

WHY CATECHISE?

IS IT BIBLICAL?

Catechising involves teaching the truths of the Bible in a question and answer format. The truths are easier to remember because they are summarised in concise language.

It has always been one of the ways used by the Church to teach the Bible. In recent generations, however, it has been neglected to some extent. Most Churches have statements of faith where they outline what they believe. A catechism is not just a document or statement. It is living and kept in the memory rather than just on paper. This makes it invaluable for future reference. Truth is ready, on the tip of the tongue (1 Peter 3:15).

The word 'catechise' is a Greek word for teaching used in Galatians 6:6 and elsewhere. It is vital that children come to learn and remember Bible truth (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). We teach them so "that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Psalm 78:4-7).

This is a key aspect of their growth and development (Ephesians 6:6). It gives them the foundation blocks of understanding to which everything else they learn must relate. It is hard to think of a better way to ensure that the truth is in our children's minds. By this means, they receive, in manageable chunks, the whole counsel of God. Even the mental discipline of learning a catechism is invaluable.

WHY NOT JUST MEMORISE BIBLE VERSES?

Memorising Scripture is vital. But a catechism helps a child to see how the verses they learn fit together. They then have the message of the Bible in their minds and not just the words. They also see how truths relate to each other and depend on other teachings. The Bible speaks about "the form of doctrine" which must be delivered to others by teaching for them to obey (Romans 6:17).



WHY THE SHORTER CATECHISM?

THE SHORTEST OF THE BEST SUMMARIES

The Westminster Shorter Catechism is of the best known and loved Catechisms. It has been a great blessing to many generations in Scotland. Its answers have been written to give the most concise statements of biblical teaching. The theologian John Murray described it as “the most perfect human compendium of Christian truth that there is in the whole world”.

WHO WROTE IT?

It was written by a great gathering of ministers and others called the Westminster Assembly. The Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms were published in 1647. The Shorter Catechism is the shortest of these best summaries of the Bible's truths.

WHAT IS IN IT?

The Shorter Catechism has 107 questions and has three main parts. The first 3 questions are introductory. The next 35 tell us what we are to believe. This covers the Bible; God; Sin; Christ and Salvation. The remaining 69 tell us what God requires of us. These cover things like the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. There are Bible verses to show that the answer is based on the Word of God.

WHY LEARN IT?

It helps us learn the truth. This is the truth about the most important subjects for this life and life after death. The truth about God, sin and salvation are clearly stated. The Catechism is also good for families to study together, perhaps during the Lord's Day.

It helps us remember the truth. There is so much to learn about God and ourselves. Learning the Catechism fixes the most important knowledge in our minds so we can remember it again and again. Some people who have been converted as adults have been thankful that they learned the Catechism when they were young. They have access to a ready-made treasury of Bible truths by remembering the Catechism.

It helps us defend the truth. By teaching us Biblical truth, the Catechism helps us recognise and reject error.