

Bay Ridge Christian Church



Catechism Questions and Answers

Question 1: Why did God create humans?

To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Question 2: Where do we learn how to glorify God and enjoy Him forever?

In His Word, the Bible.

Question 3: What is the central message of the Bible?

The central message of the Bible is that God is bringing glory to Himself through the Person and work of Jesus Christ as He creates and redeems a people in whom He lives by His Spirit so that they will glorify and enjoy Him forever.

Question 4: What must you know to be part of God's people?

To be part of God's people I must know how great my sin is, how God has delivered me from my sin and misery through Christ, and how I can show my gratitude to God for delivering me and grow in my Christian life.

Question 5: Who is God?

God is the Infinite, Eternal, Sovereign Creator of everything.

Question 6: Is there more than One True God?

No, there is only one true God. He eternally exists as the Trinity, one God in Three Persons - the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct Persons, but are one in being, power, and glory.

Question 7: What is God's character like?

God is perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.

Question 8: What does God demand of you?

God demands that I be perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.

Question 9: What has God given to teach you his demand?

God has given us His law, which is a reflection of His character, to teach us how to be perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.

Question 10: Can you summarize what God's law commands you to do?

All the law is summarized in these two commandments: You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all of your soul, and with all of your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Question 11: Can you live up to all of this perfectly?

No. I have a natural tendency in thought, word, and deed to not love God and my neighbor as He has commanded.

Question 12: What is sin?

Sin is disobeying or not conforming to God's law perfectly.

Question 13: How do you come to learn of your sin and guilt?

The law of God shows me my sin and guilt.

Question 14: Did God originally create humans so sinful and guilty?

No. God originally created them good, made in His own image, able to glorify and enjoy Him forever.

Question 15: Then how did humans become sinful and guilty?

Our first father Adam sinned when he willfully disobeyed God. This fall has poisoned our nature so that we are born sinners, guilty before God, and since then we all choose to disobey God as well.

Question 16: Will God allow such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?

No. In His holiness, love and integrity God judges all sin, both now and in eternity.

Question 17: What then is the effect of God's judgment upon our fallen condition?

In our fallen condition we have lost fellowship with God, His creation, and one another, and brought His just anger and curse upon ourselves. As a result, we are subject to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

Question 18: Will God condemn all mankind to suffer and die in sin?

No. In His holiness, love and integrity God has provided a way of redemption and forgiveness.

Question 19: If according to God's righteous judgment we deserve punishment both in this world and for eternity in hell, how then can we escape this punishment and return to God's favor?

God's holy justice must be satisfied and paid in full, either by ourselves or by another.

Question 20: Can we pay our debt to God by our own efforts and good works?

No. In fact, by our sins we increase our debt every day.

Question 21: What sort of Redeemer and Mediator is needed to bring us back to God?

One who is perfectly righteous, truly human and truly God.

Question 22: Why must the Redeemer be truly human?

The Redeemer must be truly human so that He might fulfill humanity's obligations to God by completely obeying God's Law and suffering and dying for human disobedience.

Question 23: Why must the Redeemer be perfectly righteous?

The Redeemer must be perfectly righteous so that His obedience and sacrifice in our place will be acceptable to God.

Question 24: Why must the Redeemer be truly, fully God?

The Redeemer must be truly, fully God so that His obedience and suffering would be of infinite value, He would be able to bear the full wrath of God against sin, and overcome Satan and death.

Question 25: Who is the Redeemer and Mediator, the perfectly righteous God-Man?

The only Redeemer and Mediator between God and humanity is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God who became human for us and for our salvation.

Question 26: What three major roles from the Old Testament did Jesus fulfill?

Jesus fulfilled the roles of Prophet, Priest, and King.

Question 27: How does Jesus fulfill the roles of Prophet, Priest, and King?

As Prophet, Jesus speaks the Word of God to us. As Priest, He sacrifices Himself for our sins and intercedes for us before God's throne. As King, He rules over us and all of creation to accomplish the will of God.

Question 28: Does Jesus' work as Redeemer mean that all of our sins can be forgiven?

Yes, through the redeeming work of Jesus, we may be reconciled to God, having all of our sins forgiven and having the righteousness of Christ credited to us.

Question 29: Did Jesus' work as Redeemer accomplish anything else?

Jesus' redeeming work is the beginning of reconciling all fallen creation.

Question 30: Are all people saved through the redemptive work of Christ?

No, only those who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united to Christ in sincere faith are saved.

Question 31: What happens to those who are not united to Christ by faith?

They remain under God's righteous judgment, and after death are cast into hell, where they will be justly punished forever.

Question 32: How may we be saved from this terrible fate?

We are saved only by repenting of our sin and having true faith in Jesus Christ and His substitutionary atoning death on the cross.

Question 33: What is repentance?

Repentance is when a person becomes aware of their sin, grieves over and hates it, and turns from their sin to God, seeking mercy in Christ.

Question 34: What is true faith in Jesus Christ?

True faith in Jesus Christ is a knowledge of what God has revealed in his Word concerning the Person and redeeming work of Jesus Christ, agreement that God's Word on these things is true, and an active trusting in Jesus, receiving and resting on him alone for salvation.

Question 35: What does it mean that we are saved by Christ alone through faith alone?

It means that we are accepted before God because of Christ's righteousness and atoning work alone, apart from any works or merits of our own, and that His righteousness is received by faith alone, apart from any efforts on our part.

Question 36: Can our own works contribute anything to our acceptance before God?

No, they can not, because even our best efforts and works are defiled by sin, and because everything necessary to salvation is found in Christ. To seek salvation through good works is a denial that Christ is the only Redeemer and Savior.

Question 37: What change in status occurs for those who receive Christ through faith alone?

Those who receive Christ through faith alone are justified and adopted by God.

Question 38: What is justification?

Justification is the gracious act of God in which He declares that we are totally righteous, as if we had never sinned and as if we had positively obeyed all of God's law perfectly.

Question 39: What is adoption?

Adoption is the gracious act of God in which He makes us members of His family with all of the rights, privileges, and inheritance of being His child.

Question 40: Since we receive all of these benefits by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, must we still do good works and obey God's Word?

Yes, because those who have been redeemed by Christ and regenerated by the Spirit receive a new nature that desires to submit to God and to show gratitude to God by obeying Him and doing good works.

Question 41: What do we believe about the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God, coeternal with the Father and the Son, and He dwells forever in everyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

Question 42: How does the Holy Spirit help us?

The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, comforts us, guides us, gives us spiritual gifts, and empowers us to resist sin and obey God.

Question 43: What is sanctification?

Sanctification is the gradual process through which those who have already been justified by faith alone are being made holy in all they desire and do, as they are empowered by the Holy Spirit to actively resist sin and embrace righteousness.

Question 44: What things does the Holy Spirit use to help us grow in our sanctification?

The Holy Spirit works in many ways to sanctify us, but He primarily uses the means of grace - specific activities in which God has promised to meet His people and strengthen them by His grace. The most important means of grace are the Word of God, fellowship with believers in the Church, the sacraments of water baptism and the Lord's Supper, and prayer.

Question 45: What guide has God given us so that we may grow in our faith and learn how to live in a way that pleases him?

God has given us His Word, the Bible, to feed us, guide us, point us to Christ, and show us how to live in a manner that is pleasing to Him and for our good.

Question 46: How many books are in the Bible?

There are 66 books in the Bible.

Question 47: What are the two major sections of the Bible?

The two major sections of the Bible are the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Question 48: What are the thirty nine books of the Old Testament?

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther
Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon (or Song of Songs)
Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Question 49: What are the twenty seven books of the New Testament?

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Acts
Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude
Revelation

Question 50: How is the Word of God to be read and heard?

The Word of God should be read and heard prayerfully with delight, humility, diligence, reverence, and submission, so that we may receive it in faith, store it in our hearts and apply it to our lives.

Question 51: How is the teaching of God's Word summarized in the Apostles' Creed?

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
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.

Question 52: What has God given to us so that we may know true holiness?

God has given us His moral law so that we might know true holiness, which is a reflection of God's character and thus never changes.

Question 53: How is the moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments?

The Ten Commandments, which are given in Exodus 20 and repeated in Deuteronomy 5, summarize the moral law as follows:

Preface: I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt

1. You shall have no other gods
2. You shall not make an idol
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy
5. Honor your father and mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor
10. You shall not covet

Question 54: How are the Ten Commandments divided?

The Ten Commandments are divided into two parts; the first teaches what we owe directly to God, and the second teaches what we owe to God in the way we treat our fellow humans.

Question 55: What is the preface to the Ten Commandments, and what does it teach us?

The preface to the Ten Commandments is “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” It teaches us that God is our Redeemer, who has freed us, and therefore as His people we should love and obey Him.

Question 56: What is the first commandment, and what does it teach us?

The first commandment is “You shall have no other gods.” It teaches us that we must worship and serve God, and that we must not worship or serve any other gods.

Question 57: What is the second commandment, and what does it teach us?

The second commandment is “You shall not make an idol.” It teaches us that we must worship God as He commands, not using images or other things God has forbidden.

Question 58: What is the third commandment, and what does it teach us?

The third commandment is “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.” It teaches us that we must not misuse or profane God’s name with our words or actions, but rather honor and fear God’s name with them.

Question 59: What is the fourth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The fourth commandment is “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” It teaches us that we must not work constantly, but that we must set aside a weekly time for rest and worship of our Creator and Redeemer.

Question 60: What is the fifth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The fifth commandment is “You shall honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” It teaches us that we must not dishonor or disrespect our parents or any others in authority over us, but must honor, submit, and obey them as those given authority over us by God. We are to do this so that we may enjoy a long and prosperous life.

Question 61: What is the sixth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The sixth commandment is “You shall not murder.” It teaches us that we must not murder or do any harm to others in thought, word, or deed, but must pray and work for their good.

Question 62: What is the seventh commandment, and what does it teach us?

The seventh commandment is “You shall not commit adultery.” It teaches us that we must not commit adultery or sexually sin in thought, word, or deed, but must be sexually pure whether in single life or marriage.

Question 63: What is the eighth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The eighth commandment is “You shall not steal.” It teaches us that we must not steal through theft, deceit, trickery, or fraud, but must be content and work hard to take care of our own needs and to have enough to share material possessions with those in need.

Question 64: What is the ninth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The ninth commandment is “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.” It teaches us that we must not lie or in any way deceive our neighbor, nor speak falsely about or slander our neighbor, but must speak the truth in love.

Question 65: What is the tenth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The tenth commandment is “You shall not covet.” It teaches us that we must not covet anything that is not ours, but rather be content with what we have and able to rejoice when others are blessed.

Question 66: Even as a Christian can you perfectly keep these commandments?

No. Even those who have been regenerated and given the Holy Spirit will continue to struggle with sin and will break God’s law in thought, word, and deed.

Question 67: Does the law of God help us to obey and to overcome sin?

No, the law does not enable us to obey; that is the work of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to resist sin and works to conform us to Christ.

Question 68: Then how is the law of God useful for the Christian?

The law of God is useful to give us a perfect guide to holiness, clearly distinguishing good from evil, so that we might know how the Spirit is working to conform us to God’s image.

Question 69: Does God call you to live the Christian life by yourself?

No, when I was united to Christ by faith, I was also united to other believers in the Church and called to walk in fellowship with them.

Question 70: What is the Church?

The Church is the body, bride, and temple of Christ, the community of all true believers for all time.

Question 71: Are Christians only called to be part of the universal Church?

No, all Christians are called to be part of local churches where they are led and cared for by elders, worship God, learn the Scripture, receive the sacraments, pray together, serve one another, and carry out the Great Commission together.

Question 72: What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a special symbol given by God to His people that, when received in faith, serves as a sign and seal of His promises to us, functions as a means of grace to strengthen us, and through which we testify of our faith in Him and His promises.

Question 73: What is required for the sacraments to be effective?

The sacraments do not work automatically, but only as the Holy Spirit makes them effective for those who receive them in faith.

Question 74: What are the sacraments the Lord Jesus Christ gave to the Church in the new covenant?

The Lord Jesus Christ instituted two sacraments for the Church in the new covenant: water baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Question 75: What is water baptism?

Water baptism is the sign and seal of our union with Christ and the cleansing He provides for sin, a means of grace to provide strength in our struggle against sin, and the medium through which we testify of our faith in Christ and membership in the church.

Question 76: Does water baptism itself regenerate or wash away sin?

No, it is only the sign that points to the regeneration which is done by the Holy Spirit, and the washing away of sin which comes by the blood of Christ and is received by faith alone.

Question 77: Understanding these things about water baptism, what is the best method for water baptism, and who should be water baptized?

Water baptism should be done by immersion, under the authority of the Trinity in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it should be administered only to those who have personally professed faith in Christ, not infants.

Question 78: What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper is the sacramental meal Christ commanded all believers to eat, in which the death of Christ for our salvation is represented in the breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the cup, and through which the believer spiritually feeds upon Christ, giving thanks to God as the elements are received in faith.

Question 79: What other names are given for the Lord's Supper in Scripture? What do we learn about this meal from these names?

The Lord's Supper is also known as the Breaking of Bread, the Lord's Table, the Eucharist, and Communion. From these we learn that this sacrament is a meal belonging to God, for which we give thanks, and through which we are united with God and His people as we partake in faith.

Question 80: Does the Lord's Supper add anything to Christ's atoning work?

No. Christ died once for all, forever completing His atoning work. In the Lord's Supper His sacrifice is remembered by believers, and they are spiritually strengthened as they receive the meal in faith.

Question 81: Do the bread and wine actually become the very blood and body of Christ?

No. The bread and wine are symbols of His body and blood, His redeeming life and death for us, and they unite us to Christ and all of His saving benefits when received properly.

Question 82: What is the proper way to receive the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper must be received in faith with thanksgiving by those who have confessed and repented of their sins. Those who receive the meal in this manner are assured of the forgiveness of their sins and receive grace to strengthen them in the faith, but those who do not come properly eat and drink judgment on themselves.

Question 83: What is meant by the words 'until He comes' in reference to the Lord's Supper?

The words 'until He comes' teach us that Jesus will return again, and we will eat and drink with Him in the consummated Kingdom. This is the joy and blessed hope of all believers.

Question 84: What is prayer?

Prayer is conversation with God in which believers pour out our hearts to God in the name of Christ in adoration, confession of sin, thanksgiving, and supplication, and through which our desires are changed to conform with the will of God.

Question 85: Why is prayer necessary for Christians?

God commands us to pray because it is a constant reminder of our need for God and His grace, and He has promised to hear and answer our prayers as we come to Him properly.

Question 86: What is the proper attitude in prayer?

We should pray with love for God and our neighbor, perseverance, gratitude, humble submission to God's will, and faith, knowing that God always hears our prayers because of Christ.

Question 87: Where do we learn how to pray?

The whole word of God teaches us how to pray, particularly in the Psalms and other prayers recorded in Scripture, and especially in the model prayer given by Jesus to His disciples, commonly known as the Lord's Prayer.

Question 88: What are the words of the Lord's Prayer?

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. *For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Question 89: What is the preface to the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us?

The preface to the Lord's Prayer is "Our Father in heaven." It teaches us that God is our Father in Christ, so we should approach Him with reverence and confidence, as children to their father, and that we should pray with and for others.

Question 90: What is the first request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The first request is "Hallowed be your name." In it we learn to pray that God will enable us to glorify Him in everything, and that He will work all things for the honor of His own Name.

Question 91: What is the second request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The second request is "Your Kingdom come." In it we learn to pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, that God's Kingdom of grace and righteousness would be advanced through us, and that it would come in its glorious fullness quickly.

Question 92: What is the third request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The third request is "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In it we learn to pray that by His grace God would make us to know, submit to, and obey His will in everything, as the angels do in heaven.

Question 93: What is the fourth request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The fourth request is "Give us today our daily bread." In it we learn that we should acknowledge that everything we have is a gift of God and so we pray to God each day for our needs, asking Him to bless us so that we might be a blessing to others, as we look to Jesus, the True Eternal Bread.

Question 94: What is the fifth request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The fifth request is "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." In it we learn to pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely forgive all our sins, and we promise that by His grace we will forgive others as we have been forgiven.

Question 95: What is the sixth request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The sixth request is "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." In it we learn to pray that God would protect us from Satan and his temptations, humbly recognizing our need for God and His grace to sustain and deliver us.

Question 96: What is the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer is "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." In it we learn to acknowledge all authority, power, and glory belong to God, and He is able to do all we ask and more; so we pray for these things that we might live for Him and His glory now and forever.

Question 97: Why do we end our prayer with "Amen"?

We end our prayer with "Amen" to show that we earnestly desire these things, and we have confidence that our Father in heaven hears us and delights to answer our prayers, because every promise of God is given to us in Christ.

Question 98: Knowing all of these things, what is your only comfort in life and death?

That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, from this day forth, to live unto him.