

Curriculum

Pre-Catechumen

- Exchange Contact Information
- Setup a few initial meetings to get to know him/her
 - What notions or ideas do they have about God/Christianity/Orthodoxy
 - Why are they seeking the Church? What are they looking for?
 - Who is their family, what kinds of friends, school/work, family attitude about religion, about God, etc.
 - What kind of support system do they have (if any)
- Give them a tour of the church
 - Church and Chapel
 - Church service calendar
 - Who is Pope Tawadros, HE Metropolitan Youssef, HG Bishop Basil, our priests, etc.
- Attend multiple liturgies
- Q&A
- When the time is right, offer for them to start Catechumen classes and explain what that means and what that timeline looks like.
 - REMEMBER: there is no pushiness in Orthodoxy. There is only the Truth. We are not looking for quantity, but for quality. If numbers were the main goal, to fill our pews, then we could compromise the Truth in order to obtain followers. But that is not the case. See John 6.

Meeting Structure

1.5 hours

1. Prayer (in Church/Chapel)
2. Follow-Up
3. Pressing Questions (Q&A)
4. Lesson

Spiritual Canon

The Spiritual Canon is the MOST important part of Catechism.

Prayer

Everyone starts at a different level, but if someone is at zero, I usually go in this order:

1. Pray the Lord's Prayer until it's memorized. Pray extemporaneous prayer after.
2. Add the Thanksgiving Prayer

3. Add Psalm 50
4. Up to twice a day (morning and evening) if not already
5. "Come Let us Kneel Down" (with prostrations) in the mornings
6. Add Gospel of 1st Hour in mornings, 12th Hour in evenings

Scripture

Use NKJV, can read one section at a time or continue through a chapter

If you have any question, write it down and bring it to next meeting (or send it to Abouna)

1. Gospel of St Luke
2. Acts
3. Genesis
4. Exodus
5. Romans
6. Gospel

Fasting

Liturgical Experience

Divine Liturgy

Vespers & Matins

Pascha Week

Part of the benefit of a long catechism is the chance to experience the entirety of the liturgical year/calendar

Curriculum

We may be tempted to use catechism as a way to equip ourselves to "win debates" (even under the guise of "being sure about the Church") but this is temptation by Satan. Satan tempts us to devalue the faith part, and increasingly value arguments, logic, data, etc.

Once I commit to catechism, I commit to obedience to the father the priest and the Church with regards to doctrine, teaching, etc.

Introduction

1. Intro to Catechism
 - What is it
 - Discipleship
 - Components

- Spiritual Canon
- Liturgical Experience
- Catechism Class
- Expectations
 - Commitment
 - Reverence
 - ASK QUESTIONS
- Misconceptions

2. Introduction to Coptic Church

- Coptic Orthodox Church
 - Apostolic
 - Martyrs
 - Ascetic
 - Modern
- **Orthodoxy is NOT a denomination**
- Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern US
- Church Calendar
- Recommended Websites, Apps, Books, etc.

Truth

Recommended Reading: The Gospel of Matthew/Mark/Luke

Truth

- The point here is to establish a baseline... there is such a thing called Truth. And Truth is important (imperative). And discovering or knowing the Truth is the point of catechism.
 - Some things are unknowable
 - Some things require faith
 - Here, some preliminary ideas can be mentioned as the truth, to "get them out of the way" - homosexuality is sin, transgenderism is sin, abortion is sin
- How Truth is Revealed
 - Nature
 - "For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20)
 - The Church is NOT against Science or the Scientific Method but...
 - Scripture
 - Tradition

Tradition

1. Intro to Tradition & Orthodoxy
2. Benefits of Holy Tradition
3. vs. Sola Scriptura

Scripture

1. Authenticity and Reliability of the Bible
2. Biblical Interpretation
3. Infallibility of the Bible
4. How to Read the Bible

Salvation in the Orthodox Concept

Recommended Reading:

- Salvation in the Orthodox Understanding
 - HH Pope Shenouda III
 - <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/g80ptvvlcjvo580oigj0t/Salvation-in-the-Orthodox-Concept-by-H.H.-Pope-Shenouda-III.pdf?rlkey=jmog2uvp5bfp6xy5frcuskyz2&dl=0>
- The Heresy of Salvation in a Moment
 - HH Pope Shenouda III
 - <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/64ch0dioguo9wum5upw08/The-Heresy-of-Salvation-in-a-Moment-HH-Pope-Shenouda-III.pdf?rlkey=3rficdxk1jcs7498nq7buaaw4&dl=0>
- Comparative Theology
 - HH Pope Shenouda III
 - <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/gsuz0hh4jari1xsqhke1/COMPARATIVE-THEOLOGY-HH-Pope-Shenouda-III.pdf?rlkey=eplgm0u8r08sx91mbx2pe8sn2&dl=0>

The Need for Salvation

1. Who is God?
2. Who is Man?
 1. "in the image of God" (Humans) vs. "the image of God" (Christ)
3. Genesis 1 and 2 Understood
4. Image and Likeness of God
5. Genesis 3: The Fall of Man and the Need for Salvation
6. Sin, Death, Corruption
 1. Original Sin
 2. Death is the common problem that every religion, philosophy, ideology, etc. is trying to solve
7. What is Salvation?
 1. Atonement from sin
 2. Eternal Life (rather than death)
 3. Perfection of the Likeness of God in Eternal Life

Other Ideas of Salvation

1. Universalism - "All will be saved"
2. Limited Atonement - "Only the Elect" (Mormon, Jehovah Witness, etc.)

3. Pluralism
4. Protestantism - one extreme: By Grace through faith
5. EO response to Protestant ideas (e.g. in PSA, Original Sin, Theosis) during the neopatristic movement

Salvation by Grace, Faith, Works

The point in this unit is NOT to deep dive sacraments, or get into questions like "infant baptism" vs. "believer's baptism" or "real presence" or "original sin" or "Theosis." Those questions can be addressed in the NEXT unit that is on the Mysteries.

It is simply to show that according to the Scripture and Tradition of the Church, the Sacraments are salvific.

1. Atonement
 1. Qualities of the Savior
 2. Ransom
 3. Punishment? (PSA) - see fraction "O only begotten Son"
2. No Salvation without the Blood of Christ
3. Conditions for Accepting the Blood of Christ
4. Faith
5. Baptism
6. Confirmation
7. Repentance & Confession
8. Eucharist
9. Good Works
 1. Evil works lead to death
 2. Judgment according to our works/deeds

The Holy Mysteries

1. Introduction to Mysteries/Sacraments
2. Mystery of the Eucharist
3. Mystery of Priesthood
4. Mystery of Baptism
 1. Infant Baptism vs. Believers' Baptism
 2. First Baptism?
5. Mystery of Confirmation
6. Mystery of Repentance & Confession
7. Mystery of Matrimony
8. Mystery of Unction of the Sick

Who is God

Recommended Reading:

God the Trinity

1. Trinitarian Faith
 1. Introduction
 2. Analogies
 3. Biblical Foundations
2. Attributes of God
3. Trinitarian Heresies

Christology

1. Nature of Christ
2. Christ and our salvation

Church Rituals

Divine Liturgy

1. Introduction to Ritual & Liturgical Prayer
 1. What is Ritual
 2. Use of Matter (Icons, Candles, Incense, etc.)
 3. What is Liturgy
2. Divine Liturgy
3. Vespers & Matins

Sacramental Rites

1. Rite of Initiation: Baptism
2. Rite of Initiation: Chrismation
3. Crowning Ceremony

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