

Review of the Catechism

1. Overview

- Definition: “A catechism is the name given to a written work that contains a summary of all the beliefs of the faith that is used as a teaching tool.”
- The catechism of the Catholic Church presents the fundamental truths of the faith which have already been communicated and defined. It naturally **contains the infallible doctrinal definitions of the popes and ecumenical councils in the history of the Church.**
- Catechisms have been produced by the Church both universally and locally by Bishops throughout history. The Baltimore Catechism is one of these.....
- For millions of Catholics in the United States the word catechism meant the Baltimore Catechism, which originated at the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884 when the bishops of the United States decided to publish a national catechism. The Baltimore Catechism contained 421 questions and answers in thirty-seven chapters and gave unity to the teaching and understanding of the faith for millions of American Catholics
- In 1985 a synod of bishops convened (in Rome) to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, a proposal to develop a universal catechism for the Catholic Church was made and accepted. The outcome was the universal Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- It is the first systematic presentation of the Catholic faith since the Council of Trent in 1566.
- First published in 1992 → Second addition in 1997

2. The Catechism is organized into four major parts.

- 1) Profession of Faith (Creed or Profession of Faith) Par. #'s 26-1065
 - 2) The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (Sacraments or Celebration of Faith) Par. #'s 1066-1690
 - 3) Life in Christ (Morality or Life of Faith) Par. #'s 1691-2557
 - 4) Christian Prayer (Prayer of the Believer) Par. #'s 2558-2865
- The Catechism doesn't use page numbers it uses numbered paragraphs → different translations or publications could have differing page numbers.
 - However! → Table of contents lists page numbers, not reference numbers. Can be confusing!
 - Next to the Paragraph #'s there are sometimes cross references to other paragraphs.
 - References to the Catechism are done using the paragraph number.
 - There is also a Subject Index in the back indexed by the Paragraph #.
 - The Catechism is a good reference book for understanding and explaining our beliefs.

Apologetics Exercise

1. In this exercise you will be working in groups.
2. You are to discuss and come up with a response to a question about our Catholic Faith and beliefs asked by a hypothetical non-catholic.
3. Using the Bible verses and information provided in your handout come up with a reasoned response to your question. Feel free to use one of the lesson summaries attached to the tack board or to come up with your own response.
4. Each group will have 15 minutes to come up with a response.
5. Each member must participate in the answer which you will give to the class.
6. Each group should find something in the Catechism to help explain what we believe.
7. Responses should include quoting a bible verse, the Catechism, or using history to prove what we believe.

Tips:

Read your question more than once.

Each question has more than one issue make sure you address each issue.

Only respond to the issues in the question.

Look at each question for errors. Just because someone says something that doesn't mean that it's true.

Ask us for help if can't find something in the Bible or the Catechism.

Group One Question: (Jared, Korbin, Angel, Cole)

I believe that it doesn't matter which church you belong to as long as you believe in the essentials of Christianity. After all, the Catholic Church is not found in the Bible. All you have to do is to read the Bible and let the Holy Spirit guide you in your interpretation.

“Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.” (Psalms 127:1)

“If I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth”. (1 Tim 3:15) **This verse says that it is the Church that is the upholder of the truth. Which Church is it talking about?**

"And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'" (Matt. 16:18-19)

“And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, (John 14:16)

Jesus Prays: “Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.” (John 17:11)

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.” (Eph 4:4 -7)

“I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.” (1Cor 1:10)

“Where the Bishop appears, there let the people be, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.” **St. Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Smyrneans 8, 107 A.D**

of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

“So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?"” (Acts 8:30-31)

“In these epistles there are certain things difficult to understand, which the unlearned and unstable distort, just as they do the rest of the Scriptures also, to their own destruction.”(2 Peter 3:16)

“But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” (John 21:25)

Catechism: See Part 1, Chapter 3, Article 9, Paragraph 2 (The Church – People of God)

Group Two Question: (Joe, Owen, Dylan, Jason)

I believe that Mary gave birth to Jesus but that she had other children besides Him. I also believe that she was capable of sin because it states in Romans “all have sinned” & “none is righteous”. You Catholics worship Mary as if she is equal to God. Your beliefs about Mary are not biblical and were not believed by the early Church or the reformers.

“And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?’” (Luke 1:41-43).

"And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name’” (Luke 1:46-49).

“Hail, full of Grace! The Lord is with you.” (Luke 1:28)

“Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25)

“Christ . . . was the only Son of Mary, and the Virgin Mary bore no children besides Him . . . 'brothers' really means 'cousins' here, for Holy Writ and the Jews always call cousins brothers.”
Martin Luther, (Sermons on John, chapters 1-4, 1537-39).

John Wesley's: Letter To a Roman Catholic, July 18, 1749: ”The Blessed Virgin Mary, who, as well after as when she brought him forth, continued a pure and unspotted virgin”

Recall that God created Adam and Eve without sin so doesn't it make sense that he also created Mary the Mother of Christ without sin as well. Isn't Mary, who brought Jesus our savior into this world, greater than Eve who brought sin into this world?

“And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother.” (Matt 12:49-50)

“among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.” (Matt 27:56) There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome, (Mk 15:40) – **Lots of woman named Mary in the Bible.**

Catechism: See Part 1, Chapter 3, Article 9, Paragraph 6 (Mary-Mother of Christ)

Group Three Question: (David, Gerardo, Dragan)

You Catholics believe that you can work your way into heaven. I believe that through faith alone I am saved and that I don't have to anything but believe in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and I am saved. Nothing I do, not even sin can cause me to lose my salvation.

"You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone" (James. 2:24). The only place in scripture where the words "faith alone" appear.

"Do you not know that if you yield yourself to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (Rom 6:15-16)

"Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:26-27)

"So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. "(1 Cor 13:13)

" if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." (1 Cor 13:2)

"Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven'" (Matt. 7:21).

"Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." (Matt. 19:17)

"Jesus said to him "If you would be perfect go and sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven, and come, follow me." (Matt. 19:21)

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 3:21)

"For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified" (Rom. 2:13).

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt 6:14-15)

"You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe -- and shudder." (James 2:19)

"For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgments . . ." (Heb. 10:26-27).

Catechism: See Part 3, Chapter 3, Article 2, Grace and Justification

Group Four Question: (Evan, Liam, Horatio, Cody)

As an atheist I don't believe that a person in the sky called God created the universe. The universe was created out of nothing just like the Big Band theory states. We don't need something like "God" to explain what we see around us we have science.

The Universe is ordered and has design which points to a God.

To think that everything has happened by chance is foolish! Reason tells us otherwise.

The Big Bang theory was first proposed by a Belgium Roman Catholic priest named Monsignor George Lemaitre.

In the late 1920s, Lemaitre quietly put forth a theory he called his "hypothesis of the primeval atom." Albert Einstein said this of the theory: "This is the most beautiful and satisfactory explanation of creation to which I have ever listened."

How can something come from nothing?

What is the purpose of the universe then if there is no creator?

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements -- surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone.” (Job 38:4-6) **We should keep in mind that with God there is no past or present - time as we know it only applies to us.**

If there were no God, the universe would have no meaning, and neither would we. On the other hand, if God exists, then the universe and the beings that inhabit it do have meaning and purpose.

Science is a method that one can use to discover information about the natural world. It has nothing to say about things which cannot be scientifically observed or tested.

There are things that are worthy of belief that science cannot prove, such as the laws of logic and mathematics, metaphysical truths, and ethical truths.

The things we perceive around us in the universe, including space and time, appear to have had a beginning, and so they need a cause—a reason why they began in the first place.

If atheism is true, then the earth, and consequently mankind, is insignificant and life is meaningless. So why waste time and energy building society or helping other people? If all is ultimately meaningless, why bother?

Catechism: See Part 3, Chapter 3, Section 2, Chapter 1, Article 1, The First Commandment (Paragraph 2123 – Atheism)