

THIS WE KNOW

PART TWO:
THE
CATECHISM

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of the downloadable “622 service” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: STRANGE RITUALS

Divide your teens into teams of 2-5 and ask each group to come up with a brief skit based on one of the scenarios below. Each scenario involves a person who has a “strange ritual” that they must always perform while doing an ordinary task. In the skit, other people see this happening and want to understand the reason. Give your teens a few minutes to flesh out their skit, and to make it as entertaining as possible. If you have multiple teams, allow them to perform for one another. If you only have one group, allow a longer performance time.

Some scenarios might include:

- Must kneel down to brush teeth
- Must remove shoes and socks before washing dishes
- Must clap three times between bites while eating a meal
- Must sing a familiar children's song while putting on shoes

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: VERY PERSONAL HABITS

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- What are some things that you do every day without even thinking about it?
- Do you (or does someone you know) have any special habits or rituals that are connected to these things? Why?
- If we were to take a look around your room at home, what words and images would we find on the walls? Why?
- If you wanted to begin to be intentional about the messages that you put in front of yourself, what would the messages say and how could you make them part of your everyday life?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *Every life is filled with ordinary things and moments that we often overlook. We wake and get up, dress and groom ourselves for the day, we eat meals, run errands, do chores, talk with friends, etc.*
- *Provide the example of praying before meals. This can be a way to remember that everything we eat is a gift from God, and to be grateful. Perhaps some of them have clothing or jewellery that has a special meaning. Perhaps they know someone who doodles favourite song lyrics on their hands or on books in class.*
- *We often surround ourselves with images that speak to our preferences and our sense of identity. Young people often do this by associating themselves with sports heroes, bands or other celebrity brands and role models.*

THIS WE KNOW

PART TWO:
THE
CATECHISM

When we stop to think about it, some of these things that we place in front of our eyes each day may not actually be good for us, and may be distracting us from more beneficial things.

- *What if the first thing you saw when you woke up in the morning was an icon reminding you of how much God loves you? What if each time you opened your wallet, before you could get at your money there was a Bible verse reminding you to be compassionate? See what ideas your teens come up with.*

THE LESSON: DEUTERONOMY 6+10

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

(IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE RAISED DURING THIS UNIT, WE RECOMMEND "DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A HANDS-ON APPROACH, VOLUME 2: OUR LIFE IN THE CHURCH" BY SUE CARELESS.)

What do you think of when you hear the word "Catechism"? Perhaps you have not had much exposure to it before. Would it surprise you to be told that it is both *foundational* and *relevant*? There's a reason why young believers are traditionally given this particular instruction as they are setting out on their journey of faith. Learning the Catechism isn't going to furnish you with *all* you need, but it *will* equip you with a very solid grounding.

If you've taken a Catechism class in the Prayer Book tradition, then you know that it requires you to learn: the Apostle's Creed, the Ten Commandments (through the lens of Christ's teaching), the Lord's Prayer, as well as the significance of Baptism and Holy Communion. Phew! But the course not only requires students to regurgitate some ancient words, rather you must understand *how they relate to you personally*. So, for example, not only must we learn the "I believe" of the Creed, but we must also understand the personal relationship to which it points. That's what is going on when the Catechism states that through the creed "I learn to have faith in the one true God: in God the Father, *who made me* and all the world; in God the Son, *who redeemed me* and all mankind; and in God the Holy Spirit, *who sanctifies me* and all the people of God" (BCP p. 545).

As you're getting started in the Christian life, the Church wants to ensure that you have a crash course in right belief (Creed), right help (Lord's Prayer), and right living (Ten Commandments). If you have never taken a Catechism course or worked through the material in the Prayer Book, it is well worth the time. (*If you don't have a prayer book of your own, you can find the Catechism here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/catechism/>*).

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It has always been important for God's people to know what is true and right; to take this wholly in – not just into their minds, but into their hearts also, allowing it to inform every aspect of life. Take a look at what we find in the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. This section of scripture forms part of "The Law", given by God through Moses to the people of Israel.

Refer to Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 10:12-19.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- What does this passage tell us about God?
- What are some of the specific commands mentioned in this passage?
- Take a look at 10:13. What is the reason given for the commandments in this verse?
- Take a look at 10:18-19. What connections do you see between the command and its reason?

THIS WE KNOW

PART TWO:
THE
CATECHISM

- What practical instructions were offered to help the people remember to keep the commandments? How do you think we can apply this to our own lives today?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *Note: This section of scripture forms part of “The Law”, given through Moses to the people of Israel. The New Testament has a lot to say about the Law, namely that over time it had been expanded by religious leaders in ways that were harmful, and moreover that no human being could fully keep the law because of our sinful nature. This is why “when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5). Though Christians understand that we can only be justified through Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection, we recognize that the law is a reflection of God’s holiness and helps to flesh out how we can love God and our neighbours.*
- *Deuteronomy 6:4 is sometimes called “The Shema” (from the first Hebrew word in the verse), and is a foundational passage in the Old Testament, almost like a creed, declaring that God is one God, and that the worship of his people must be fixed on him only. The passage in chapter 10 tells us that everything belongs to God (v14), that he loves those he chooses (v15). The passage goes on to give us details about God’s character: he is all-powerful, just, and compassionate (v17-18).*
- *The first command we read is that the people are to love the Lord wholly, and his command is to be “on your heart” – permeating every aspect of life (6:5-9). Chapter 10 reiterates the command to love God wholly, to fear him, serve him, and obey him (10:12-13). Verse 19 includes a specific command to care for “sojourners”, those who are traveling, away from their own homelands.*
- *In 10:13, the reason given for the command is “for your good”. Like loving parents who do not want their child to run out into the road, God’s commandment is given with the wellbeing of his children in view.*
- *There are several connections here. The first thing to notice is the character of God. God cares about these people who are at a disadvantage. Therefore his people should care about them too. Moreover, Israel was to be empathetic towards them, since they had been in similar circumstances themselves (and might be again).*
- *The people of Israel were instructed to surround themselves with this teaching. It was to be passed on “diligently” to children, talked about during daily life (6:7), and reminders were to be placed in and around the home (6:9). This was to become as present and personal as a hand or eyes (v8). The fact that God loved them and had chosen them, and that they were set apart for him was to be their central identity and it was essential that this not be forgotten (though it often was). In the same way, we can be at risk of only considering these things on occasion, whereas instead they ought to permeate our lives. Do we think about God and talk about him every day? What about the place where we live? What indications could be found in that physical space that you are a believer? What habits do you have in place that can keep you from drifting away from the faith?*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

During this unit, we’re going to take some of the prayers that come from the liturgies of Baptism and Confirmation and pray them for one another as a reminder and a renewal of commissioning.

THIS WE KNOW

PART TWO:
THE
CATECHISM

Spend some time reflecting on and praying with the words of this prayer:

Almighty and everliving God, who is able to regenerate thy servants by Water and the Holy Spirit, and to grant forgiveness for all their sins: Confirm and strengthen these persons, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Spirit the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and might; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear, now and for ever. Amen.

(ADAPTED FROM THE CONFIRMATION SECTION OF THE MINISTRATION OF HOLY BAPTISM TO SUCH AS ARE OF RIPER YEARS, BCP PAGE 538)

CLOSING PRAYERS (622 AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

Before closing, ask the teens to listen quietly while you pray the words of the At-Home Challenge prayer over them.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE "PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS" SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER.

Then finish with the "Grace", the final prayer in the booklet.

DEUTERONOMY 6+10: **HEART, SOUL, MIGHT**

6 ⁴Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

10 ¹²And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good? ¹⁴Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. ¹⁵Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. ¹⁶Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. ¹⁷For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. ¹⁸He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.