

**St. Peter's Fireside
Catechism: Deeper into faith**

January – June 2020
Sundays, 2:30-4:00pm (subject to slight change)
Email: pgordon@stpf.ca

Description

Catechism (meaning “to instruct”) is the ancient Christian practice of teaching the doctrines of faith to new believers. At St. Peter’s, Catechism is a course to study carefully the core beliefs Christians have professed since the time of the New Testament until today. It is for all who want to go deeper in their Christian faith and to continue growing into maturity in Christ (Hebrews 6:1-3).

Our method of study reflects our Anglican heritage by working through the ACNA Catechism, *To Be a Christian* (ed. J. I. Packer).

The course will take place generally every other week (see Schedule & Outline for dates). Register online at www.stpf.ca/events.

Learning Objectives and Goals

1. To help each person understand what exactly it is we as Christians believe. This is the primary goal: to have a deeper grasp of the core beliefs of Christian faith as they have been shared by Christians throughout the centuries.
2. To grow in confidence and ability in communicating the core tenets of Christian faith to others (1 Pet 3:15).
3. To develop an ability to read Holy Scripture thoughtfully and carefully, learning some basic skills of interpretation
4. To experience wonder and awe at the many ways God has (and is) acting to save, heal, and redeem creation (of which we are a part!).
4. To have the option of Anglican Confirmation (see note below).

Expectations

1. *Attendance.* Unlike Community Groups, Catechism requires an upfront commitment to be present at all sessions. This means that participants BLOCK OUT these days and times. In extreme circumstances – like a pre-existing commitment that cannot be rescheduled or serious illness – a make-up session can be slotted. However, the group should strive to keep make-up sessions to a minimum, as they place extra demands on the time of the teacher.
2. *Reading.* Participants are asked to prepare for each session in the following manner:
 - a. Read in advance all the questions/statements that will be discussed.
 - b. Write down any aspects of the material that are unclear or create confusion (no questions are off-limits!) for discussion in the next session.
3. *Memorization.* Each session, participants will together memorize 1 Scripture passage that relates to the discussion, selected by the catechist.

Schedule & Outline

*Schedule of topics and catechetical questions addressed is a general guide and may be adapted as the course progresses

January 19 – The Gospel (TBC 1-18)
February 2 – Creeds & Scripture (TBC 19-37)
February 10 – Faith in God (TBC 38-48)
February 16 – Faith in Christ (TBC 49-65)
March 1 – Faith in Christ & the Holy Spirit (TBC 66-88)
March 15 – The Church (TBC 89-101) & Sacraments (TBC 102-117)
March 22 – Conversion & transformation: sin, salvation, & hope (133-148)
April 5 – Prayer; Introduction to the Lord’s Prayer (TBC 149-168)
April 19 – Lord’s Prayer II (TBC 169-200 – a selection TBD)
May 3 – Lord’s Prayer III (201-223)
May 17 – Rule of Life & discipleship (TBC 224-255)
June 7 – Behaving Christianly (256-285)
June 14– Behaving Christianly (286-317)
June 28 – Behaving Christianly (318-345)

Evaluation

At the end of the course, a short exam will be given to help participants reflect upon what they have learned. This is meant to help participants bring together some of their key learnings and articulate one or two aspects of the Christian faith that they have grasped on a deeper level.

Catechesis & Confirmation

Successfully completing Catechism may lead to confirmation, but it does not have to. Confirmation is a service whereby individuals publicly identify with Christ and His church universal (not only the Anglican church). There are several reasons people are confirmed:

1. They were baptized as an infant and now desire, at an appropriate age of understanding, to personally and publicly confirm their baptism
2. They have already been confirmed but have had lapses in the practice of faith. Confirmation is a wonderful way to rededicate one’s life and affections to Christ. As Anglicans, we do not re-baptize. So confirmation is the natural way to renew one’s faith commitments.
3. Confirmation is also an occasion for a person to identify with the church more broadly, as opposed to just being identified with a local congregation. In this sense, confirmation is a public reminder and declaration that to be a Christian is to be part of a community (the “household of God”) that transcends any single place or any particular time.