

Discussion Questions

- Do you sometimes find yourself wanting to find more exciting ways to encounter God than the normal church meeting?
- What are some ways you could reinvigorate your own encounter with the means of grace?

Day 5 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

What's so special about the means of grace? We talked yesterday about how ordinary they are. They are the very practices ordained by God so that the faith of God's people might be strengthened. While God may work in a multitude of extraordinary ways as he chooses, he has instructed us in the way he intends to work ordinarily. He does this through the preached word, prayer, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. When the catechism and confession speak of the ordinary means of grace, they speak primarily of those practices carried out in the gathered congregation of God's people. We might ask, what about the private means we engage in outside of church? We read the bible, sing, and pray in our quiet times at home as well as with our families. Aren't these means of grace as well? Reformed Baptists speak about these practices in a variety of ways. One helpful way that some have used is to speak about public means of grace and private means of grace. The bible encourages the use of private means of grace. Yet, the predominate emphasis in the bible is on the public means. In addition, the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are intended only for the gathered church. They are only to be carried out publicly. While the public means of grace have the priority in scripture, and ought to in our lives, the public and private means ought not to be pitted against one another. We should never neglect one for the other.

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think the Bible gives such a predominate voice for the public means of grace?
- In your life, do you tend to emphasize the public or the private means of grace? Are there ways in which you need to reorient yourself?

Baptist Catechism

Family Worship Guide



West Oaks Baptist Church

(in preparation for Sunday, July 27th, 2025)

Baptist Catechism Question #93

Q: What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?

A: *The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the word, baptism, the Lord's supper, and prayer; all which means are made effectual to the elect for salvation.*

Suggested Memory Verse

Acts 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Day 1 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

What does it mean to be saved? Salvation is a work of God in which he redeems us from sin and death and gives us life in Jesus Christ. Sometimes we can get a little confused when we start talking about how we can be saved. When the Philippian jailer asked how he could be saved the Apostle answered him, “believe in the Lord Jesus!” This seems straightforward until we start reading 1 Peter 3:21 which says, “Baptism now saves you...” How can that be? Is it faith in Jesus that saves us, or is it baptism and other works of the Christian? Many have struggled with this question experiencing varying degrees of success. The reformers answered the question in a way that honors all of the biblical teaching on the nature of salvation. What they realized is that Christians are saved and that they are also *being* saved. When you believe in Jesus you are saved, then and there! Ephesians 1:8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith...* Once you are saved, you find that Jesus is doing a work of saving you day by day. He grows your faith, conquers the power of sin in your life, and gives you life and blessing through his Spirit. This is what Paul alludes to when he says in Philippians 2:12 *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*. This work of being saved is what we commonly call sanctification. God makes us more and more like Jesus.

Discussion Questions

- What does the word “salvation” typically mean when you use it?
- How comfortable are you speaking of sanctification in terms like “salvation”?

Day 2 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Yesterday we began to talk about the nature of our salvation. When we believe we are saved, but that isn’t the whole story. Throughout our lives God works out our salvation in a process of sanctification. This process is what our catechism question today speaks of when it says *Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption*. How does he do this? He uses *means*. The classic name for these means are the *Means of Grace*. The catechism lists 4 primary means of grace. These are the preached word, baptism, the Lord’s supper, and prayer. These are avenues by which God has determined and promised to work in the hearts of his people. He does this when we faithfully obey God’s commands and gather together to hear the word, pray, and carry out the ordinances of his church. People have a tendency to misunderstand the place of the means of grace in the Christian’s life. Catholics and others have a tendency to turn the means of grace into work we perform to please God and merit salvation. We must not start to think our obedience in these practices gains us any merit before God. Others in our day have a tendency to deny the importance of the means of grace in the Christian’s life. They figure God has already saved us. Why does it really matter how we worship as Christians. Rather, God has taught us that we as Christians are to come to him in worship as he has prescribed. As we do this his Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out.

Discussion Questions

- Do you have more of a tendency to try and do works to get God to give you grace, or do you tend to ignore the commands of God?
- How important are the means of grace in your life? How can you tell?

Day 3 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

This week we continue to talk about the role of the means of grace in sanctification. An important question for us to consider is ‘who?’ Who is partaking of the means of grace? Another way of asking this question is, do the means of grace bless everyone who comes to them with the same blessing? Are the means of grace like the wind up Jack-in-the-Box toys? It doesn’t really matter who winds the box, it will always pop up with the same crazy spring-loaded character. For many, the means of grace are things we do. Whoever does them gains a blessing from God. God kinda owes it to them. This is why so many unbelievers will religiously attend church services week after week. They hope to gain a good standing before God by their religious devotion. The means of grace are no benefit to such people. The question of ‘who’ ends up being vital. God blesses only his people with the benefits of redemption. The catechism states the means of grace *are made effectual to the elect for salvation*. Unless you are God’s child the means of grace are of no benefit to you. If you are a believer, however, and you come to the means of grace in faith, God will most surely bless you.

Discussion Questions

- Why don’t the means of grace benefit unbelievers?
- Do you expect to receive blessings from Church on Sundays? Why or why not?

Day 4 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Our catechism this week speaks of the means of grace as *ordinary*. Does that word make the means of grace sound kind of boring? Is there nothing special about them? This is not the meaning we are to take from the word ordinary. The catechism says that God uses these very means to work out salvation in our lives. This makes the means of grace some of the most precious possessions that we have as believers. Ordinary is related to the word ‘ordained’. When we say the means of grace are ordinary it communicates that they are the very things that God has commanded and through which he intends to bless us. There is another sense in which the means of grace are ordinary. They are the ordinary ways in which God intends to save and sanctify his people. There are other means that he sometimes uses but those are extraordinary. An example is the way in which God saves unbelievers. Ordinarily God uses the proclaimed word to save sinners. There are extraordinary ways God has saved sinners. He spoke to Paul on the road to Emmaus. He saved John the Baptist in the womb, and perhaps he has done the same with many other unborn children. Yet, the ordinary way for sinners to be saved is to hear the word. This drives us to both share it ourselves, and to gather to hear it as a church. We should not seek God’s blessing through extraordinary means, but rather through the ordinary ones that he has promised to bless.