

Preparing Your Children for the Lord's Table

There are few things more delightful to a parent than hearing your child's interest in knowing and following Jesus. The years of praying, reading, and teaching seem to be taking root in their hearts and beginning to bear fruit, which is what every Christian parent hopes for from their child's earliest days. Often one of the first signs of that interest is a desire to partake in the Lord's Supper. Because we practice the Supper weekly at Redeemer, this is a natural and expected development, which is why we want to make sure that we help parents prepare their children for this important step in their Christian discipleship.

The following guide is designed to help you begin to prepare your child for the elder interview that Redeemer requires before coming to the Lord's Supper. It is organized around the five membership vows every communing member of the church takes upon joining the church, and contains a list of "Key issues" to talk through as well as the relevant questions from the *First Catechism* we use in our School of Discipleship curriculum. (You may pick up a copy of the *First Catechism* from our book table if you do not have a copy.)

We encourage you to spend some time talking through these questions with your children even *before* they express interest in the Lord's Supper so that when the time comes they will be all the more prepared to talk about their growing faith intelligently and conscientiously. We hope this guide proves helpful to you and your family as you minister to your kids!

Vow #1: Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in God's sight, justly deserving his displeasure and without hope save in his sovereign mercy?

Key issues: Does your child understand who God is? Do they understand the nature of sin? Do they view their sin as against God (and not just Mom and Dad)? Do they understand that God must punish their sin? Do they understand that they cannot save themselves?

Suggested catechism questions:

1. Who made you? God.
3. Why did God make you? For his own glory.
4. How can you glorify God? By loving him and doing what he commands.
29. What is sin? Sin is any lack of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God.
30. What is "lack of conformity"? Not being or doing what God requires.
31. What is "transgression"? Doing what God forbids.
38. How sinful are you by nature? I am corrupt in every part of my being.

40. Can anyone go to heaven with this sinful nature? No. Our hearts must be changed before we can believe in Jesus and go to heaven.

32. What does every sin deserve? The wrath and curse of God.

42. Who can change a sinner's heart? The Holy Spirit alone.

Vow #2: Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as he is offered in the gospel?

Key issues: Do your child understand who Jesus is (his divine and human natures, his sinless life, etc.)? Can they explain what Jesus did to save them? Do they know what it means to trust Jesus to save them?

Suggested catechism questions:

46. How then can you be saved? By the Lord Jesus Christ.

48. How did Christ fulfill the covenant of grace? Christ obeyed the whole law for his people, and then suffered the punishment due for their sins.

49. Did Jesus ever sin? No. He lived a sinless life.

50. How could Christ suffer? Christ, the Son of God, became a man so that he could obey and suffer in our place.

53. What kind of death did Jesus die? The painful and shameful death of the cross.

68. How many offices does Christ fulfill as the promised Messiah? Christ fulfills three offices.

69. What are they? The offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king.

70. How is Christ your prophet? Christ teaches me the will of God.

71. How is Christ your priest? Christ died for my sins, and continues to pray for me.

72. How is Christ your king? Christ rules over me, the world and Satan, and he defends me.

141. Did Christ remain in the grave after his crucifixion? No. He rose bodily from the grave on the third day after his death.

58. What must you do to be saved? I must repent of my sin and believe in Christ as my Savior.

61. What does it mean to believe in Christ? To trust in Christ alone for my salvation.

Vow #3: Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?

Key issues: Does your child understand what it means to obey God? Are they following God? Do they pray for God's help to obey him? Are they grieved over their sin and repenting?

Suggested Catechism Questions:

59. How do you repent of your sin? I must be sorry for my sin, and hate and forsake it.

60. Why must you hate and forsake your sin? Because sin displeases God.

62. Can you repent and believe in Christ by your own power? No. I cannot repent and believe unless the Holy Spirit changes my heart.

63. How can you get the help of the Holy Spirit? God has told us to pray for the Holy Spirit's help.

57. How does God sanctify you? God makes me more and more holy in heart and conduct.

77. Why should we obey the Ten Commandments? Because God is our Creator, Savior, and King.

80. What do the Ten Commandments teach? To love God with all my heart, and my neighbor as myself.

82. Is God pleased with those who love and obey him? Yes. God says, "I love them that love me."

Vow #4: Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?

Key issues: Does your child participate in worship with your family? Do they sing, pray, and listen during church? Do they desire to be with God's people? Do they give to the church? Can they explain why the church is an important part of the Christian life?

Suggested Catechism Questions:

85. What does the first commandment teach you? To worship the true God, and him only.

94. How should you keep the Lord's Day? I should rest from my daily work and faithfully worship God.

Vow #5: Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to study its purity and peace?

Key issues: Can your child explain why discipline is important (maybe using an example from their family)? Who is “in charge” in the church? Can they name any of the pastors or elders?

96. What does the fifth commandment teach you? To love and obey my parents and all others that God appoints over me. [Here you may want to discuss how God has put pastors/elders over them to shepherd and care for them.]

Questions Regarding the Lord’s Supper

Key issues: Does your child understand the purpose of the Lord’s Supper? Do they have a sense of why it’s different from other meals? Can they identify what the elements represent? Do they know what it means to “examine themselves” or “discern the body” (1 Cor 11:28-29)?

Suggested Catechism Questions:

137. What sign is used in the Lord’s Supper? Eating bread and drinking wine to remember the suffering and death of Jesus.

138. What does the bread represent? Christ’s body sacrificed for our sins.

139. What does the wine represent? Christ’s blood shed for our sins.

140. Who can partake of the Lord’s Supper? Those who repent of their sins, trust in Christ, live a godly life, and profess their faith before the Church.