

Experiences in Catechesis: Fr. John Roberts

The parents of 2 children in our parish, ages 9 & 10, approached me about baptizing their children. After some prayer and discussion, I suggested that I attempt to catechize these children, to give them an age-appropriate understanding of the faith. The parents and I set about to determine how I would do this. That is when I discovered that the Reformed Episcopal Church has taken the *Catechism for Young Children* (originally published in 1840 by Joseph P. Engels) and modified it to fit the Anglican tradition, which is available [here](#). This catechism is in the Q&A format intended for memorization, a learning format that middle and upper elementary ages do very well with.

So I had my catechism, but without any experience teaching elementary age children, I felt ill-equipped to present the material to them in an engaging way. That was until I found the [Kid's Quest Catechism](#) curriculum published by Great Commission Publications (and orthodox Presbyterian curriculum company). This is a 30+ week curriculum that provides activities and lessons that teach the content of the original *Catechism For Young Children*, with the goal of having the children memorize all the Q&A's. The master plan can be viewed [here](#) and materials are available for purchase [here](#).

So I have begun using these materials for a Kids' Catechism class at St Matthias. The curriculum will match perfectly until the third semester (there are 3 semesters total) when I will have to modify the teachings and activities to match the Anglican modifications from the [REC catechism](#) (on the topics of sacraments and clergy).

In addition to the 2 children I wanted to catechize, 3 other children who are already baptized were interested and have signed up. As of today, our class of 5 has already completed 2 weeks of the course. I believe this is such a wonderful resource that I wanted to share it with others in the Diocese.

It has been well-documented that the weakness of the Sunday School movement over the last 60 years is that it has taught kids bible stories atomistically, but it has been deficient in teaching theology and in tying those stories together into a coherent narrative for them to live their lives out of and take into adulthood. This Kids' Quest Catechism curriculum, with its emphasis on theology and its utilization of the age-appropriate teaching method of memorization, is intended to do just what the majority of curriculums in the SundaySchool movement failed to do. Plus, the memorization homework (about 4-5 questions per week) gets parents and the whole household talking about faith and God ways many haven't previously.

GCP also sells a curriculum for the younger age group of 4-5 years old. I have not looked at it, but it can be seen [here](#) and purchased [here](#)

If you have further questions, feel free to contact me at revjohnroberts@gmail.com or 209-840-2202

REC Modified Catechism: http://www.ststephensmontrose.com/files/Catechism_1_.pdf

Elementary Kid's Catechism master

plan: http://www.gcp.org/Content/Site109/CategoryHeader/57115XINSX57115_00000015173.pdf

Elementary Kid's Catechism purchase materials:

<http://www.gcp.org/Products/CategoryCenter/KQE/Kids-Quest-Elementary.aspx>