

A Modernised  
Catechism  
for Today's Youth

*from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer*

This is a modernisation of the Catechism found in the *1662 Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England, which has been written and edited by River Devereux. All archaic words and stylistic choices have been changed, and some of the language has been clarified so that it will be easily understood especially by young people, particularly between 10-20 years old.

Much effort has been taken to ensure that the meaning of all of the Catechism remains the same, even though some phrases that are very Biblical and traditional have been altered so that young people can understand them. To give two examples of this, compare the original with this modernisation:

### 1. The spiritual grace of Baptism

*Original (1662): A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.*

*Modernised (2021): Our old sinful self-dies, and we are born again to live a righteous life: because by nature we are born as sinners, as children who deserve to be punished, but in Baptism we are made children who are graciously forgiven by God.*

### 2. The definition of a Sacrament

*Original (1662): I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.*

*Modernised (2021): A Sacrament is something physical and visible that signifies a spiritual and invisible gift. Jesus Christ created Sacraments to be the way that we receive those gifts and they assure us that we have received them.*

## **Part One: Our Identity as Christians**

Q. What is your Name?

A. (*Name*)

Q. Who gave you this Name?

A. My Godfathers and Godmothers gave it to me at my Baptism, which was when I was joined to Jesus Christ and made a member of his Church. At my Baptism I was also made a child of God, and now I look forward to entering the Kingdom of Heaven.

Q. What did your Godfathers and Godmothers do for you at your Baptism?

A. They promised three things on my behalf: First, that when I grow up I will reject the devil and all the evil things he wants me to do, I will reject the ways of the secular world, and I will reject the sinful desires of my body. Second, they promised to ensure that I will grow up to believe in the Christian faith and all its doctrines. And thirdly, they promised on my behalf that I will follow God's will and commandments all the days of my life.

Q. Do you want to do these things that they promised on your behalf?

A. Yes, I truly do; and with God's help I will. And I thank our heavenly Father for saving me from a life of disobedience and giving me this new life through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray to God that he will give me his grace, so

that I will continue having this identity and living this saved life forever.

## **Part Two: The Christian Faith**

Q. What do you believe as a Christian?

A. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate. He was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell. On the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, and he sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Q. What do you mainly learn from these beliefs?

A. First, I learn to believe in the Heavenly Father, who is God, and who made me and all the world. Second, I learn to believe in the Heavenly Father's Son, Jesus Christ, who is also God, and who redeemed me and all of humanity. And third, I learn to believe in the Holy Spirit, who also is God, and who sanctifies and empowers me and all the people God chooses.

## **Part Three: The Commandments**

Q. You said that your Godfathers and Godmothers promised on your behalf that you would keep God's Commandments, tell me how many there are?

A. Ten.

Q. What are they?

A. They are the commandments God gave to Moses in the twentieth chapter of Exodus in the Bible. God said: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and out of slavery.

1. You must have no other Gods but me.

2. You must not make for yourself any carved or painted image, nothing that looks like anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. You must not bow down to them, or worship them, because I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, and I punish people because of the sins of their fathers, and grandfathers, and great-grandfathers who hate me. But if you love me, I will show mercy to the thousands of people who will come from you.

3. You must not misuse the Name of the Lord: for the Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his Name.

4. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day. For six days you will work and do all the things that you have to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath day, which belongs to the Lord your God. On that day you must not do any kind of work.

Your son or daughter also must not work, and your employees must not work, and your animals must not work, no one in your city can work, whether they are from that city or from somewhere else. This is because in six days the Lord made heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything that is in those places, and he rested on the seventh day; therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day, and made it holy.

5. Respect and honour your father and your mother, so that you may live for many days in the land that the Lord your God has put you in.

6. You must not murder.

7. You must not be unfaithful towards marriage.

8. You must not steal.

9. You must not tell a lie about your neighbour.

10. You must not be envious of your neighbour's house or their husband or wife, or their employees, or their belongings, or their animals, or anything else that is theirs.

Q. What do you mainly learn from these commandments?

A. I learn two things: My duty towards God, and my duty towards my neighbour.

Q. What is your duty towards God?

A. My duty towards God is to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; to worship him, to thank him, to trust in him wholly, to come to him for help, to honour his holy Name and his Word; and to truly serve him all the days of my life.

Q. What is your duty towards your Neighbour?

A. My duty towards my Neighbour is to love them as much as I love myself, and to treat everyone in the same way I want them to treat me: To love, honour, and cherish my father and mother: To honour and obey the government, and all that are put in authority under them: To submit myself to all teachers, spiritual leaders, and employers: To be humble before those who are in authority over me: To hurt no-one with my words or actions: To be truthful and fair in everything I do: To not hate anyone or want to harm them: To keep my hands from stealing, and my tongue from bullying, lying, gossiping, and insulting: To keep my body pure: Not to be envious or desire other people's belongings; but instead to try and earn things for myself honestly, and to be obedient to God and to those in authority over me.

#### **Part Four: Prayer**

Q. You should know this, dear one, that you are not able to do these things by your own strength, nor are you able to follow God's commandments and serve him, without his special grace; which you must learn at all times to ask for by constant prayer. Are you able to say the Lord's Prayer?

A. Our Father who is in heaven, holy is your Name; your kingdom come; your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven: give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and do not let us be tempted, but rescue us from evil. Amen.

Q. What do you want from God in this Prayer?

A. I desire my Lord God, our heavenly Father, who is the giver of all that is good, to send his grace to me, and to all people so that we may worship him, serve him, and obey him, as we are supposed to do. And I pray to God, that he will send us all things that be we need for our souls and bodies, and that he will have mercy on us, and forgive our sins: And that he will want to save and defend us from all dangers that are spiritual and physical: And that he will help us to not sin and or do what is wrong, and protect us from the Devil and his demons, and from eternal death. And I trust that he will do this, because of his mercy and goodness, because of our Lord Jesus Christ: and so, I say Amen!

## **Part Five: The Sacraments**

Q. How many Sacraments has Christ instituted for his Church?

A. Only two, which are in general necessary for us to have salvation; they are Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Q. What does the word Sacrament mean?

A. A Sacrament is something physical and visible that signifies a spiritual and invisible gift. Jesus Christ created



Sacraments to be the way that we receive those gifts and they assure us that we have received them.

Q. What happens in a Sacrament?

A. Two things: something is visibly done with a physical symbol, and then a spiritual and invisible gift is given to us.

Q. What is the symbol and action involved at Baptism?

A. The symbol is water; and the action is that the person is put into the water or sprinkled with it, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Q. What is the invisible and spiritual gift?

A. Our old sinful self-dies, and we are born again to live a righteous life: because by nature we are born as sinners, as children who deserve to be punished, but in Baptism we are made children who are graciously forgiven by God.

Q. What do baptised people have to do?

A. They have to repent, which means they are sorry for their sins and want to stop sinning; and they must have faith, which means they truly believe the promises that God makes to them in that Sacrament.

Q. So why then are babies baptised, since they are so young that they cannot repent or have faith?

A. Because other people who care for them promise on their behalf that they will repent and have faith.

Q. Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper instituted?

A. For the constant remembrance of the death of Jesus Christ, which was a sacrifice, and so that we can receive the benefits of his sacrifice.

Q. What is the symbol and action of the Lord's Supper?

A. The symbol is bread and wine, which the Lord commanded us to receive, and the action is eating and drinking.

Q. What is the invisible and spiritual gift that is received?

A. The body and blood of Christ, which are truly and actually taken and received in the Lord's Supper by those who are faithful to Jesus.

Q. What are the benefits of receiving this?

A. Our souls are strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ, just as our bodies are by the bread and wine.

Q. What must you do before taking the Lord's Supper?

A. We must think about our sins and truly be sorry for doing them and want to stop, we must honestly want to live a new life, have a strong faith in God's mercy through Jesus Christ, be thankful that he died for us, and not have hurt anyone without having said sorry.