



NBJ 095

Parent/Child Communicant's Class

**A Step-by-Step Curriculum for
Parents to Prepare their
Children for Communion**

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CHILDREN AND COMMUNION

Requirements for Children

1. Age

Reach Church does not believe that there is a particular age that every child should begin participating in communion. We believe that many of our children will confess faith in Christ from an early age. However, receiving communion requires a child having a desire to come to the table, an understanding of the grace promised, and an ability to recognize and repent of their sin.

2. Willful Initiation

Partaking of the sacraments is a matter of the heart. Though we recommend parents go through this curriculum with their children, the child should express his/her own desire in these things and not be coerced by parents or anyone else.

Responsibilities of the Parents

1. Teaching Curriculum

This material is designed to be presented in five lessons. Parents are responsible to walk through each lesson with their child and ensure their child understands the content of the lesson. Some of the material will already be familiar, but the repetition should help to confirm their faith in Christ and result in firmer assurance of the reality of their salvation. Normally, parents know how their children learn best and are encouraged to be as creative as they like in assisting their child to master these lessons.

2. Completion of Curriculum

Upon completion, parents should notify the church that they have completed the curriculum with their child(ren). If parents would like, a pastor or elder would love to meet with your child (or you and your child), especially if you (or they) have any remaining questions!

LESSON ONE: THE TRUTH ABOUT MAN

Purpose: *To teach your child what the Bible says about the nature of man and the present and eternal consequences of man's sin.*

Objectives:

1. To point out the position and privileges given to man when he was created.
2. To emphasize the fall of man and the far-reaching results of sin.
3. To help your child understand the conditions of fallen man as dead in his sin and the implications thereof

The Original State of Man

Scripture Passage: *Read Genesis 1:27-2:17*

Questions for Discussion:

(Ask your child these questions after reading the Scripture passage. Answer points are provided below the question.)

1. What does it mean that we were made in the image of God?

- a. God made man and woman in His own image (*Genesis 1:27*). Think about what this means. It does not mean that man is a god, but he was made in some ways like God. Originally man had some god-like attributes such as:
 - i. Perfect love
 - ii. Perfect knowledge
 - iii. Perfect peace
- b. Man was able to have fellowship with God and talk with Him just like two close friends.

2. What job did God give man to do?

- a. God also gave man some special jobs to do. (*Genesis 1:28,2:15*). He let him overcome the earth and rule over His creation. All man's needs were provided for and he was never hungry or sick.

3. What is an agreement? What was the agreement between God and man?

- a. God put only one condition on man in order to keep enjoying these privileges (*Genesis 2:16,17*). Man could eat from anything in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This agreement is

called a covenant. Both parties (God and Adam) pledged/promised to obey the conditions of the covenant.

The Terrible Sin of Man

Scripture Passage: *Read Genesis 3:1-24*

Questions for Discussion:

1. What changed the perfect relationship between God and man?

- a. Adam and Eve did not obey and keep the agreement that God had made with them. They listened to the lies of Satan and ate from the forbidden tree. Immediately the perfect love, knowledge and peace that they had as God's image-bearers was gone because of their sin. This is shown in part when they are afraid and hide from God. (*Genesis 3:10*)

2. In what ways was this relationship changed?

- a. Because they broke the agreement, they immediately died spiritually and began to die physically (*Genesis 2:17*).
- b. Because all men and women came from Adam and Eve, we are all born spiritually dead as well. Paul, in the book of Romans, reminds us of this condition of all men.
 - i. Read Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23

3. What effect did sin have on all that God made including man?

- a. The wonderful fellowship that God and man had enjoyed was now broken (*Genesis 3:24*). Not only was man punished, but all things God made were put under a curse, so that man's rule over creation was made very hard.
- b. Because of his sin, Adam was also driven out of the Garden of Eden and made to work hard all the days of his life. Adam and Eve would no longer live forever physically but would eventually die.
- c. Since all men and women came from Adam and Eve, the curse of hard work and physical death was passed on the everyone. Even the plants and animals of the earth are affected by sin's curse. This is seen in diseases and sicknesses found in plants and animals as well as in death.

Additional Notes for Parents:

1. If there is any indication that your child doesn't see himself as much of a sinner, you might challenge him with this math problem:
 - a. If you only sinned three times a week, how many times would that be in a year? How many times would that be in your lifetime?
 - i. The point here is to stress to your child that "all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory," and there are not "little" sins in terms of God's requirement for obedience.
2. Though not mentioned specifically in the lesson, it would be good to emphasize that spiritual death means spending eternity in hell, and that all men due to their sin deserve this eternal punishment.

Memory Verses for Lesson One

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

LESSON TWO: THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

Purpose: *To teach your child what the Bible says is the solution to the dilemma of man's sin.*

Objectives:

1. To emphasize the importance of the justice and mercy of God the Father and how it produced His solution.
2. To show Jesus Christ was the only possible provision for man's sin.
3. To point out the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation and the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Justice and Mercy of God

Scripture Passage: *Read Psalm 89:14*

Remind your child first about the condition of man in his sin. Then share the following illustration with your child and ask the questions that follow.

A very well-respected man was a judge in the criminal court of Atlanta. One day a case was brought to him where a young man had been caught stealing products from a local store. The penalty was a \$250 fine and one month in jail. When the criminal was brought into the court he would not look at the judge and kept his head down. The evidence proved the young man was guilty and the judge gave him the appropriate sentence. After announcing the decision, the judge took off his robe, gave the court clerk \$250, and told the bailiff to take him and not the young man to jail. When the young man saw what the judge did, he finally looked up weeping and said to those around him - "He's my dad."

1. Why would the young criminal not look at the judge?
2. Why did the judge not just dismiss the charges against his son?
3. Did the young man deserve what his father did for him?
4. How did the judge show mercy in this story?
5. How was justice done in this story?

Discuss this story and relate it to what Christ has done for us and how God was both merciful and just in His action.

The Death and Resurrection of Christ

Scripture Passage: *Read John 3:16-18, 36*

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why was Jesus the only man who could die for our sins?

- a. In order for God to be just, He would have to punish a perfect man, not a man that had sinned. A sinful man could not die for others' sin and his own. This man would be required to shed his blood and die for us. So God in His love for us had to send His only Son to earth. God's Son had to become a man to be the perfect replacement for us. This is the only way all the conditions could be met.

2. What was our proof that God accepted the punishment of His Son Jesus in place of our punishment?

- a. Jesus Christ, God's Son, fulfilled the agreement of works that Adam and Eve could not. He obeyed perfectly. God accepted Jesus' suffering and death as a replacement for our sin. He proved this by raising Jesus from the dead. Those who believe in Christ can have eternal life and are saved from endless punishment in hell. (*John 3:36*). When a person believes in Jesus with all his heart, God makes him just as if he had never sinned.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

Scripture Passage: *Reach John 14:26*

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why is the Holy Spirit called a Helper?

- a. God sent us not only His Son Jesus Christ, but also a Helper known as the Holy Spirit. Why did we need someone else? Since we were dead in our sins, God knew that we would not believe in His Son on our own. He sent God the Holy Spirit to lead us to believe in Christ as our Lord and Savior.

2. What is the Trinity?

- a. God has worked as three persons. See if you can name these:
 - i. God the Father
 - ii. God the Son
 - iii. God the Holy Spirit.
 - iv. These three together are called the Trinity, which means three in one, or one God in three persons. We receive all three of them when we believe in Jesus will all of our heart.

Memory Verses for Lesson Two

Psalm 89:14

John 3:16

John 14:26

LESSON THREE: REPENTANCE AND FAITH

Purpose: *To teach your child what the Bible says about true repentance and saving faith, as well as assurance of salvation.*

Objectives:

1. To reinforce the knowledge of the importance of Christ's work for us in salvation so that it is not routine.
2. To relate the necessity of not only seeing ourselves as sinners but our desperate need for a Savior.
3. To explain what true repentance is and is not.
4. To illustrate the importance of real faith and the danger of misplaced faith.

The Change Necessary for Becoming a Christian

Questions for Discussion

Scripture Passage: *Read Romans 3:9-12*

1. Is there some good in every man?

- a. Heaven is a free gift, but it is not cheap. It cost Jesus terrible suffering before He gave His life for us. Our Lord not only paid the price for our sin, but gave us His perfect heart! Why do we need Christ's righteousness? Isn't there a little good in each of us? According to the Bible, there is no little bit of good in any of us that can get us into heaven. Remember that God's condition for Adam to live forever was that he obey perfectly. When we become a Christian, God forgives our sins and we receive the perfect goodness of a person who never sinned. Here we learn that this perfect goodness is called righteousness and that it comes not from ourselves but from God. It is a gift to those who have trust in Jesus Christ.

Scripture Passage: *Read Mark 2:17*

2. Why do some people not take sin seriously?

- a. Jesus told the scribes that only those who are sick need a doctor. And not only those who are sick, but those who know they are sick. The sickness that Jesus was talking about was sin. All men do sin in their minds, hearts, and actions. But all men do not care if they sin or not. Some men either do not believe in sin, do not think about sin, or do not see the terrible results of sin. The Holy Spirit draws men to Jesus Christ by first making them care about their sinfulness and seeing their need for a Savior.

Scripture Passage: *Read Matthew 27:3-5*

3. What is the difference in “being sorry” and repenting?

- a. In this passage we see Judas admitting that he had sinned by betraying Jesus. But just admitting you are a sinner is not enough. What did Judas do when he recognized he was a sinner? He did not care enough to turn and trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Instead he went away and hanged himself. Before we can come to true faith in Jesus, we must not only recognize that we are sinners, but must turn away from that sin to trust Jesus for forgiveness and the power to overcome it the next time. This is called repentance. Just saying, “Oh, that doesn’t matter, God will forgive me,” is not a sign of true repentance. Nor is only being sorry for your sin when you get caught.

The Faith that Leads to Eternal Life

Read and discuss the following story. Then note what each of these characters was putting his faith in or what concern he had.

A. Faith N. Self

B. Faith N. Feelings

C. Dad D. Saidso

D. Iva Mazin Story

E. Notty Nuff Faith

F. Ben Worryin

G. Sal Vation Assured

In the youth Sunday School class of a small church, an important discussion took place. The teacher had presented some questions to the group. “Can we be sure that we are Christians? How do we know we are going to heaven?”

The girl named Faith N. Self excitedly waved her hand and cried “I know I’m going to heaven!”

“How do you know?” said the teacher.

"Because," she replied, "I have been in the Sunday School all my life and I try to be good. Besides, my dad is an elder in this church!"

The teacher responded gently, "Faith N. Self, you are named well because you seem to think you are a Christian because of your attendance at church and Sunday School, and because you try to be good. Remember that the Bible says 'By grace you are saved through faith not of your SELF, it is a gift of God, not of WORKS, so that no man should boast.' This faith is not in SELF, but in a Person. Remember Paul said 'I know WHOM I have believed' not WHAT. Of course Paul was speaking about Jesus."

At this point her cousin, Faith N. Feelings spoke up and said "Well, I know I am going to heaven because I just feel like I am a Christian. Every time we sing those beautiful songs, it makes me feel like I'm in heaven already!"

"Hmmm," said the teacher, "do you always feel that way?"

"No, not all of the time. When things get rough sometimes I don't feel that way. Then other times I am just 'blah' and don't think about God or heaven at all."

"You can see, Faith N. Feelings, from you own life that emotions, moods, and feelings often change. The Bible says that 'He who believes on the Son has everlasting life...' no matter how you feel or what kind of good or bad situation you find yourself in. Your faith should be in Jesus and His Word which never changes."

"Yeah, that's right," resounded one of the boys in the class named Dad D. Saidso. "My dad and mother have told me that stuff a hundred times and they tell me I am a Christian and going to heaven, so I don't worry about it."

"It's great that your parents have taught you well," replied the teacher, "but remember that you must put your trust in Jesus Christ and His Word yourself. Trusting your parents is great, but what they say about your faith cannot substitute for you. You must personally trust Him."

At this point, a little girl in the back, frantically waving her hand was called on. "Teacher, when you hear what I have to tell, you will know I am saved." This girl's name was Iva Mazin Story. She proceeded to tell the group how she was lying in the bed one night and an image of Jesus appeared on the wall above her stereo, telling her He loved her and not to worry about anything. Based on that vision, she said she knew she was going to heaven.

The teacher replied, "Iva, that is an amazing story, but just remember that God says His Word was 'written unto us...that we may know we have eternal life.' Lots of people have strange dreams and visions, but this experience should not be the center of your faith. Jesus Christ must be."

The teacher then noticed a member of the class staring at the floor, looking very sad. "What's wrong, Notty Nuff Faith?" said the teacher.

"I am worried," replied Notty, "that even though I have faith in Jesus, that I do not have enough faith. Sometimes I am afraid to die and wonder if I need to ask Christ into my heart again. Will I ever get enough faith not to worry about my salvation?"

"No, you won't Notty Nuff, because it is not your great faith that saves you...it is the Great Savior. You see you are trusting in the amount of faith you have to save you, but it is Jesus Who saves! Faith is trusting Him to do it. Do you believe He is able to save you?" the teacher asked.

"Oh yes." said Notty Nuff.

"Then stop worrying and making yourself miserable! Rejoice in His love and His ability to save you. Then He will build your faith."

Notty Nuff's friend Ben Worryin' spoke up frantically. "But what if we stop trusting Jesus! Can we be unsaved?"

"The Bible says," said the teacher, "that Jesus gives us eternal life if we truly deny ourselves, repent, and follow Him. And no one will be able to pluck us out of His hand. Again it is not our great faith that holds on to Him, He holds on to us and will never let us go. So stop worrying, Ben, and start trusting!"

The Sunday School hour is almost over and there is one hand still in the air "Yes, Sal," recognized the teacher.

"I have assurance of my salvation and I know I'm going to heaven," said the boy whose full name was Sal Vation Assured.

"You think you're so perfect?" retorted Faith N. Self who obviously had not been listening to the discussion.

"No, in fact I had to see what a sinner I am before I could put my trust in the Lord Jesus as my Savior. I trusted His promise to save me and give me eternal life. It's just like the bank account my dad started to help me go to college. I won't receive the money until I am 18 years old. But I know the money is there and drawing interest."

"How do you know for sure?" asked Ben Worryin'.

"Because my father told me so," he replied confidently. Sal went on to explain that he could trust his Heavenly Father even more because God is perfectly trustworthy and cannot lie. Plus he could see evidence of God's truth in this life.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Faith N. Feelings.

Sal Vation said, "There are proofs that the Bible gives, sort of like the bank statement I get that tells that my college money is really there. One proof is obeying God's commandments in His Word. Sure I don't always keep them, but I really want to and have seen God change my heart to be more obedient to Him. An example would be the change of my hatred to some mean kids on my street to a love for them. The Lord even gave me the strength to witness for Him to one of them. If Jesus were not in my life, I would never have seen that! I have a long way to go, but the Lord has promised to make me more like Himself. He keeps all His promises. So I know one day I will be in heaven with Jesus."

Memory Verses for Lesson Three

Romans 3:22

Mark 2:17

LESSON FOUR: SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND THE CHURCH

Purpose: *To teach your child the basics of growing in their relationship to Christ and the role of the church in that growth.*

Objectives:

1. To point out the important areas of Christian discipline that God can use to produce growth.
2. To clarify what each of these areas involves and why they are important.

The Necessity of Spiritual Growth

Discussion Questions:

Scripture Passage: *Read 1 Peter 2:2-3*

1. What is our role and God's role in growing spiritually?

- a. When the Holy Spirit brings us to repentance and faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, He also helps us to grow. Just like a little baby needs food or milk to be healthy and grow, new Christians need to feed on the Word of God to grow in Christ. Even though we feed a baby properly, it is still God who produces the growth. In the same way Christians read and study God's Word but depend on Him to make them grow spiritually.

Scripture Passage: *Read Mark 1:35*

2. Why is a quiet time daily with God important?

- a. Another way that we grow stronger in Christ is to spend time alone with Him. Here you see Jesus going to a special place where He could be alone with God. Why is this so important? Suppose I called you my best friend in the whole world, but I never talked to you, called you, or spent any time with you! We wouldn't even know each other, much less be best friends! It's the same with our relationship to God. We should take time to talk with Him every day. He talks to us through His Word, the Bible. If we don't read it we will not receive His message to us. As we get to know Jesus better, He will help us to grow even stronger as Christians.

Scripture Passage: *Read Hebrews 10:24-25*

3. Why does a Christian need the local church?

In addition to Bible reading and prayer, God produces growth in our lives through fellowship with other Christians. These verses point out that God did not

intend for us to always worship alone, but to meet with others for prayer, study, and encouragement. The place where this is normally done is called the local church. Although the universal church contains all true believers in Christ worldwide, the local church consists of a smaller group of believers with common beliefs, interests, and commitments. Reach Church is one of these local churches.

The Role of Evangelism in Spiritual Growth

Discussion Questions:

Scripture Passage: *Read Acts 1:8*

1. What is a Christian to do with the good news of God's plan of salvation?

- a. In these final words of Jesus on earth, He tells His disciples that they are to be His witnesses to all parts of the earth. A witness is someone that tells others about what has happened to him. The disciples had witnessed both the death of Jesus and Him raising from the dead. Their lives had been changed and they had received the power of the Holy Spirit. All who have trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior have this same power. Just like the disciples, we are to be witnesses about what Jesus has done for us. Suppose you had a cure for a deadly disease that was killing millions of people. Would you keep the cure a secret? Well, the deadliest disease is sin that leads to hell. We have the cure - faith in Jesus Christ!

2. What should make us want to share the good news?

- a. Sometimes it is hard to witness, to tell others about our faith in Jesus. We are afraid of what others will say about us, or that we might say the wrong thing. But God tells us not to fear men but to fear God. He has commanded us to share our joy with others. Would God ask you to do something you cannot do? Of course not. The holy Spirit will give us power to be able to overcome our fears. Remembering what Jesus has done for us will make it easier to share with others. He loved us enough to die for our sins and give us eternal life. Shouldn't we love Him enough to obey His commandments and tell others about Jesus? Remember that He will give us the power and the words to speak.

Memory Verses for Lesson Four

Mark 1:35

Acts 1:8

LESSON FIVE: SACRAMENTS

Purpose: *To bring your child to a basic understanding of the importance of the sacraments of the church.*

Objectives:

1. To present the privileges of being a covenant child.
2. To teach how a physical practice can represent a spiritual truth.
3. To get the child to see the benefit and seriousness of the Lord's Supper.

Infant Baptism as a Sacrament

Questions for Discussion:

Scripture Passage: *Read Genesis 17:12-14*

1. What is a sacrament and why is it important?

- a. When the grace (unearned favor) of God is given to His covenant children in a special way through a biblical practice, this is called a sacrament. One such sacrament is the practice of infant baptism. This practice was illustrated in the Old Testament. Here we read that God commanded believing parents to perform a special sign on all male children when they were eight days old. This sign was called circumcision and involved a cleansing of the boy's body by cutting away some unneeded skin. This sign showed this child was in a promise covenant relationship where all members were under the special grace of God's promise (covenant). This promise (covenant) did not become permanent until the child personally believed God, as Abraham did. In the New Testament the practice of circumcision was replaced by a cleansing with water known as baptism.

Scripture Passage: *Read Galatians 3:26-29*

2. How is baptism like a wedding ring?

- a. Here we see baptism mentioned as a sign of being a child of God. Like the rings placed on the bride and groom's fingers at a wedding, the practice of baptism is only a sign of faith in Jesus Christ. Wearing a ring doesn't make you married, nor does being baptized make you a Christian. This special practice is only a sign that an infant is temporarily in the promise covenant of God's grace due to the faith of his parent(s). When they are old enough, covenant children will have to put their faith in Christ in order to remain in God's everlasting promise (covenant).

Scripture Passage: *Read John 1:12*

3. What must a covenant child do when they are old enough?

- a. If a person is already a Christian but has never been baptized, the Bible teaches that they should be baptized. If they were baptized as an infant because of their parents' relationship with Christ, then they became a promise (covenant) child with special blessings. A promise (covenant) child still needs to personally make Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior!

The Body and Blood of the Covenant

Questions for Discussion

Scripture Passage: *Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

1. What is the meaning of Communion?

- a. The blood of Christ was represented at the supper by wine. Likewise the bread at the meal represented the body of Christ, which was crucified. Jesus told His disciples to eat and drink these things in order to remember Him and to proclaim His death until He returned. These new instructions of Jesus to His disciples brought to light the real reason why God's people for many years had eaten the Passover meal. When God's people were slaves in Egypt, God told them to kill a perfect lamb and put its blood on their door posts. Then they were to cook and eat the lamb along with unleavened bread (bread that didn't rise) and bitter herbs. Later the Bible explains that this perfect lamb represented Jesus Christ, called the "Lamb of God." The blood of a lamb saved the Hebrews from death in Egypt, but the blood of God's Lamb, Jesus Christ, saves us from never-ending death! Just as the Hebrew people celebrated the Passover feast to remember when they were freed from slavery and death in Egypt, God's people today celebrate the Lord's Supper to remember their deliverance from the bondage of sin and eternal death. That's why the Lord's Supper is so special!

Scripture Passage: *Read John 6:48-58*

2. Why is taking the Lord's Supper like having a personal relationship with Him?

- a. When God's people observe this special sacrament, He pours out His grace upon them. There is nothing magic in the bread or wine that accomplishes this. The grace comes from God in a personal relationship of the believer with Jesus Christ. Jesus says, "I am the bread of life." He

says He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life. This is not to be taken exactly, for Jesus was a man and not bread. He is speaking of eating and drinking in terms of having Jesus as the center of your life. Just as you take food and drink into your body in order to live physically, you take Jesus into your heart to live spiritually.

Memory Verses for Lesson Five

John 1:12

John 6:51

Final Questions for Parents to ask their Children:

1. Do you know you are a sinner (someone who does things that do not please God) deserving God's anger, having no hope except for His mercy?
2. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of sinners, and do you receive and depend upon Him only for salvation?
3. Have you made up your mind that by depending on the free gift of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, that you will try to live as a follower of Jesus should?

Parents should finish the class by leading their child in this prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and deserve never-ending punishment. I believe that You paid the price for my sin by Your perfect life and death on the cross. I invite you now to come into my life and be my Lord. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me your righteousness. Amen."