a conspicuous area. Read them aloud every time you see them.
- Make flashcards with the question on one side and the answer on the other, and test yourself. Children can color these in and draw pictures on them.

- Review the question and answer at night and in the morning. For children spend a few minutes at bedtime helping them remember the answer, then repeat at breakfast the next morning.
- Write out the question and answer. Repeat. The process of writing also helps a person's ability to recall text.
- Drill the questions and answers with another person as often as possible.

### A Biblical Practice

In his letter to the Galatians Paul writes, "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor" (Galatians 6:6). The Greek word for "anyone who receives instruction" is the word *katechoumenos*, one who is catechized. In other words, Paul is talking about a body of Christian doctrine ("catechism") that was taught to them by an instructor (here the word "catechizer"). The words "all good things" probably means financial support as well. In this light, the word *koinoneo* — which means "to share" or "to have fellowship" — becomes even richer. The salary of a Christian teacher is not to be seen simply as a payment but a "fellowship." Catechesis is not just one more service to be paid for, but is a rich fellowship and mutual sharing of the gifts of God.

If we re-engage in this biblical practice in our churches, we will find again God's Word "dwelling in us richly" (Colossians 3:16), because the practice of catechesis takes truth deep into our hearts, so we find ourselves thinking in biblical categories as soon as we can reason.

When my son, Jonathan, was a young child my wife Kathy and I started teaching him a children's catechism. In the beginning we worked on just the first three questions:

**Question 1. Who made you?**

**Answer.** God.

**Question 2. What else did God make?**

**Answer.** God made all things.

**Question 3. Why did God make you and all things?**

**Answer.** For his own glory.

One day Kathy dropped Jonathan off at a babysitter's. At one point the babysitter discovered Jonathan looking out the window. "What are you thinking about?" she asked him. "God," he said. Surprised, she responded, "What are you thinking about God?" He looked at her and replied, "How he made all things for his own glory." She thought she had a spiritual giant on her hands! A little boy looking out the window, contemplating the glory of God in creation!

What had actually happened, obviously, was that her question had triggered the question/answer response in him. He answered with the catechism. He certainly did not have the slightest idea what the "glory of God" meant. But the concept was in his mind and heart, waiting to be connected with new insights, teaching, and experiences.



Such instruction, Princeton theologian Archibald Alexander said, is like firewood in a fireplace. Without the fire — the Spirit of God — firewood will not in itself produce a warming flame. But without fuel there can be no fire either, and that is what catechetical instruction is.

Timothy Keller, October 2012



## ***New City Catechism***



# Part 1. God, Creation And Fall, Law

## Q 1. What is our only hope in life and death?

That we are not our own but belong, body and soul, both in life and death, to God and to our Savior Jesus Christ.

**Romans 14:7–8:** *For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.*

### Commentary

“If we, then, are not our own but the Lord's, it is clear what error we must flee, and whither we must direct all the acts of our life. We are not our own: let not our reason nor our will, therefore, sway our plans and deeds. We are not our own: let us therefore not set it as our goal to seek what is expedient for us . . . . We are not our own: in so far as we can, let us forget ourselves and all that is ours. Conversely, we are God's: let us therefore live for him and die for him. We are God's: let his wisdom and will therefore rule all our actions. We are God's: let all the parts of our life accordingly strive toward him as our only lawful goal. O, how much has that man profited who, having been taught that he is not his own, has taken away dominion and rule from his own reason that he may yield it to God! For, as consulting our self-interest is the pestilence that most effectively leads to our destruction, so the sole haven of salvation is to be wise in nothing and to will nothing through ourselves but to follow the leading of the Lord alone.”

John Calvin [**Calvin:1960**], III. VII. I., 690.

### Prayer

“Lord, here am I; do with me what thou pleasest, write upon me as thou pleasest: I give up myself to be at thy dispose . . . . The ambitious man giveth himself up to his honours, but I give up myself unto thee; . . . man gives himself up to his pleasures, but I give up myself to thee; . . . man gives himself up . . . to his idols, but I give myself to thee . . . Lord! lay what burden thou wilt upon me, only let thy everlasting arms be under me . . . . I am lain down in thy will, I have learned to say amen to thy amen; thou hast a greater interest in me than I have in myself, and therefore I give up myself unto thee, and am willing to be at thy dispose, and am ready to receive

what impression thou shalt stamp upon me. O blessed Lord! hast thou not again and again said unto me . . . 'I am thine, O soul! to save thee; my mercy is thine to pardon thee; my blood is thine to cleanse thee; my merits are thine to justify thee; my righteousness is thine to clothe thee; my Spirit is thine to lead thee; my grace is thine to enrich thee; and my glory is thine to reward thee'; and therefore . . . I cannot but make a resignation of myself unto thee. Lord! here I am, do with me as seemeth good in thine own eyes. I know the best way . . . is to resign up myself to thy will, and to say amen to thy amen.

Thomas Brooks [**Brooks:1866**], 305–306.

### **Biographies**

- For Thomas Brooks, see page 27.
- For John Calvin, see page 27.

### **Further Reading**

“Salvation” in [**Packer:2001**].

### **Video**

VIMEO.COM/46824533

## Q 2. What Is God?

God is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything. He is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable in his power and perfection, goodness and glory, wisdom, justice, and truth. Nothing happens except through him and by his will.

**Psalms 86:8–10 and 15:** *Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God . . . You, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*

### Commentary

“God is an eternal, independent being . . . . He gives being to all creatures . . . . God is an eternal, unchangeable being . . . . His being is without any limits. Angels and men have their beings, but then they are bounded and limited; . . . but God is an immense being that cannot be included within any bounds . . . . There never was nor shall be time wherein God could not say of himself, ‘I am’ . . . . He is a God that gives being to all things . . . . He is the Being of beings, subsisting by himself; . . . ‘I am that I am, and as I am, so will I be to all eternity’ . . . . He is infinite in power, sovereign in dominion, and not bounded as creatures are . . . . He is so strong that he is almighty, he is one to whom nothing is impossible . . . . He wanteth nothing, but is infinitely blessed with the infinite perfection of his glorious being . . . self-sufficient, all-sufficient, absolutely perfect . . . . There is no succession or variation in God, but he is eternally the same . . . . God ever was, ever is, and ever shall be. Though the manifestations of himself unto the creatures are in time, yet his essence or being never did nor shall be bound up by time. Look backward or forward, God from eternity to eternity, is a most self-sufficient, infinite, perfect, blessed being, the first cause of our being, and without any cause of his own being; an eternal infinite fulness, and possession to himself and of himself. What God is, he was from eternity, and what God is, he will be so to eternity.”

Thomas Brooks [Brooks:1866a], 150–157.

### Prayer

“I believe, O sovereign Goodness, O mighty Wisdom, that thou dost sweetly order and govern all things, even the most minute, even the most noxious, to thy glory, and the good of those that love thee. I believe, O Father of the families of heaven and earth, that thou so disposest all events, as may best magnify thy goodness to all thy children, especially those whose eyes wait upon thee. I most humbly beseech thee, teach me to adore all thy ways, though I cannot comprehend them; teach me to be glad that thou art king, and to give thee thanks for all things that befall me; seeing thou hast chosen that for me, and hast thereby ‘set to thy seal that they are good’. And for that which is to come, give me thy grace to do in all things what pleaseth

thee; and then, with an absolute submission to thy wisdom, to leave the issues of them in thy hand.”

John Wesley [**Wesley:1831**], 392.

### **Biographies**

- For Thomas Brooks, see page 27.
- For John Wesley, see page 27.

### **Further Reading**

“Self-existence”, “Transcendence”, and  
“Almightiness” in [**Packer:2001**].

### **Video**

VIMEO.COM/46824534



### Q 3. How many persons are there in God?

There are three persons in the one true and living God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

**2 Corinthians 13:14:** *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

#### Commentary

“The . . . Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, being one God, is . . . necessary to us to be believed, not only as to the eternal . . . but especially for the knowledge of God’s three great sorts of works on man: that is, as our Creator, and the God of nature; as our Redeemer, and the God of governing and reconciling grace, and as our Sanctifier, and the Applier and Perfecter of all to fit us to glory.

The Scripture tells us that there are three, and yet but one God. . . . We are to be baptised into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii. 29.) And there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one (1 John v. 7.) . . . [That] God is one infinite, undivided Spirit; and yet that he is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be believed.

We must . . . know, believe and esteem him to be the only infinite, eternal, self-sufficient Spirit, vital Power, Understanding, and Will, our most perfect Life, Light, and Love; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things; our absolute Owner, Ruler, and Father; our Maker, our Redeemer, and Sanctifier.”

Richard Baxter [**Baxter:1830**], pp. 33, 62, 165. Richard Baxter

#### Prayer

“Not without trembling, we have entreated of the most holy mystery of the reverend Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which we have learned out of the scriptures: and here now we will stay, humbly worshipping this Unity in trinity and Trinity in unity. And let us keep in mind and acknowledge this distinction or division most manifestly declared in the scriptures, and the unity also commended unto us with exceeding great diligence . . . . There is but one God . . . . Therefore when we read that God created the world, we understand that the Father from whom are all things, by the Son by whom are all things, in the Holy Ghost in whom are all things, created the world. And when we read that the Son became flesh, suffered, died, and rose again for our salvation, we believe that the Father and the Holy Ghost, though they were not partakers of his incarnation and passion, yet notwithstanding that they wrought our salvation by the Son . . . . And when sins are said to be forgiven in the Holy Ghost, we believe that this benefit and all other benefits of our blessedness are unseparably given and bestowed upon us from one, only, true, living, and everlasting God, who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. To whom be praise and thanksgiving for ever and ever. Amen.”

Henry Bullinger [**Bullinger:1851**], pp. 325–326.

**Further Reading**

“Trinity” in [Packer:2001].

**Video**

Vimeo.com/46824536

## **Frequently Asked Questions**



## FAQ—*New City Catechism*

Most of your questions will be answered by the introduction to *New City Catechism*. Please read that first.

### **At What Age Is The Children’s Catechism Aimed?**

This very much depends on your children and your way of using the catechism. Memorization can begin at an early age but if you want to use the Bible verses and prayers then 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> graders will get the most out of it. On the other hand, if your children are able to memorize and recite the Apostles’ Creed (the longest catechism answer) then they should be able memorize the entire *New City Catechism* with ease.

### **Why Is Some Of The Text In Color In The Answers?**

In the adult version the children’s answer appears in **color**<sup>6</sup> to differentiate it from the longer adult answer. *New City Catechism* is a joint adult and children’s catechism. In other words, the same questions are asked of both children and adults, and the children’s answer is always part of the adult answer. This means that as parents are teaching it to their children they are learning their answer to the question at the same time, albeit an abridged version. The adult answer is always an expanded version of the children’s answer and so the **colored** text shows the children’s answer within the adult one.

### **In What Order Should I Go Through The Verses, Commentaries, And So On?**

Start by reading the Bible verse that accompanies each question and answer, and seeing how it applies and how the question and answer derive from it. Then read the text commentary, and then watch the video commentary. If you have access to either of the further reading books, read the recommended chapter(s). End your time in prayer, using the attached prayer as a starting point and for inspiration.

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<sup>6</sup>Editor’s note: in the black & white version, the text is **bolded**.

## **How Do I Use *New City Catechism*?**

*New City Catechism* consists of 52 questions and answers so the easiest way to use it is to memorize one question and answer each week of the year. Because it is intended to be dialogical it is best to learn it with others, enabling you to drill one another on the answers not only one at a time but once you have learned 10 of them, then 20 of them, and so on. The Bible verse, written and filmed commentary, and prayer that are attached to each question and answer can be used as your devotion on a chosen day of the week to help you think through and meditate on the issues and applications that arise from the question and answer.

## **How Do I Use *New City Catechism* With My Family?**

*New City Catechism* consists of 52 questions and answers so the easiest way to use it is to memorize one question and answer together as a family each week of the year. It is intended for parents to help their children memorize the children's answer and then for parents to learn the longer, extended adult answer themselves. Parents will have different ways of approaching the memorization process depending on their children and their particular circumstances-so there are no prescribed times of day or particular devotional practices attached. When and how parents use the catechism can be as diverse as during family devotions, at the breakfast table, as part of a longer study including comprehension questions and praying, or as a fun memorization time with flashcards and drills. Parents may decide to read aloud the Bible verse and pray aloud the children's prayer attached to each question and answer, or it may be appropriate for your child to read and pray aloud themselves.

## **How Do I Use *New City Catechism* With My Study Group?**

Groups may decide to spend the first 5–10 minutes of their study time looking together at only one question and answer thus completing the catechism in a year, or they may prefer to study and learn the questions and answers over a contracted length of time, for example by memorizing 5 or 6 questions a week and meeting together to quiz one another, discuss them, as well as read and watch the accompanying commentaries.

## **Why Are Some Of The Prayers Longer Than Others?**

The prayers are intended to help and inspire you in prayer by showing you some of the ways historic preachers and authors prayed to and praised God. Please feel free to lengthen or shorten the prayers as is most helpful to you.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Editor's note: the prayers may be found at [www.newcitycatechism.com](http://www.newcitycatechism.com).

## **Which Catechism Should I Learn After This One?**

*New City Catechism* is based on and adapted from Calvin's *Geneva Catechism*, the *Westminster Shorter* and *Larger Catechisms*, and especially the *Heidelberg Catechism*. A good next step would be to learn either Westminster Shorter or Heidelberg.

## **Any Additional Resources You Would Recommend?**

Kevin DeYoung has written an excellent exploration of the *Heidelberg Catechism* in *The Good News We Almost Forgot: Rediscovering the Gospel in a 16<sup>th</sup> Century Catechism* (published by Moody).

Thomas Watson's *A Body of Divinity* (published by Banner of Truth, among others) is a great exposition of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*.

Thomas F. Torrance's *The School of Faith, Catechisms of the Reformed Church* (published by Wipf & Stock) has a fascinating introduction to catechesis, as well as being a great collection of the historical catechisms.

*Grounded in the Gospel* by Gary Parrett and J. I. Packer (published by Baker) provides a case for why catechetical instruction is still important for churches and discipleship today.





## **Addenda**



## Brief Biographies

For all citations from or references to these writers, refer to the index “People”, starting on page 31.

**Baxter, Richard (1615–1691):** An English Puritan, Baxter served as a chaplain in the army of Oliver Cromwell and as a pastor in Kidderminster. When James II was overthrown, he was persecuted and imprisoned for 18 months. He continued to preach, writing at the time that: “I preached as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men.” As well as his theological works he was a poet and hymn-writer. He also wrote his own Family Catechism (from which the quote on p. 17 is taken).

**Brooks, Thomas (1608–1680):** An English Puritan preacher, Brooks studied at Cambridge University before becoming rector of a church in London. He was ejected from his post, but continued to work in London even during the Great Plague. He wrote over a dozen books, most of which are devotional in character, *The Mute Christian Under the Smarting Rod* being the best known.

**Bullinger, Heinrich (1504–1575):** A Swiss reformer, and the successor of Zwingli as head of the Zurich church, Bullinger wrote both theological and historical works comprising some 127 titles. There exist about 12,000 letters from and to Bullinger, the most extended correspondence preserved from Reformation times. He corresponded with Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth I of England, Christian II of Denmark, and Frederick III Elector Palatine, among others.

**Calvin, John (1509–1564):** A theologian, administrator, and pastor, Calvin was born in France into a strict Roman Catholic family. It was in Geneva however where Calvin worked most of his life and organized the Reformed church. He wrote the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the *Geneva Catechism*, as well as numerous commentaries on Scripture.

**Wesley, John (1703–1791):** An English preacher and theologian, Wesley is largely credited, along with his brother Charles, with founding the English Methodist movement. He traveled generally on horseback, preaching two or three times each day, and is said to have preached more than 40,000 sermons. He also was a noted hymn-writer.



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