



Teacher Tips for

Not My Own

Discovering
God's Comfort
in the Heidelberg
Catechism

Glenda Mathes

Rev. Ronald L. Scheuers
General Editor

Introduction

by Glenda Mathes

Welcome!

Welcome to a new year of instructing the precious covenantal youth in your congregation! Perhaps you've taught catechism for so many years that beginning a new year seems routine. Perhaps this is your first year of teaching and you have no idea where to begin. More likely you're somewhere in between those two examples.

No matter how many or how few years you've taught catechism, these Teacher Tips are designed to help you prepare to teach each lesson and make the most of the short time you have with your students each week.

The Need

How important is church education anyway? Shouldn't parents be teaching their children biblical truths? Don't Christian schools provide instruction in the faith?

Even if the youth of your church are being trained faithfully by parents and Christian school teachers, church school still performs a vital role in the instruction of covenant youth. And although Sunday school is a relatively new invention, Reformed and Presbyterian church educators have long recognized the value of catechism instruction. That instruction may be more important than ever in today's society.

Many Christians are concerned about studies in recent years showing that an alarming number of young adults have left the Christian faith in which they were raised. Various estimates range from 60% (George Barna, *barna.org*) to 70% (*USA Today*, August 7, 2007) to even 75% (Frank Turek, *crossexamined.org*)!

You may think those sobering statistics reflect trends of liberal churches in mainline denominations, but according to Ken Ham and Britt Beemer, **two-thirds** of the youth in **conservative, Bible-believing** churches are **already gone** in terms of their faith commitment. Their research shows that of those young adults who no longer believe all the accounts in the Bible are true, 39.8% first had doubts in middle school, 43.7% first doubted in high school, and only 10.6% first experienced doubts during college (p. 32, *Already Gone*, Master Books, 2009).

Even young people growing up in Bible-believing churches are failing to accept the entirety of the Bible (especially the foundational chapters of Genesis) as true, failing to develop a biblical worldview that applies God's Word to their lives, and failing to learn how to defend their faith in the face of modern challenges.

Reformed and Presbyterian churches with solid catechism programs may have a lower incidence of young people leaving the faith, but even these churches must do all they can to instill truth and strengthen faith in covenantal youth. Catechism instruction ought to enable students to know God's Word as truth and to apply it to their lives.

This Curriculum

A distinctively Reformed perspective and unified program characterize the *Life in Christ* catechism curriculum. The series of volumes provides a comprehensive overview of the doctrines of grace, church history, the covenant, as well as specific Reformed confessions including the *Westminster Standards* and the *Three Forms of Unity* (*Heidelberg Catechism*, *Belgic Confession*, and *Canons of Dort*). The curriculum presents a full-orbed perspective not only in its material, but also in its method.

The *Life in Christ* catechism curriculum includes memorization of Scripture, confessional statements, and Reformed concepts. The value of memorization cannot be overstated. Words memorized in youth often anchor the heart in the calm harbor of God's peace when tossed in life's tempests. And God specifically commands the memorization of His Word as an effective antidote to sin: "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11).

This curriculum goes beyond mere rote memorization, however, by incorporating application and apologetics. While students learn God's Word, they also learn how to apply it to their lives and defend their faith in the world.

Your Role

You are probably part of a church that presents infants for baptism. Maybe you vow with the rest of the congregation at these children's baptisms to receive them in love, pray for them, help care for their instruction in the faith, and encourage and sustain them in the fellowship of believers (p. 131, *Psalter Hymnal*, 1976). Teaching covenant youth is a tangible way to fulfill your vow to care for their instruction in the faith. You may be surprised to feel as if you are being blessed more than the students!

Recent statistics are a wake-up call for parents, pastors, elders, and all church educators. You must take seriously your calling as an instructor of your church's covenant youth. Instructors should immerse themselves in God's Word so that they not only know and understand it, but live it. It must be evident not only in church and the classroom that the teacher loves and serves God, but it must also be evident in the home and in the work place. Young people quickly discern hypocrisy, and few things more quickly turn them from the church.

Combat recent statistics by looking for ways to emphasize the entirety of God's Word as truth and the applicability of it to every area of your students' lives.

You more effectively utilize the curriculum when you **pray, prepare, and plan.**

Pray

The most important thing you can do as an instructor is **pray**. Pray for God's guidance and His equipping grace as you prepare each lesson and as you teach it. Pray that you will know God's Word and faithfully teach it to these impressionable young people. Pray that you will genuinely live God's Word in your private as well as your public life. Pray that you will always be prepared to answer for the hope that is in you as well as to answer any student questions.

Pray for each of your students by name. Pray that their minds will understand the concepts, but especially that their hearts will be soft soil in which the Word of God takes root. Pray for their families. Pray that their parents will have a strong marriage and will be united in their efforts to train their children in the Lord.

Pray for your church's educational program and all the instructors.

Pray for Christ's church.

Prepare

Since these are interactive lessons that will require some preparation time on the part of the student, you should be prepared to spend some time in preparation as well. You may want to write or contact parents to encourage their involvement with the learning process. Students should begin preparing early in the week and may need parental assistance. Lessons or parts of them may work well for use in family devotions.

Read the lesson yourself. Make sure you understand all of the text and concepts. Read suggested scripture passages and look up any referenced work. A careful reading will alert you to any parts of the lesson that may require additional explanation or prior research. Reading the lesson orally, perhaps even in front of other people or family members, may be helpful. Oral reading increases comprehension. It can also help you overcome any awkwardness or nervousness you might be feeling.

Determine how you will teach the lesson. You are not required to use every part of every lesson. The volumes are written for an approximated grade level, but each instructor has the flexibility to adjust the material to the learning level of the students. Consider how you will use class time to discuss, reinforce, and examine lesson concepts.

Decide how much of the memory work you will require from the students and how you will check their learning progress. You could ask for either oral or written responses for memory work. However you decide to implement memory work, strive for consistency in amount and method. While memory work from the Bible and the *Three Forms of Unity* appears in bold print, alternative or additional memory work is included for churches that wish to incorporate memorization from the *Westminster Standards*.

Think about how news of current events or archaeological findings can be shared with the class to foster a biblical worldview or support the Bible's truth. Look for maps or pictures that can be shared with students to supplement and enliven the lesson's text.

Plan

Plan out your year by determining which lesson will be covered on each day of class. If extra dates are available, you may want to schedule review quizzes or contests. Reviews could be written or oral. Younger children especially enjoy team contests. If an individual is not able to adequately answer the question, he or she could be permitted to confer with teammates for a reduced number of points. If the team cannot answer, the opposing team could have opportunity to answer for reduced points. Use your imagination to make every lesson and review as interesting as possible.

Each lesson has been prepared in a way that anticipates about forty-five minutes of classroom time for review. But you can't come to class and hope to "wing it" through thirty or forty-five minutes. You must have a plan.

It may be helpful to write out a lesson plan that lists the things you want to accomplish in their intended order. Remember to open and close with prayer, perhaps assigning a different student each week for one of these functions on the following Sunday.

It is an advisable idea to have more items on your plan than you think necessary. If class is longer than usual or the lesson goes more quickly than anticipated, you will have a plan for filling the remaining amount of time in a productive manner. After the first class or two, you will soon learn how your lesson plan needs to be adjusted.

How Should I Teach?

by Glenda Mathes

The Material

Not My Own: Discovering God's Comfort in the Heidelberg Catechism is an introductory overview of the Heidelberg Catechism. It focuses on the Catechism's theme of comfort by providing practical application of biblical teaching. The Heidelberg Catechism is a beautiful and highly personal confession loved by generations of Reformed believers that remains decidedly practical for today's Christians.

The Catechism's personal aspect is stressed in *Not My Own* with first person questions as lesson titles and practical application throughout the text. Each lesson includes sections of explanation followed by "Thinking Carefully" questions for review and further reflection. The "For Memory" sections include selections from Scripture, the Heidelberg Catechism, and optional questions and answers from the Westminster Shorter Catechism. A graphic box reiterates "Key Words and Concepts" from the lesson.

Not My Own was written with middle school students in mind, but can be used effectively in lower or higher grade levels. As the instructor, you will want to require an amount of memory work that is appropriate for the grade level and learning abilities of your students. You may find they do well with all the suggested memory work, or that it works better for you to assign only parts of it.

As a general rule, bold formatted text is intended as required memory work. The Westminster Shorter Catechism (perhaps also the Key Words and Concepts) may be used for memory at your discretion. Those items could be used to challenge gifted students, but this should always be done in ways considerate of students who struggle to memorize (i.e., optional work on written papers handed in to instructor).

This booklet summarizes concepts and provides suggested answers for the "Thinking Carefully" questions, although most answers can be found in the material.

Communicating with the Students

Since each lesson in *Not My Own* includes reading and answering questions as well as memory, students will need to allow an adequate amount of time to prepare ahead of class. You may want to suggest that they begin working on their lessons early in the week, perhaps using them in connection with personal or family devotions.

You will also want to be sure students understand exactly what parts of the memory work you expect them to know for the following week.

As you go throughout your week, think about things you can share with students to supplement and enliven the lesson's text (see the **Introduction's** "Prepare" section).

My Prayer

It is my prayer that you and each student will grow in grace and truth as you explore the *Heidelberg Catechism* and discover the comfort of belonging to Christ.

Lesson 1

What Must I Know?

BELONGINGS

This first section impresses on the students that everything we have is a gift from God. Our ownership is only temporary, and we should take good care of His gifts and use them for His glory.

BELONGING

Thinking about belongings and ownership leads to this discussion of belonging. This second section shows the students that not only everything they own belongs to God, but also their very selves belong to Christ. It demonstrates this truth from Scripture.

Try to help your students avoid misconceptions about what belonging means.

Many people in history and even today mistreat others, using belonging as an excuse to justify horrific abuse. Be sure students understand that belonging to Christ shouldn't be equated with the wretched conditions of slavery or other abusive situations.

Some imaginative students may become anxious about the images of a strong man with a gun or an army rolling through town in tanks. Try to be sensitive to your audience. If you sense some students becoming overly anxious, try to emphasize the safety of belonging to Christ rather than overly dramatizing the horrors of this life.

On the other hand, some students may be more hardened and think they are pretty self-reliant. Try to demonstrate our dependence upon God to those who think they can handle everything themselves.

In either case, try to be in tune with the individual students and their needs. Above all, emphasize the comfort that comes from knowing we are always safe and secure in the arms of Christ.

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

1. Where does the Bible tell us that we belong to Jesus Christ?

- a. 1 Corinthians 6:19b–20a
- b. John 10:29
- c. Romans 14:8

2. Why is it a good thing to belong to Christ? Allow for freedom of expressing the idea that belonging to Christ means He will always keep us safe.

COMFORT FROM THE CATECHISM

This section introduces the student to both the study book and the *Heidelberg Catechism*. It explains the book's title and summarizes the scope of the class: exploring the *Heidelberg Catechism* and discovering what it says about God's promises of comfort in the Bible, as well as learning how to live with joy and die without fear.

It includes a brief and basic introduction to the *Heidelberg Catechism's* history.

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

3. Where do we find God's promises of comfort? In the Bible

4. What is a catechism? Questions and answers for teaching

5. Why is the catechism we are studying called the Heidelberg? That is the name of the town in Germany where it was first published.

6. For how many years have churches been using the *Heidelberg Catechism* to teach young people about the Christian faith? Subtract 1563 from your current year to find the correct answer.

COMFORT IN CHRIST

This section introduces the student to Q. and A. 1 and relates how it is very meaningful to many people.

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

7. What one word describes the thread, or theme, of the Heidelberg Catechism? Comfort

8. Why do you think Q. and A. 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism means so much to so many people? This question is intended to get students thinking about why the knowledge of belonging to Christ can be a comfort. Allow for freedom of expression about the comfort of belonging to Christ.

WHAT WE MUST KNOW

This section relates the three things students must know: We are sinners; Christ saved us from our sin; and we should show gratitude in a life of service.

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

9. What does the word *gospel* mean? “Good news”

10. What three things must we know from the Bible?

- a. My sin and misery are very great.
- b. Jesus Christ redeems me from my sin.
- c. In gratitude I must try to serve God.

11. What are the three main sections of the *Heidelberg Catechism*? Correct answers can be both the “S” and “G” words or either the “S” or the “G” words. Point out how the same initial letters make these three divisions easy to memorize.

- a. Sin and Guilt
- b. Salvation and Grace
- c. Service and Gratitude

Lesson 2

Do I Sin?

FIRST THE BAD NEWS

This section aims to help students realize that they *do* sin and *are* sinners.

Please make sure the students understand that this lesson does *not* teach that God views all sinners in the same way. Every person is a sinner, but there is a difference between the unsaved sinner and the redeemed sinner.

Once again, try to be sensitive to students who are easily convicted of personal sin as well as to those who are not so quickly convicted. Some students may be crushed with the weight of their sin, while others—particularly those from an unbelieving family or without a strong church background—may find it difficult to believe that they are sinners.

NOW THE GOOD NEWS

Don't dwell on the bad news regarding conviction of sin too long; don't neglect to tell the students the gospel of salvation in Christ. Make sure they understand that—even though we cannot know what's in each person's heart—there is a distinction between sinners who remain stubborn in their rebellion and those who are saved by grace.

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

- 1. How do you know you are a sinner?** The Bible (or the law of God) tells me.
- 2. List two Bible passages that tell you that you are a sinner.**
 - a. Romans 3:23 (may also mention Romans 3:20)
 - b. 1 John 1:8
- 3. What two kinds of sinners are there in the world?** Unsaved sinners, and forgiven sinners.
- 4. Which one are you?** This question is designed to get the student thinking about the importance of their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and trusting Him for their salvation. If you sense a student is unsure or uncomfortable with this question, you may wish to discuss the matter with him or her privately and make sure he or she understands the gospel.

LORD'S DAYS IN THE CATECHISM

This section explains the rationale behind the Lord's Day divisions of the *Heidelberg Catechism*. It then emphasizes that only three of the fifty-two Lord's Days in the *Catechism* dwell on our sin and guilt.

Please be sure the students realize that the *Heidelberg Catechism* spends many more lessons dealing with salvation and service than with sin. It's unfair to characterize this Reformed confession as focusing on sin (as some do today).

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

- 5. How many Lord's Days are in the Heidelberg Catechism? 52**

6. Why is there that number? So that ministers could preach on one Lord's Day section each Sunday of the year.

7. How many Lord's Days focus on sin? Only three!

8. How many Lord's Days focus on something other than sin, like salvation and service? 52-3 = 49. Some students may note that fourteen lessons in this book focus on salvation and seven focus on service.

GOD'S LAW

This section illustrates that even traffic laws have a purpose: saving lives. It discusses God's law as it is summarized in the first and second great commandments.

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

9. What is God's first great law? Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind—or—I must love God above all.

10. What is God's second great law? Love your neighbor as yourself.

MY SINFUL NATURE

This section deals with the ever-present reality of sin—even in the lives of redeemed believers. Scripture shows that no one is able to keep God's law. We have a sinful nature. We are not sinners because we sin. We do sinful things because we are sinners. Sins are a result of our sinful nature.

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

11. Why do even forgiven sinners struggle with sin? Because we have a sinful nature.

12. Can anyone keep God's law perfectly? No

Lesson 3

How Did Sin Come into the World?

IT WAS GOOD

God's creation was good. Everything did what it was created to do.

IT WAS NOT GOOD

God's creation was not complete until He made a "suitable helper" (help meet) for Adam.

IT WAS VERY GOOD

After God made Adam and Eve, He viewed all creation as "very good" (Genesis 1:31). Adam and Eve were God's crowning creations. They loved God and enjoyed fellowship with Him. Everything and everyone did what they were created to do. There were none of the dreadful effects of sin. Everything was perfect.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. How did God view what He created on the first five days? Good

Why? Because it all did what it had been created to do.

2. What did God say when He first created Adam? "It is not good for man to be alone."

3. How did God view all creation on the sixth day? Very good

Why? Now there were people to love God and enjoy Him. They and all creation did what they had been created to do.

4. Read Genesis 1. Match the day with what God created.

The First Day	=	Light
The Second Day	=	Sky
The Third Day	=	Land and Plants
The Fourth Day	=	Sun, Moon, and Stars
The Fifth Day	=	Fish and Birds
The Sixth Day	=	Animals and Humans

IN GOD'S IMAGE

Being made in God's image means that in some ways people are similar to God. People can think. They can love God, enjoy God, praise God, and live for Him. They show that they are made in His image by loving Him and doing His will.

5. In what three ways can people reflect God's image?

- a. Knowledge
- b. Righteousness
- c. Holiness

6. What does it mean to be made in God's image? Allow for some variety of answers; students may simply say it means there are ways we are similar to God or may include the three ways listed above. They may also mention that people can think and can choose to do good, or they may say that it means loving God and doing His will.

Younger students may think it means to look like God. If this misconception comes up, try to steer the discussion toward ways we mirror God's *characteristics* rather than His *appearance*. Although God the Son appeared on earth in the flesh as Jesus, who looked like any other man, we don't know what God looks like.

IT BECAME BAD

Our good world became corrupt through the Fall of Adam and Eve.

THE BLAME GAME

Like Adam and Eve, we all have a tendency to blame our sin on others. It's part of our sinful nature, which we inherited from them. Their sin corrupted the world and everything in it. Every person since has been sinful from conception. We cannot do any good, unless we are born again by God's Holy Spirit.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

7. What's the short answer for how sin entered the world? the Fall

8. What happened in that sad event? Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the fruit He had told them not to eat.

9. Who did Adam blame? Eve and God

10. Who did Eve blame? Satan or the serpent

11. Why do people always want to blame someone else? It is part of our sinful nature, which we inherited from our first parents.

12. How can anyone do any good? Only if they are born again by the Spirit.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CATECHISM

This section presents a third use for the *Catechism*: helping all people (the common person, the person in the pew) learn more about the Bible. Informing students about the lack of printed material in the 1500s provides context for the historical need for the *Catechism* and leads into a discussion of its necessity today. Even though we have many copies of the Bible in our homes today, it's still important to learn biblical truth from the *Catechism*. In a culture permeated with the lies of evolution, the biblical truth about creation is crucial. Subsequent lessons will explore more about our Savior and His resurrection, but you should bear in mind while teaching this lesson that human death is part of the curse and the reason Christ had to conquer death in His resurrection. A belief that death was part of creation or occurred before Adam and Eve lived and sinned negates the need for a savior and destroys the gospel. Contrary to what many people think, creation is—indeed—a salvation issue!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

13. What are three reasons the Heidelberg Catechism was written?

- a. To teach young people truths from the Bible
- b. To help ministers preach each Lord's Day from the Bible
- c. To help all people learn more about the Bible

14. How can learning the Heidelberg Catechism help people today?

Students may come up with their own ideas about how it is helpful. Perhaps some will mention how it shows us our sin, describes our need for a Savior, and guides our living. Or they may relate in various ways the necessity of holding fast to the biblical teaching of creation in a world that is full of evolutionary propaganda.

This is your opportunity as a teacher to show students the importance of belief in creation. Creation is a foundational concept for all of Scripture. Even these young students are constantly exposed to worldly assumptions based on evolutionary thinking. Students who doubt creation are not likely to develop a solid, biblical worldview and may eventually leave the church.

If you want help emphasizing and teaching a biblical view of creation, check out the resources on the Answers in Genesis website (www.answersingenesis.org).

Lesson 4

How Bad Is Sin?

SIN IS BAD

The students should realize that everything we think, everything we say, and everything we do is stained with sin. Sin lives in our hearts and in the whole world. The world is full of death and misery. Misery is the pain and sorrow that come from sin.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. In what three ways do we sin?

- a. In our thoughts
- b. In our words
- c. In our actions

2. What is misery? The pain and sorrow that come from sin.

IS IT FAIR?

God is not unjust. He created man with the ability to obey His law. But Adam and Eve's sin destroyed their ability—and ours—to perfectly obey God.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. Were our first parents able to keep God's law? Yes. God created them with the ability to perfectly keep His law.

4. Why are you not able to keep God's law perfectly? Because my first parents sinned and destroyed their ability and mine to perfectly obey God.

IT GETS WORSE

Adam was our covenant representative. When Adam sinned, we not only received our sinful nature, but we also shared in the responsibility of his guilt. So we are born with two big problems: we are guilty and we are sinners. We are guilty before God, and we have sinful hearts.

We sin in everything we do. The penalty for sin is death, and one day we will have to die. God is just and holy. He cannot ignore sin or look the other way. His justice and righteousness demand that sin be punished.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. What are our two big problems when we are born?

- a. We are guilty.
- b. We are sinners.

6. How does God feel about sin? He hates it! He is terribly angry about it.

7. According to Heidelberg Catechism, answer 10, what two kinds of sin does God see in us?

- a. the sin we are born with
- b. the sins we commit

8. What will God do about our sin? He will punish it now and in eternity.

OUR JUST DESERTS

Our just deserts would be spending eternity in hell, but God gives us what we don't deserve—peace with God in this life and eternal joy with Him in heaven!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

9. What does it mean to get one's "just deserts"? to get what one deserves

10. What do we deserve? death and eternal punishment in hell

11. What is a penalty? a payment

12. What is the penalty for sin? death and eternal punishment in hell

13. What does God, in His mercy, give us? peace with God in this life and eternal joy with Him in heaven

THREE FORMS OF UNITY

The Three Forms of Unity include the *Belgic Confession*, the *Canons of Dort*, and the *Heidelberg Catechism*.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

14. What is the fourth reason the Heidelberg Catechism was written? to unite the churches

15. How does the *Catechism* still do that today? It helps different churches teach the same truths from the Bible.

16. What are the Three Forms of Unity?

a. *Belgic Confession*

b. *Canons of Dort*

c. *Heidelberg Catechism*

Lesson 5

Who Can Save Me?

WE CAN'T PAY THE PRICE

No person can pay the price of salvation. God will punish sin in this life and the next. God's justice and righteousness demand that our sin account be paid in full. Either we pay it ourselves by spending eternity in hell, or someone else has to pay the price. Since our sin debt gets bigger every day, there is no way we can pay the price.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. What do God's righteousness and justice demand of our sin account?

That our sin must be completely paid for, either by ourselves or by someone else.

2. What do we do to our sin account every day? We make it bigger.

3. Can we pay the debt for our sin? no

WHAT DO WE NEED?

No creature can bear the weight of God's anger against sin. No mere sinful person can pay the price. We need a mediator and deliverer who is a truly righteous human, yet very God!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. Can an animal or any creature pay the penalty for our sin? no

6. What is a mediator? Someone who stands between two enemies to bring them together.

7. Our mediator must be a truly righteous human, but must also be true God.

WHO CAN PAY?

Jesus Christ stands between the holy God who is angry about our sin, and sinful man, who has become God's enemy. He gave Himself as the ransom to redeem all His children. He is the only one who is truly human and truly divine. Jesus Christ is the perfect mediator who gave Himself as the ransom for our sin and makes us right with God. Just as sin came to humanity through one man, salvation comes to humanity through the only truly righteous man, Jesus Christ. He sets free all those chosen by God from before time began to receive God's gift of salvation.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

8. Who is the only one who meets the requirements to be our mediator?

Jesus Christ

9. Who does our mediator stand between? the holy God and sinful man

10. What is a ransom? a payment for someone's freedom

11. What is a redeemer? someone who pays the price to set someone free

12. Who are the elect? God's children (believers), who have been chosen by God from before time began to receive His gift of salvation.

“YOU ARE HERE” IN THE CATECHISM

This lesson begins the section on Salvation and Grace. As we learn about God's grace in providing salvation through Jesus Christ, we will continue to discover the comfort of God's promises in His Word.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

4. What section of the Catechism does this lesson begin?

Salvation and Grace

Lesson 6

What Is True Faith?

ELECTION

The biblical teaching of election is that out of the entire human race—lost in sin—God graciously chooses to save some people as His children. All people are sinners through the first Adam, but not all people are saved through the last Adam, Jesus Christ.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. **Will all people be saved?** no

2. **Who will be saved?** Only those who believe in Christ because they have been chosen by God from before time to be His own children

3. **What chapter in the Bible talks about this?** John 3

4. **What is the biblical teaching of election?** That out of the entire human race—lost in sin—God graciously chooses to save some people as His own children.

GRAFTED

Grafting is making a branch grow on a different tree trunk. If you have true faith, you have been grafted into Christ.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. **What is grafting?** making a branch grow on a different tree trunk

6. **Where does the Bible talk about grafting?** Romans 11:17–18

7. **What do you think it means to be grafted into Christ?** Allow the students to express in their own words the idea of dwelling in Christ and being united to Him.

TRUE FAITH

The hall of faith in Hebrews 11 begins with this definition of faith: “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” True faith is believing that God’s promises are true. It is a confident, deep-rooted assurance in your heart that Christ earned salvation for you out of grace alone. That confidence in your heart is a gift of the Holy Spirit and comes through hearing the gospel (good news) of salvation.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

8. **What is found in Hebrews 11?** hall of faith

9. **How does the first verse of Hebrews define faith?** Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

10. **How does true faith come into your heart?** The Holy Spirit creates it in our hearts through the hearing of the gospel of salvation.

11. Read Hebrews 11 and list people who obeyed God “by faith”:

Abel

Enoch

Noah

Abraham

Sarah

Isaac

Jacob

Joseph

Moses

Rahab

Gideon

Barak

Samson

Jephthah

David

Samuel

12. See how many of those names you can find in this word search:

W	N	J	P	R	N	I	V	B	N	Z	A	G	A	J
S	P	F	X	A	H	K	W	K	H	B	U	F	S	A
S	A	Y	I	H	Q	R	E	Z	R	L	Q	T	A	C
H	A	R	P	A	B	C	M	A	E	R	F	F	M	O
E	O	M	A	B	H	W	H	B	L	Q	J	D	U	B
E	X	P	S	H	C	A	A	H	S	R	H	B	E	D
C	C	N	W	O	M	E	A	V	S	C	U	K	L	L
I	K	Z	L	D	N	H	I	K	O	M	I	F	B	N
H	M	E	I	P	I	E	A	N	J	D	S	K	M	O
U	P	V	H	H	J	R	E	B	K	J	A	N	F	E
V	A	J	P	Y	A	M	L	F	Q	B	A	O	O	D
D	C	E	S	B	X	C	I	Q	N	Z	C	A	O	I
K	J	G	U	U	A	B	O	K	I	Y	W	H	Q	G
V	S	V	B	B	E	N	M	O	S	E	S	K	J	Z
L	K	N	D	T	E	M	O	J	O	S	E	P	H	E

What Catechisms Have in Common

Like other catechisms, the Heidelberg Catechism contains the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

13. What are the three statements that many catechisms have in common?
- The Apostles' Creed
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Lord's Prayer

Lesson 7

What Do I Believe?

BELIEFS

In a world in which we all are bombarded with pressure to believe from many sources and belief systems, what do Christians believe? What is truth?

BELIEF

Christians have the only true belief system. Our source of truth is the Bible. Christians believe the Bible and everything God promises us in it.

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

1. List two false belief systems that may confront you:

NOTE: Students may mention any two such as Jewish, Muslim or Islam, Buddhist or Buddhism, Jehovah’s Witnesses or other belief systems.

You may wish to discuss with the students the foundational and crucial questions a belief system, or religion, considers: Is there a God? Who is God? How can we know Him? How did people come to the earth? What is the source of truth?

2. What is the only true belief system? Christianity

3. What is our source for truth? The Bible

4. What do Christians believe? Everything God teaches in the Bible.

THE CATECHISM ON BELIEF

Heidelberg Catechism A. 22 states what Christians must believe: “Everything God promises us in the gospel. That gospel is summarized for us in the articles of our Christian faith—a creed beyond doubt, and confessed throughout the world.” For hundreds of years after Christ, churches used the Apostles’ Creed as a statement of faith to summarize biblical truth.

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

5. Why is this creed called the “Apostles’ Creed”? Students should convey the concept that—although the Creed may not have actually been written by the apostles—it is rooted in their teaching.

Legends attributing authorship of different sections of the Creed to different apostles under the influence of the Holy Spirit on or soon after Pentecost circulated until about the mid-seventeenth century. Although apostolic authorship is only legendary, the content of the Creed has always been accepted as originating in New Testament and apostolic teaching. A variety of similar confessions were used as oral traditions in different geographic areas in the early centuries after Christ, particularly under persecution. These oral creeds were used as confessions of faith prior to baptism, to teach the basic tenets of the faith, and to guard against heresies prevalent during the early centuries after Christ. Churches gradually began to discuss their confessions and agree on statements of faith. Written forms of the Creed became more widespread after Christianity was legalized in the fourth century.

Irenaeus of Lyons (120-202 A.D.) describes a creed that had been used for some time, which was apparently similar to the Apostles' Creed. An early Latin version of the Creed appears in the writings of Tertullian in about 210 A.D. Hippolytus of Rome used a creed with new converts in 215 A.D. that differs very little from a version by Marcellus in 336 A.D. In 390 A.D., Rufinus (after studying in Rome, Egypt, and Palestine) produced a similar creed in northern Italy. Augustine, bishop in North Africa in 400 A.D., published a creed nearly identical to the present day Apostles' Creed. It was used in Gaul in 650 A.D. and is identical to that written by Pirminius (in the area that is now Switzerland) in 750 A.D. (www.christianhistorytimeline.com, #214: Rediscovering the Apostles' Creed, "Glimpses in Church History"; www.christianodyssey.com/history/apostles.htm).

Philip Schaff writes about the Apostles' Creed in *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume I. The History of Creeds*: "It can not be traced to an individual author. It is the product of the Western Catholic Church...within the first four centuries.If we regard...the *present* text of the Apostles' Creed as a complete whole, we can hardly trace it beyond the sixth, certainly not beyond the close of the fifth century, and its triumph over all the other forms in the Latin Church was not completed till the eighth century, or about the time when the bishops of Rome strenuously endeavored to conform the liturgies of the Western churches to the Roman order. ...But if we look at the several articles of the Creed separately, they are all of Nicene or ante-Nicene origin, while its kernel goes back to the apostolic age. All the facts and doctrine which it contains, are in entire agreement with the New Testament...." (www.ccel.org/schaff/creeds1.iv.ii.html, Christian Classics Ethereal Library).

NOTE: I do not use the term "early church" as is often found in literature regarding the church in the first centuries after Christ. The church existed in the Old and New Testaments. It has existed since God created man. The phrase "early church" would more accurately refer to Adam and Eve in Eden! The wording "early" or "first" centuries after Christ" is used intentionally in this text to indicate the church at the time of history after Christ's ascension and before what we know as "the Middle Ages."

PARTS OF THE CREED

The Apostles' Creed is divided into three parts. **First**, it talks about how God the Father created heaven and earth. **Second**, it tells about how Jesus Christ the Son was born, lived, and died to deliver us from our sins. **Third**, it talks about how the Holy Spirit helps us live together as Christians, looking forward to everlasting life.

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

6. Into what three sections is the Apostles' Creed divided?
 - a. God the Father and our creation
 - b. God the Son and our deliverance
 - c. God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification

TRINITY

God is one God, but He exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

THINKING CAREFULLY – suggested answers

7. What does the word "Trinity" mean? Tri-unity or Three-in-One
8. List three Bible passages that show the doctrine of the Trinity:
 - a. Matthew 3:16-17

- b. Matthew 28:18-20
- c. 2 Corinthians 13:14

9. If the word “Trinity” is not in the Bible, why do we use it? Because God has chosen to reveal Himself in His Word as the one eternal God in three persons.

Lesson 8

Who Is God the Father?

ALL FOR GOOD

Everyone's life is different. Some of your students may seem to have an idyllic life, but there may be tensions in their family or dark secrets in their hearts. It's possible that a student has an extremely difficult life, even suffering abuse from the man who should most love and tenderly care for a child: his or her father.

Although your students may come from a variety of backgrounds or have a variety of apparent and not-so-apparent struggles in their lives, the important thing to stress is that God is our loving heavenly Father who will work all things for their good.

This is difficult even for adults to understand. Guard against conveying the idea that it will always be easy to see the good. Some people see the good decades later, and some never see the good in this life.

It's important for the students to realize that even if they live in an abusive situation, they can make choices in how they live as adults. They don't have to continue the cycle of abuse. And children in good living situations need to realize that they are also responsible for the choices they make in their adult lives. They all need to live for the Lord in everything they do and love Him with all their hearts.

The students should realize that God's promise of working everything for good is for believers only. Be sure they understand this promise is only for children of God.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. If you love God, what does He promise about all that happens in your life? He will work it for my good.

2. What must you choose to do throughout your life? things that please God

OUR FATHER

We are God's children because we have been adopted by Him through Christ. The Holy Spirit enables us to speak to Almighty God as a dear father. The relationship is even more special than that of a father and child because God chose us as His children. He wanted us for His own dear children. That was His pleasure and His will!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. What did Christ teach us to call God? our Father

4. What does *abba* mean? dear father; some students may answer "Daddy"

5. How is our heavenly Father's relationship with His children special? He chose us. He wanted us as His children and adopted us through Christ.

CREATOR AND SUSTAINER

God created a beautiful variety of things by the power of His spoken word. He continues to maintain and sustain them.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

6. Read Psalm 104. Its vivid word pictures pulse with the energy and excitement of God's creation and His care for it. Which verses contain these word pictures?

- a. Garment of light; heavens stretched like a tent = 2
- b. Clouds as a chariot; riding on wings of the wind = 3
- c. Messenger winds; servant flames of fire = 4
- d. Mountain springs and waterfalls = 10
- e. Glad heart, shining face, sustaining bread = 15
- f. Leaping mountain goats; scurrying coneys* = 18
- g. Forest beasts prowling at night = 20
- h. Roaring lions seeking food (from God) = 21
- i. Teeming sea creatures = 25
- j. Sailing ships; frolicking leviathan** = 26
- k. God's glance making the earth tremble; His touch making the mountains smoke = 32

* Coneys are rabbit-like creatures.

** The leviathan was some type of great sea creature.

God is the Creator, who made the universe and everything in it. He is the Sustainer, who upholds and rules everything through His providence. He sends adversity into our lives, but He will turn it for our good. He is *powerful enough* to do all this because He is almighty God; He *wants* to do this because He is our faithful Father.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

7. What is God's providence? God's will and care for all creation and creatures

8. What is adversity? the pain and suffering in life

WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT GOD'S PROVIDENCE?

Question and Answer 27 gives a great definition of God's providence. Question and Answer 28 explains how knowing about creation and providence helps you through life's emotional highs and lows. Encourage the students to memorize and store these words in their hearts. There will be times when they need the comfort found in these wonderful promises of God!

Lesson 9

Why Is the Son Called Jesus Christ?

THE NAME *JESUS*

Jesus obeyed God throughout His life and in His death. Because of His obedience, God gave Him the name above all names.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. Why is *Jesus* the name above all names? Because Jesus obeyed God, He exalted Him and gave Him the name above all names.

SAVIOR

Only Jesus can save us from our sins. He is the only way of salvation. And Jesus did everything necessary for salvation. Jesus is all we need!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. What does *Jesus* mean? Savior

THE NAME *CHRIST*

God the Father ordained Jesus as the Christ. He decreed that Jesus should be the Christ and gave Jesus authority as the Christ. God the Holy Spirit anointed Jesus to do His special work as the Christ.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

4. Who ordained Jesus as the Christ? God the Father

5. Who anointed Jesus as the Christ? God the Holy Spirit

ANOINTED

When the Holy Spirit anointed Jesus, He was appointed and consecrated to a special three-fold office as our chief prophet, our only high priest, and our eternal king.

As our **chief prophet**, Christ perfectly reveals to us the will of God for salvation.

As our **only high priest**, Christ has set us free through His one sacrifice and He continually pleads our cause with the Father.

As our **eternal king**, Christ governs and guards us by His Word and Spirit. He keeps us eternally safe in the freedom He has won for us.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

6. What are the three offices of Christ?

- a. Our Chief Prophet
- b. Our Only High Priest
- c. Our Eternal King

7. What does He do in each one?

- a. He perfectly reveals to us the will of God for salvation.
- b. He has set us free through His one sacrifice

- and He continually pleads our cause with the Father.
- c. He governs
and guards us
by His Word and Spirit (students may also include: He keeps us safe)

THE NAME *CHRISTIAN*

Believers were first called “Christians” in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Christians are part of Christ and share in His anointing! Just as Christ was consecrated as our prophet, priest, and king, each of us is called to live a holy life as prophet, priest, and king.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

8. In what city were believers first called Christians? Antioch

9. What are your three callings?

- a. prophet
- b. priest
- c. king

10. What are you called to do in each one?

- a. to confess the name of Christ
- b. to live for Christ
in a sacrificial way
and genuinely fight sin in my life
- c. to do everything for His glory and to look forward to reigning with Christ over all things for all time

Lesson 10

Who Is God the Son?

ONLY SON

Abraham showed the Lord his willingness to give up his only son. But he also showed *us* something. His actions give us a picture of God's love for us. God sacrificed His only Son—the Son of eternal promise—to save sinners like us!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. What does the story about Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his only son show us? It gives us a picture of God's love for us in His willingness to sacrifice His only Son.

ONE AND ONLY SON

We are God's adopted children, but Christ is and has been His own natural Son from eternity.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

2. How do we know that Jesus Christ is God's Son? God says so.

3. Why is Christ called God's "one and only" Son when we are also called God's children? We are the adopted children of God, but Christ is His own natural Son from eternity.

OUR LORD

With His precious blood, our Lord Jesus Christ bought us for His own. He set us free from sin and from the cruel rule of the devil. He conquered death so we no longer need to fear it. We are not our own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to our faithful savior, Jesus Christ. No wonder we call Him "our Lord"!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

4. What was the payment for our sins? the precious blood of Christ

5. List four reasons we call Jesus Christ "our Lord":

- a. Christ bought us with His precious blood.
- b. Christ set us free from sin.
- c. Christ set us free from the cruel rule of the devil.
- d. Christ conquered death so we no longer need to fear it.

TRUE GOD, TRUE MAN

Jesus lived perfectly as true man and true God.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

6. From whom did Jesus get His human nature? His mother Mary

7. How is Christ a descendant of David? He was born in a family in the line of David.

8. How does Christ's human nature differ from ours? He was like us in every way, except that He was without sin.

VAST BENEFITS

Christ as our mediator removes all our sin—even the sin we inherit before birth—and makes us innocent and perfectly holy in God's sight. What a Savior!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

9. What does the word *conception* mean? from the earliest moment of a baby's development inside its mother.

10. What removes your sin from God's sight? Christ's innocence and perfect holiness

11. When did you become a sinner? before I was born

Lesson 11

What Did Jesus Do for Me?

HE SUFFERED AND DIED

Jesus Christ suffered His whole life, but especially at the end of His life.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. **What did Jesus do for you? He suffered and died.**

2. **Read Philippians 2:6–8 and answer these questions:**

a. **What was Jesus like in heaven?** He had the nature of God and was equal with God.

b. **What did Jesus become?** He made Himself nothing, taking the nature of a servant, being born as a human.

c. **How did He humble Himself even more?** He was obedient to death on a cross.

NO CONDEMNATION

Even though Christ was innocent, He had to be declared guilty before a human judge, so that we can be declared innocent before a holy God on the final judgment day.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. **What does *condemnation* mean?** to be declared guilty

4. **Why did Jesus have to be judged by Pilate?** He had to be declared guilty before a human judge so that we can be declared innocent before a holy God on judgment day.

“CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED”

Christ hung on the cross because that kind of death was cursed by God. He became cursed by God so that we never have to!

It was not only important that Jesus die on the cross, but it also was important that Jesus really die. It wouldn't have been enough for Him to suffer *almost* to death. He had to really become “dead” because the penalty for sin is death. And Jesus Christ had to die because only the death of God's Son could pay for our sin (Q. and A. 40).

It also was important for Jesus to be “buried.” When Christ was laid in the grave, there could be no doubt that He really had gone all the way to death.

Christ had to be crucified, He had to die, and He had to be buried. In these ways, He fulfilled the prophecies of God's Word, and He met the demands of God's justice.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. **Why was it important for Jesus to die on a cross?** Death on a cross was cursed by God, and Jesus had to bear God's curse for our sin.

6. **Why did Jesus have to die?** because the penalty for sin is death

7. Why was Jesus buried? to show He really died (and to fulfill prophecy)

WHY MUST WE DIE?

We can't pay the debt of our sin or anyone else's by dying. Our death isn't part of our payment for sin; Christ paid it all!

Our death does do something, however; it puts an end to our constant struggle with sin. And it opens the door to an eternity of fellowship with God in heaven!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

8. Does our death help pay the debt for our sin in any way? no

9. What does our death do? puts an end to our sinning
and brings us into heaven

THERE'S MORE!

Our sinful old natures have been crucified, put to death, and buried with Christ! By God's grace, we can now choose to do things that please God. We can dedicate our lives to Him as a fragrant offering of gratitude.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

10. In Christ, what three things happen to your old self?

- a. It is crucified.
- b. It is put to death.
- c. It is buried.

Lesson 12

What Will Christ Do for Me?

RESURRECTION

Make sure students understand the significance of Christ's resurrection.

Christ's resurrection benefits believers in three ways: It has overcome death, helps us live a resurrected new life, and is a guarantee of our own resurrection.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. If Christ hadn't risen, what would make us miserable and hopeless?

We would be stuck in sin
and we would have no hope for our future resurrection.

2. What three benefits do you receive from Christ's resurrection?

- a. It has overcome death.
- b. It helps us live a resurrected new life.
- c. It is a guarantee of our own resurrection.

ASCENSION

The ascension and Ascension Day are often overlooked in many churches. If there are any students in the class who are unfamiliar with the ascension story, you may want to read it from the Bible or tell it to them.

Christ's ascension into heaven benefits us in three ways. Christ pleads our cause to His Father, His body in heaven guarantees that He will take us there, and He sends His Spirit as a further guarantee.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. If Christ is in heaven, how is His last promise true? His human body is in heaven, but His divine nature is always with us.

4. What three benefits do you receive from Christ's ascension?

- a. Christ pleads my cause to the Father.
- b. His body in heaven guarantees that He will take me there.
- c. He sends His Holy Spirit as a further guarantee.

REIGN

Be sure the students understand the significance of Christ's position at the right hand of God. It is the position of honor, authority, and power.

Christ reigns over the church and rules over all things.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. What does Christ's position at God's right hand show?

His authority
and power

6. What two things does Christ do to show this?

- a. He reigns over His church.

b. He rules over all things.

RETURN

Remind the students that the *Heidelberg Catechism* is all about comfort. Show them how they can find comfort in the thought of Christ's return.

In all our struggles—even if we are persecuted!—we can anticipate Christ's return. Christ, our judge, already was judged in our place. He paid our penalty. He will condemn God's enemies and ours, but He will bring us to heaven's eternal joy and glory!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

7. Why should God's enemies be afraid for Christ's return? Christ will judge them and condemn them to eternal destruction.

8. Why should Christians be eager for Christ's return and find comfort in thinking about it? Christ will put an end to all our suffering and sin. He will condemn God's enemies and ours, but will glorify our bodies and bring us into the eternal joy and glory of heaven.

Lesson 13

Who Is God the Holy Spirit?

PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit came with power on Pentecost. And today, though we cannot see Him, we know by faith that He lives in our hearts. Romans 8:16 says, “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. **What did Jesus promise to ask His Father?** to send the Holy Spirit

2. **If we can’t hear a rushing wind or see tongues of fire, how do we know the Holy Spirit exists?** We know by faith that the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts.

GUARANTEE AND GLORY

The Spirit assures us that we will go to heaven, and He helps us want to go there. Christ’s glorious reign as head of the church has two main benefits for us.

First, His Holy Spirit pours gifts on believers.

Second, Christ’s power defends us from all enemies.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. **What is a guarantee?** a sure promise

4. **What are two benefits of Christ’s reign in glory?**
 - a. The Holy Spirit pours gifts on believers.
 - b. Christ’s power defends us from all enemies.

THE CATECHISM ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

It may appear as if only one Question and Answer deal with the Holy Spirit, but earlier questions and answers as well as later questions about faith and living a godly life also deal with the Spirit.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. **Is Q. and A. 53 the only question and answer about the Holy Spirit?**
Explain your answer. No. It looks like the only one, but other questions and answers before and after this one deal with the Holy Spirit.

ETERNAL GOD

Like God the Father and God the Son, the Holy Spirit is eternal God.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

6. **What are three Bible passages that show the Holy Spirit is eternal God?**
 - a. Genesis 1:1–2
 - b. Matthew 28:19
 - c. Acts 5:3–4

PERSONAL GOD

The Holy Spirit is a personal God who is active in the work of salvation and promises us eternal life. He works in our hearts so that we come to true faith in Jesus Christ. The Spirit is also a counselor; He guides us and provides direction in our lives. He helps us live more and more for Christ. The Spirit's work in our hearts enables us to share in Christ and the blessings of His salvation. The Spirit works faith in our hearts and helps us live more Christ-like lives.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

6. In what way is your body a temple? The Holy Spirit lives in me and makes my body His temple.

7. How is the Holy Spirit a counselor? The Holy Spirit guides me and provides direction in my life. He helps me live more and more for Christ.

8. In what does the Holy Spirit enable you to share? in Christ and the blessings of His salvation

COMFORTER

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit strengthened and encouraged the church. The Spirit still comforts believers by strengthening and encouraging them.

We are to show that same kind of encouragement, comfort, and fellowship to other Christians.

God promises that our comforter, the Holy Spirit, will be with us and our believing children forever. The Holy Spirit is our Comforter who will never leave us or forsake us.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

9. What two things did the Holy Spirit do for the church after Pentecost?

- a. strengthened it
- b. encouraged it

10. What does the Spirit do (Isaiah 51:12)? comforts

11. What Bible passage shows that the Holy Spirit is with us, even when we suffer or are persecuted? 1 Peter 4:14

10. What Bible passage shows that the Holy Spirit will be with us and our believing children forever? Isaiah 59:21

Lesson 14

What Is the Church?

WE ARE THE SHEEP

Believers are like sheep who follow Jesus Christ because they know His voice.

THE CHURCH IS A FLOCK

The church is like a flock of sheep, led by Christ our Good Shepherd. We hear the Good Shepherd's voice through God's Word, and we believe it through the Holy Spirit's work. We are the sheep who hear our Good Shepherd's voice through faith given by the Holy Spirit and through God's Word.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. **Why do you think Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd?** Allow students to express in their own words the concept of Christ leading His people like a shepherd leading his sheep.

2. **How do we hear our Good Shepherd's voice? Through faith given by the Holy Spirit and through God's Word**

“HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH”

From the time of creation until the time Christ returns, the Good Shepherd calls His sheep from every part of the world. His sheep hear His voice and believe in Him through His Spirit and His Word. He **gathers, protects, preserves, chooses,** and **unites** His church. Believers are and always will be living members of His flock, the church.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. **What does *catholic* mean in the Apostles' Creed?** whole or universal

4. **What does *Catholic* often mean today?** someone or something associated with the Roman Catholic Church

5. **List five verbs that tell what Christ does for His church:**

- a. gathers
- b. protects
- c. preserves (or keeps)
- d. chooses
- e. unites

6. **From when and where does Christ choose His people?** Allow students to convey in their own words how Christ chooses His people from all time and all places.

7. **Can you lose your membership in Christ's eternal church?** No, not if I believe in Christ.

“COMMUNION OF SAINTS”

First, all believers are members of Christ’s community, sharing in Him and His gifts. **Second**, believers should be happy to use God’s gifts for others in the church. The way to **JOY** is to think first of Jesus, then of Others, and finally of Yourself!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

- 8. What does “communion” mean?** a sharing or having something in common

- 9. Who are the “saints”?** all believers

- 10. What are the two parts of what “communion of saints” means?**
 - a. All believers are members of Christ’s community, sharing in Him and His gifts.
 - b. Believers should be happy to use God’s gifts for others in the church.

- 13. When we think about God, ourselves, and others, in what order must we place them?**
 - a. Jesus
 - b. Others
 - c. Yourself

Lesson 15

Does God Forgive Me?

FORGIVING

Forgiveness is something we like to get, but we don't like to give.

FORGIVENESS

Because of Christ's perfect life and atoning death, God frees us forever from eternal punishment and gives us the righteousness of Christ. God shows compassion to us and gets rid of all our sins.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. Read Psalm 103's beautiful imagery about God's reaction to our sin:

a. What does verse 3 say God does for you? forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases

b. What does verse 4 say He does for you? redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion

c. What *doesn't* God do (verse 10)? He doesn't treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

d. What does verse 12 promise you? As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

God forgives all our sin and our sinful nature. Christ will come as judge, but we don't need to be afraid because He Himself has set us free forever from condemnation!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

2. What two things will God never hold against you?

a. my sins

b. my sinful nature

3. What does God instead grant you? the righteousness of Christ

4. From what does that set you free? condemnation, judgment, eternal punishment, or "the law of sin and death"

MY RESURRECTION

If we believe in Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation, our souls will go immediately to be with Him when we die. When Christ returns, our old bodies will be raised by Christ's power and reunited with our souls. We will have wonderful new bodies like Christ's glorified body! Remind students that **comfort** is the theme we are discovering throughout the entire Heidelberg Catechism. We can take comfort in God's promise about the resurrection of our own bodies. Christ has the power and authority to do this. He will transform our bodies into incredible new bodies like His!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. What does believing in the resurrection of your own body do for you?

It comforts me.

6. What will happen to your soul when you die? It will go immediately to be with Christ in heaven.

7. What will happen to your body when Christ returns? It will be raised from the grave, and Christ will transform it into a glorified body like His.

ETERNAL JOY

We can do more than merely anticipate eternal joy; we already can begin to have it in our hearts. The Spirit enables us to worry less about external things and to experience more inner peace and joy. Because our future joy is sure, we begin to experience eternal joy in our hearts right now!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

8. How can you begin to have eternal joy now? The Holy Spirit helps me worry less about external things and experience more inner peace and joy.

FORGIVEN!

God forgives us because of Christ's perfect life and atoning death. We are comforted by God's promise of our own resurrection and eternal joy.

This finishes our discussion of what it means to confess the phrases in the Apostles' Creed. Assure students that they are right with God and will inherit eternal life if they have true faith in Jesus Christ.

Lesson 16

Can I Earn Salvation?

JUSTIFIED

God grants righteousness to those who believe in Jesus Christ. They are justified by God's grace through faith, not by their obedience to the law. Here's a simple definition: Justified means *just as if I'd* never sinned. When we are justified there are two things God does for us. First, He forgives us all of our sins and cleans up our sinful record. Then, He takes Christ's perfect obedience and holiness and places it on our record. Justification is as if you are standing in God's court of law, but because of Christ's sacrifice, God views you as if you'd never sinned and declares you "not guilty."

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. **What's a simple definition of *justified*?** just as if I'd never sinned

2. **What does God declare in justification?** Because of Christ's sacrifice, God views me as if I'd never sinned and declares me "not guilty."

FAITH IS A GIFT

We are right with God only by true faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying Him and going good things. Righteousness comes only from faith; it's a work of God and a gift of His grace from first to last. We are saved only by God's grace through God's gift of faith. We must believe in our hearts, but that faith is a free gift of God's grace.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. **What was Martin Luther's struggle?** He was not assured of his salvation.

4. **What did Martin Luther suddenly realize?** He realized that he was saved by faith, not by his works.

5. **Can we do anything to make faith come into our hearts?** We can do nothing; faith is a gift of God from first to last.

6. **How do we get faith?** It is a free gift of God's grace.

FAITH ALONE

We are made right with God and saved by faith alone, not by our works or by our obedience. The free gift of faith is the only way of salvation!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

7. **What three things from Christ do you receive that make you right with God (A. 61)?**
 - a. satisfaction
 - b. righteousness
 - c. holiness

8. **What is the only way these things come to you?** by faith alone

DOESN'T DOING GOOD HELP?

No one can keep God's law perfectly. God expects perfection and none of us can measure up to God's standard. Even our best works are stained with sin.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

9. What kind of righteousness does God's law demand? God's law demands perfect righteousness.

10. What is the problem with even the best things you do? Even my best works are stained with sin.

WHAT ABOUT REWARDS?

Rewards are not earned. They are a free gift of grace.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

11. What can we do to earn heavenly rewards? Nothing—they are a free gift of God's grace.

Lesson 17

What Does the Holy Spirit Do?

BORN AGAIN

No one comes into God's kingdom unless the Spirit makes that person a new creation. The Spirit makes the new self come to life just like a baby being born. The Spirit shows us our sin and how much we need a Savior. The Spirit softens our hard hearts so that we can be born again.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. Where does it mean to be born again? Students should convey the idea of the Holy Spirit working in a person's heart to make that person a new creation.

2. Whose work is the new birth? God the Holy Spirit

REBIRTH AND GOD'S WORD

The Holy Spirit creates faith in our hearts. It is through the work of the Holy Spirit that we are born again. As we hear God's Word, the Holy Spirit produces faith in our hearts. The Spirit confirms our faith through our participation in the sacraments. When we hear God's living and enduring word, the Holy Spirit works in our hearts.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. What famous verse is part of what Jesus told Nicodemus? John 3:16

4. Who produces faith in our hearts? God the Holy Spirit

5. How is that faith produced? From hearing God's Word

SACRAMENTS

The Holy Spirit produces faith in our hearts through the preaching of God's Word and confirms that faith through our use of the sacraments. Sacraments are signs and seals that help us understand God's promise. A sign is a picture that points to something beyond itself. A seal is a promise that guarantees something. God gave sacraments to help us understand His promise of salvation. Sacraments are things we can see that assure us of our salvation. There are two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

6. What are sacraments? Signs and seals that help us understand God's promise.

7. What is a sign? A sign is a picture that points to something beyond itself.

8. What is a seal? A seal is a promise that guarantees us of something.

9. What are the two sacraments God has given us to see?

a. baptism

b. the Lord's Supper

FOCUSING OUR FAITH

Christ's sacrifice on the cross is the only foundation for our salvation. The Spirit's work in the Word and sacraments focuses our faith on Christ's sacrifice.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

10. Through what two ways does the Holy Spirit focus our faith?

- a. God's Word
- b. the sacraments

11. What is the focus of our faith? Christ's sacrifice on the cross as the only foundation for our salvation.

REGENERATION AND SANCTIFICATION

When we talk about the work of the Holy Spirit, we often talk about regeneration and sanctification. Regeneration means that the Holy Spirit makes you spiritually alive to believe in Jesus. Sanctification means that the Holy Spirit enables you more and more to die to sin and live for Christ.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

12. What does regeneration mean? The Holy Spirit makes me spiritually alive to believe in Jesus.

13. What does sanctification mean? The Holy Spirit enables me more and more to die to sin and live for Christ.

Lesson 18

What Does the Church Do?

THE TRUE CHURCH

A church that is true to God's Word will show it by the proper administration of the sacraments, the pure preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the faithful exercise of Christian discipline.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. A church shows that it is true to God's Word by the proper administration of the sacraments, the pure preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the faithful exercise of Christian discipline.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

We've learned that sacraments are pictures and promises and that there are two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper (or communion). They are rooted in the Old Testament practices of circumcision and the Passover but were established as lasting sacraments by Christ.

A church has proper administration of the sacraments when it practices baptism and the Lord's Supper according to biblical principles. The *Heidelberg Catechism* explains the Bible's teachings.

BAPTISM

Christ gives us baptism to remind and assure us that—as surely as water washes dirt from our bodies—Christ's blood and His Spirit wash away all our sins.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

2. Finish the phrase by matching (there should be no lines straight across!):

Christ	=	gave us the sacraments
Water	=	washes dirt from the body
Christ's blood and His Spirit	=	wash away all my sin
Washed with Christ's blood	=	means Christ's blood forgives my sins
Washed with Christ's Spirit	=	means the Holy Spirit renews me
We baptize babies	=	as members of God's covenant

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper reminds and assures you of Christ's sacrifice. God uses vivid images and figurative or symbolic language to show and tell His great love.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. Of what does the Lord's Supper remind and assure you? Christ's sacrifice

4. If the bread and wine are not actually changed into Christ's body and blood, why does Jesus talk about us eating His flesh and drinking His blood? Jesus talks this way to *show* and *tell* His great love in granting us forgiveness and fellowship with Him.

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

Preaching the gospel and exercising Christian discipline open the kingdom of heaven to believers and close it to unbelievers.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. What are the keys of the kingdom?

- a. preaching the gospel
- b. exercising Christian discipline

6. What two things do they do to the kingdom of heaven?

- a. They open it to believers.
- b. They close it to unbelievers.

PREACHING

At every worship service on every Sunday you sit in church and hear a sermon. It may seem pretty ordinary, but preaching is extraordinary. It is God's very word!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

7. Preaching opens the kingdom of heaven by proclaiming and publicly declaring to you and each believer that as often as you accept the gospel promise in true faith, God truly forgives all your sins because of Christ's sacrifice.

8. Preaching closes the kingdom of heaven by proclaiming and publicly declaring to unbelievers that as long as they do not repent, the anger of God and eternal condemnation rest on them.

DISCIPLINE

Exercising Christian discipline means to lovingly confront people with their sin in the hope of bringing them to repent from it. The goal of Christian discipline is always repentance.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

9. What is the goal of Christian discipline? repentance

Lesson 19

What Should I Do?

GRATITUDE

Genuine gratitude is expressing thankful appreciation for something someone does for you. Gratitude is showing our thankful appreciation for God's gift of salvation. We show our thankful appreciation by doing things that are good.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. **What is gratitude?** expressing thankful appreciation for something someone does for us

2. **How do you show gratitude for God's gift of salvation?** doing things that are good and pleasing to God

DOING GOOD

We want to do good things out of gratitude to God. The Bible tells us that we do good things because God created us for them and prepared them for us! We also do good things to show that we are thankful to God, to praise God with our actions, to assure us of our faith, and to witness to other people.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. **Ephesians 2:10 tells us that God has created us to do good works and He has prepared good works for us to do.**

4. **What are four other reasons for doing good?**

- a. to show that we are thankful to God
- b. to praise God with our actions
- c. to assure us of our faith
- d. to witness to other people

LOOKING AT THE *CATECHISM*

Remind students that we are discovering together how we can live in the joy of the comfort of knowing we belong to Christ!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. **In the rest of our lessons, we will discover how we can live in the joy of the comfort of knowing we belong to Christ.**

BEING RENEWED

The *Catechism* talks about the "dying-away of the old self" and the "coming-to-life of the new self" as the two parts of being renewed. The "dying-away of the old self" *is to be genuinely sorry for sin, to hate it more and more, and to run away from it.* The "coming-to-life of the new self" *is wholehearted joy in God through Christ and a delight to do every kind of good as God wants us to.* We delight in doing God's will.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

6. What are the two parts of being renewed?

- a. the dying-away of the old self
- b. the coming-to-life of the new self

7. What three things are you to do about sin?

- a. be genuinely sorry for it
- b. hate it more and more
- c. run away from it

8. What two things are included in the “coming-to-life” of the new self?

- a. wholehearted joy in God through Christ
- b. a delight to do every kind of good as God wants us to

GOOD WORKS

If we are grateful for our salvation, we will want to do good works. Works that are good come only from true faith, are done in obedience to God’s law, and are done for His glory. They are **not** those things we think are right or things based only on tradition.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

9. What three things are necessary for a work to be good?

- a. It must come from true faith.
- b. It must be done in obedience to God’s law.
- c. It must be done for God’s glory.

Lesson 20

What Is God's Law?

LOVING GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOR

Jesus said: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 22:37–39).

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. With what three things are you to love God?

- a. all my heart
- b. all my soul
- c. all my mind

2. How are you to love your neighbor? as myself

A RULER

The Ten Commandments are like a ruler. They show us how to **measure** up to God's law. They also show us how to walk **straight** in the paths of God's law.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. What are the Ten Commandments like? a ruler

4. What two things do God's commandments show you?

- a. They show me how to measure up to God's law.
- b. They show me how to walk straight in the paths of God's law.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Heidelberg Catechism lists the Ten Commandments in Q. and A. 92.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. Carefully read the Ten Commandments and correctly fill in the blanks:

<i>1st Commandment</i>	You shall have no other <u>gods</u> .
<i>2nd Commandment</i>	You shall not make an <u>image</u> (or idol).
<i>3rd Commandment</i>	You shall not misuse God's <u>name</u> .
<i>4th Commandment</i>	Keep the Sabbath day <u>holy</u> .
<i>5th Commandment</i>	Honor your <u>father</u> and <u>mother</u> .
<i>6th Commandment</i>	You shall not <u>kill</u> .
<i>7th Commandment</i>	You shall not commit <u>adultery</u> .
<i>8th Commandment</i>	You shall not <u>steal</u> .
<i>9th Commandment</i>	You shall not <u>bear false witness</u> .
<i>10th Commandment</i>	You shall not <u>covet</u> .

THE PREFACE

The words of God, which come immediately before the first commandment, are called the *preface* to the Ten Commandments.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

6. What is a preface? something that comes before something else

7. What does the preface to the Ten Commandments teach us? It teaches us why we must love and obey God out of gratitude for saving us.

TWO TABLES

Even though there are Ten Commandments, they can be divided into two sections, or tables. The first table focuses on God and the second table focuses on our neighbors.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

8. The Ten Commandments can be divided into two tables.

9. The first table of the Ten Commandments tells us how we are to love God.

10. The second table of the Ten Commandments tells us how we are to love our neighbors.

Lesson 21

How Should I Love God?

LOVING GOD

Loving God with all your heart, mind, and strength means loving Him with every feeling, every thought, and every action. Loving God with all your soul is to love Him with that part of you that will never die.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. **Loving God with heart, mind, and strength means loving Him in every:**
 - a. feeling
 - b. thought
 - c. action

2. **What does it mean to love God with your soul?** To love Him with my soul means that I love Him with that part of me that will never die.

NO OTHER GODS

The first commandment is that we are to have no other gods. We shouldn't trust in the strength of any army, philosophy, organization, or ourselves. We must trust only and completely in the true God, who alone is the giver of every good thing.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. **In what "other gods" might you sometimes trust?** Let the students express things they may sometimes trust in more than God (such as the examples in the lesson). Urge them to think honestly about things they trust and love more than God and encourage them to put their whole trust in God.

4. **Why do you think God wants you to love Him even more than you love your father or mother?** Allow students to express their own thoughts. You may want to point out that even fathers and mothers sin; they can't know everything. Fathers and mothers will not live forever; they will get old—perhaps some students will one day need to care for their parents!—and parents will eventually die. But God is without sin and knows all things. He is immortal. He is the One we must trust.

NO IDOLS

Not making an idol means more than not carving a wooden pole or forming a golden statue; it means not setting up idols in your heart and properly worshiping God. Remind students: "Dear children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. **Find Habakkuk 2 and read verses 18–20, which contrast idol worship with proper worship. A man who makes an idol trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak. But the LORD is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him.**

Here is the text from the NIV:

- ¹⁸ "Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it?
Or an image that teaches lies?
For he who makes it trusts in his own creation;
he makes idols that cannot speak.
- ¹⁹ Woe to him who says to wood, 'Come to life!'
Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up!'
Can it give guidance?
It is covered with gold and silver;
there is no breath in it.
- ²⁰ But the LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth be silent before him."

You may wish to read the above text and discuss with the students how foolish it is for someone to make something and then to think that the thing he has made can be worshiped. He cannot make it come to life, speak, or breathe.

Point out the contrast in verse 20: God is in His holy temple; every creature and every person on earth is to come before Him with reverence and awe. Make sure the students understand that "silent" does not mean we may never pray or sing to God, but rather that we must always come into worship with a reverent attitude and an awareness of God's majesty and our own sin.

6. How does the command not to make idols apply to you? Encourage the students to express personal ways they make idols in their hearts; perhaps they think of sports or friends more than they think about God. Urge them to think honestly about things they trust and love more than God and urge them to give God first place in their hearts and minds.

NO MISUSING GOD'S NAME

Misusing God's name includes swearing, standing silently by while others misuse His name, and dishonoring His name in our words or actions.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

- 7. What are three ways we might misuse God's name?**
- a. swearing
 - b. standing silently by while others misuse God's name
 - c. dishonoring God's name in our words or actions

KEEPING THE SABBATH HOLY

We keep Sunday—the "*festive day of rest*"—holy by supporting the ministry, attending worship, and resting from sin every day.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

- 8. In A. 103, the Catechism calls Sunday: this festive day of rest.**
- 9. In what three ways do we keep the Sabbath holy?**
- a. supporting the ministry
 - b. attending worship
 - c. resting from sin every day

Lesson 22

How Should I Love People?

LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR

The second table of the law provides guidelines for our relationships with others.

HONORING FATHER AND MOTHER

Honoring parents means to love and obey them in everything according to God's will. It also means that we are to obey and be patient with everyone in authority over us.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. **Whom must you obey besides your parents?** All those in authority over me.

2. **Why should you be patient when your parents, teachers, and others in authority make mistakes?** They are all sinners so they will make many mistakes, but God has placed them over me and wants me to honor them.

NOT KILLING

Students may think that they've never broken the commandment not to kill. God wants us to love our neighbors; He wants us to love even our enemies!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. **In what ways do you break the commandment not to kill?** Allow the students to express their own ideas of specific ways they hate, envy, become angry, or feel vindictive.

NOT COMMITTING ADULTERY

Your students must guard their thoughts, their speech, and their actions just as much as adults. They must think about what they see, what they say, and what they wear.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

4. **Why is this commandment for you?** God wants me to be pure in my thoughts, words, and actions. He wants me to think about what I see, what I say, and what I wear.

NOT STEALING

The commandment not to steal includes much more than not taking things that belong to other people. It includes cheating, swindling, being greedy, wasting God's gifts, not working well, and failing to share with needy people. Any of these ways of stealing show that we don't love God and our neighbor.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. **In what ways might you break this commandment?** Students should think about specific ways they might cheat, be greedy, waste God's gifts, not work well, and fail to share with the needy.

NOT BEARING FALSE WITNESS

Bearing false witness means to speak untruthfully about someone or something. It is lying. It is also any kind of speech that is not loving toward our neighbor.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

6. What is one way you might break this commandment? Students may express specific instances or general ways such as lying, gossiping, passing judgment, failing to protect someone else's good name.

NOT COVETING

Coveting is wanting something that belongs to someone else. We obey this command when we are content with the way God has made us and the things He has given us. We show contentment by fighting our sinful impulses, hating sin in ourselves and in our world, and rejoicing in doing God's will as He has commanded.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

7. What does it show when you covet? That I am not content with the life God has given me.

8. How can you show contentment in your life? By fighting my sinful impulses, hating sin in myself and in my world, and rejoicing in doing God's commandments.

Lesson 23

Can I Keep God's Law?

WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

Remind the students that through all these lessons on the Heidelberg Catechism, we've been discovering from the Bible God's wonderful comfort in Christ!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. What three things have you learned about your comfort in Jesus Christ?

- a. why I need that comfort
- b. how I get that comfort
- c. what I can do to show my gratitude to God for that comfort

2. What are the three sections of the Heidelberg Catechism?

- a. Sin
- b. Salvation
- c. Service

Point out to the students how what they've learned so far (the answer to question 1 mirrors the outline of the Heidelberg Catechism, which is the answer to question 2). Note the circular nature of the *Catechism*; it leads us from comfort, through comfort, to comfort, and back to comfort.

PERFECT OBEDIENCE

Knowing that we can't keep God's law perfectly is no excuse for not trying. God commands obedience. With God's grace through the Holy Spirit, we can begin to live according to all—not just some—of God's commandments.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. Is any believer able to obey God's law perfectly? no

4. Why should you even bother to try to obey God's law? because God commands my obedience

PERFECTION

Since the Bible so clearly teaches that no person is able to obey God perfectly, students may be surprised to learn that many people—in the past and still today—think that saved people don't sin. I was surprised to discover that an author of some excellent books for young people believes that saved people no longer sin.

NOTE: Encourage students to be discerning about what they read. A story may be very exciting, and it may even have obvious Christian themes, but students must know what the Bible teaches so they can be aware of writing that does not reflect God's truth.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. What two reasons does the Catechism give for preaching and learning about the Ten Commandments?

a. so that we grow and mature in our understanding of our sinfulness and our need for Christ's forgiveness

b. so that we keep praying for God's grace through the Holy Spirit and keep trying to obey God

6. How does the Catechism describe trying to obey God? to never stop striving to be renewed more and more after God's image

7. How does Paul describe trying to obey God? As a runner in a race: "Run in such a way as to get the prize."

8. What is the prize toward which we run? perfection

9. When will we experience it? when Christ returns and gathers believers to Himself in heavenly perfection

Lesson 24

Why Should I Pray?

WHAT ABOUT PRAYER?

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

- 1. What three things must we have to do God's will?**
 - a. a joyful heart
 - b. a prayerful attitude
 - c. a thankful spirit

WHY PRAY?

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

- 2. What two reasons do the Bible and the *Catechism* give for prayer?**
 - a. It is the most important way to show our thankfulness.
 - b. God grants His grace and Spirit to those who continually ask Him for these gifts and thank Him for them.

NOTE: You may wish to make sure your students understand that the *Catechism* is not referring to **saving** grace here, but to **equipping** grace. The grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit **toward salvation** are not dependent upon our prayers. But we do need to acknowledge our total dependence upon God by continually seeking His grace and His Spirit to guide us. We also must remember to thank God daily for the equipping grace of His Spirit in our lives.

IN WHAT WAY SHALL WE PRAY?

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

- 3. The Bible and the *Catechism* give us these three ways to pray. List each one.**
 - a. We must pray from the heart to the one true God as He has commanded in His Word.
 - b. We must confess our sin and humble ourselves before God.
 - c. We must trust God's promise that He will listen to our prayer because of Christ.

THE ACTS OF PRAYER

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

- 4. What are the ACTS of prayer?**
 - Adoration
 - Confession
 - Thanksgiving
 - Supplication

Find these words about praying in the word search below: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION, ASK, BLESS, GRACE, GLORIFY, HONOR, HUMBLE, IMPLORE, JOY, PETITION, PLEAD, PRAYER, REQUEST, SEEK, SPIRIT

S	N	T	P	O	N	I	B	L	E	S	S	C	A	J
S	P	F	H	A	B	K	R	K	H	O	N	O	R	E
B	H	I	C	A	Q	S	E	E	K	L	Q	N	A	S
H	U	R	R	A	N	C	M	A	Q	E	F	F	M	U
P	M	M	A	I	H	K	H	I	C	U	J	E	U	S
E	B	P	S	H	T	A	S	A	M	R	E	S	E	B
P	L	E	A	D	M	E	R	G	S	P	U	S	L	L
R	E	Z	L	D	N	G	J	K	I	M	L	I	T	E
A	D	O	R	A	T	I	O	N	J	V	S	O	M	H
Y	P	V	H	S	J	R	Y	B	Q	U	I	N	R	P
E	A	S	P	K	P	E	T	I	T	I	O	N	O	E
R	C	O	N	B	L	C	Y	F	I	R	O	L	G	I
I	S	U	P	P	L	I	C	A	T	I	O	N	J	A

Lesson 25

How Should I Pray?

WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?

Christ taught us the prayer we know as the Lord's Prayer.

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

1. God commands us to pray for everything we need:

- a. spiritually and
- b. physically

“OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN”

The Bible often calls God our Heavenly Father. Our Heavenly Father protects and provides for us.

We have more than friends in high places; we have a Father in the highest place!

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

2. What does Christ want you to have toward God?

A childlike awe and trust

“HALLOWED BE THY NAME”

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

3. How can you “hallow” God’s name? Allow students to express in their own words how they can honor God’s name by learning more about Him, reading the Bible, praying, going to church, and blessing, worshiping, or praising Him in other ways. Remind them that they must be careful not to dishonor God in anything they think, say, or do, but make sure that all their thoughts, words, and actions honor and praise God.

“THY KINGDOM COME”

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

4. Briefly summarize the three main requests of this petition:

Rule us by Your Word and Spirit

Keep your church strong

Destroy the devil’s work and all evil

“THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN”

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

5. How might you “back talk” to God? Encourage students to express in their own words ways they might rebel against or be reluctant to do God’s will. You may want to explain that “back talk” means to talk back (although I believe all students will be thoroughly familiar with this concept!).

“GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD”

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

6. In what ways might you trust in “creatures”? Allow students to express in their own words how they may sometimes put their trust in people (parents, teachers, politicians, etc.) or organizations (schools, government, etc.) or philosophies (work ethic, educational progress, etc.).

“FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS”

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

7. Think about debts others owe you and how they compare with the debt you owe Christ. Are you ever like that unforgiving servant? If your students are honest, they should all say “yes” or at least “sometimes” to this question. The point is for them to think about applying the parable to their own lives and see how this petition of the Lord’s Prayer really applies to them.

“LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL”

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

8. List our three enemies:

- a. the devil
- b. the world
- c. our flesh

“FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOREVER”

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

9. How is this part of the Lord’s Prayer different from the other parts we’ve discussed? This is concluding praise—a conclusion, not a petition.

“AMEN”

THINKING CAREFULLY—suggested answers

10. What does “amen” show? It shows God’s promises are sure. It is sure to be!

If you and your students have benefited half as much from studying these lessons as I have from writing them, you have benefited a great deal. It has been a privilege and joy to craft these lessons, and it is my prayer that you and each student will grow in knowledge and love for Christ through them.

Glenda Mathes