

St. Peter's Fireside Catechism: Deeper into Faith

February – June 2023
Sundays, 1:00-2:30pm
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DESCRIPTION

Catechism is the ancient Christian practice of teaching the doctrines of faith to people. 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. This course is designed for all followers of Jesus seeking deeper grounding in the full reality of Christian faith and life.

The method of study will be based around three key elements of Christian faith and spiritual life: creation, redemption, and holy living. We will focus on God's person as related to each (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), common ways these doctrines are misunderstood, and invitations for our proper response as followers of Jesus Christ.

The course will use *To Be A Christian: An Anglican Catechism* as the primary source, which draws upon the classic catechetical tools of study: The Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the 10 Commandments. However additional readings will be added as well to further our conversation.

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 Peter 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!).
5. 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, as well as any supplementary materials.

- 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. *Sunday worship.* Catechism is about a deepening of faith and growth in Christian life. Since our faith is always lived out in community and is nourished through our coming together in worship, during Catechism participants will commit to consistent attendance at Sunday worship with the local body of Christ.
4. *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. Specific readings will be assigned week by week.

Week 1		Feb 5	–	Introduction: Where are we going?
Week 2		Feb 19	–	Our Story: Scripture & Creeds
Week 3		Mar 5	–	Creation: Faith in God the Creator
Week 4		Mar 12	–	Creation Misguided: When creation becomes God
Week 5		Mar 26	–	Creation Response: Sabbath, Work, & Time
Week 6		Apr 2	–	Salvation: Faith in God the Saviour
Week 7		Apr 16	–	Salvation Misguided: Secular and 'religious' responses
Week 8		Apr 23	–	Salvation Response: A Sacramental Life
Week 9		May 7	–	A Life of Prayer
Week 10		May 14	–	Holy Living: Faith in God the Holy Spirit
Week 11		May 28	–	Holy Living Misguided: What else might I live for?
Week 12		June 4	–	Holy Living Response: Life in the Spirit
Week 13		June 11	–	Conclusion: Where do we go from here?

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.