

Family Worship and Catechesis

A simple guide for discipling your household

"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."
(Deuteronomy 6:7)

Scripture puts the first discipling relationship in the home (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:4). The Reformers agreed: Luther wrote his Small Catechism "as the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household," and the Church of Scotland's Directory for Family Worship (1647) treated daily household worship as ordinary Christian life. You do not need training. You need fifteen minutes and a habit.

The Fifteen-Minute Pattern

READ	A short passage. Work through a Gospel, Proverbs, or Genesis a few verses at a time. Younger children can use a good children's Bible.
ASK	Two or three questions. What happened? What does this show us about God? What should we do?
LEARN	One catechism question a week. Repeat it every day until everyone can answer it.
PRAY	Each person names one thanks and one request. A parent closes.

Aim for most days of the week. If you miss, simply start again the next day. A singing family can add a psalm or hymn.

Choosing a Catechism

- **Westminster Shorter Catechism** (1647): 107 questions; the classic for Presbyterian and Reformed families.
- **Heidelberg Catechism** (1563): 129 questions in 52 weekly "Lord's Days," warm and personal.
- **Luther's Small Catechism** (1529): short and written expressly for households.
- **Children's catechisms:** for little ones, use a simplified children's catechism or the modern New City Catechism, which has a children's version.

Your first month (Westminster Shorter Catechism)

Wk 1	Q. What is the chief end of man? A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.
Wk 2	Q. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him? A. The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.
Wk 3	Q. What do the scriptures principally teach? A. The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.
Wk 4	Q. What is God? A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Practices That Invite Questions

God built question-provoking objects into Israel's life so that "when your children ask," a parent would have to tell the story (Exodus 12:26; Joshua 4:6). Try a few:

- **A memorial jar.** Write answered prayers on small stones or cards and keep them in a jar. Pull one out and tell the story.
- **A verse by the door.** Post a Scripture card at the entrance of your home (Deuteronomy 11:20) and change it monthly.
- **Lord's Supper Sundays.** On the drive home, ask what the bread and cup mean, and explain.
- **Baptism anniversaries.** Mark the day each child was baptized and talk about God's promises.
- **Walking conversations.** Use car rides and walks "by the way" for one good question.

By Age

Little ones (1-4)	Short Bible stories, one-line catechism answers, simple songs, and very short prayers. Repetition is the point.
Children (5-11)	Memorize catechism answers. Let them read aloud. Ask "why?" questions and let them answer first.
Teens (12-18)	Let them lead the reading and questions. Welcome real objections and work through them from the text. Add regular one-on-one time with a parent.

When It Is Hard

- **You missed a week.** Start again tonight. Faithfulness over time matters more than a perfect streak.
- **The kids are restless.** Shorten it. Five good minutes beat twenty miserable ones.
- **Your spouse isn't on board.** Begin gently and invite, don't pressure. Pray together if you can.
- **You're a single parent.** You are not alone. Ask your church family or a discipleship partner to join you some evenings.
- **You don't feel qualified.** Read the text and ask the questions. You are learning together, and your children will remember that you did it.

Our Week

Day	Passage	Catechism Q.	Prayer focus
Sun			
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			