



# Back to the Beginning: Westminster Confession of Faith

## SUPPLIES Needed



### TO PRINT:

- Large Memory Verse to hold up (1 copy)\*
- Picture of Westminster Abbey

### TO GATHER:

- Hymnal/lyrics for songs\*  
(Optional: guitar or music to sing along with)
- Basket for offering\*
- *The Big Picture Story Bible*—Book 1 (Can be substituted with another children's story Bible if necessary.)
- Blank paper (1-2 sheets/child) & crayons

### OPTIONAL:

- Kid's Activity Sheet (1 copy/child)
- Elements of Worship Icons\*  
(Found in the introduction section.)

\*These items will be needed every week.

## LEADER'S Review

From the first statement of faith in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 to more extensive ones in Colossians 1:15-20 and 1 Timothy 3:16, God's people have always needed a means to explain and confirm their faith. *The Westminster Confession* is no exception. Written during the English Reformation, Parliament gathered a group of Bible scholars to develop an organized summary of the doctrines taught in Scripture.

Today our pastors are tested on this doctrinal standard and are required to adhere to it. The Confession is so important that pastors must voice disagreement to any sections and provide biblical reasons for those disagreements. This is no small matter. Besides Scripture, the Confession is the one document on which the Presbyterian Church in America leans for guidance.

For that reason, we are learning about the confessions of faith that guide our worship. This week, it's all about the first question of *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*. Our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. We may never fully understand that idea, but we can help the children start learning about it while they are young. What better means of living than to glorify God in all that they do and to enjoy all the love, grace, and mercy that He has shown them?

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled

— "How Firm a Foundation"







## Reading of the Word

*Read Scripture. (1-2 minutes)*

Genesis 1:1, 26-27

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.



## Prayer

*Have a prayer of thanksgiving that God is the Creator of the universe and that He created us in His image. (1-2 minutes)*

Father, we are amazed that we can come before You, the Creator of the universe, and call You “Father,” but You have made each of us in Your image and You call us Your children. What a privilege! Thank You, Father! In Jesus’s name we pray. Amen.



## Hearing the Word

*Teach the lesson to the children using the text below as a guide. (6-9 minutes for lesson; 10-15 minutes for activity)*

This month we are learning about special writings which help us know and share our faith. Last week we learned about *The Nicene Creed*. Let’s see what you remember.

### **Review Questions:**

- What is it about Jesus’s identity that has been argued and fought about? *If Jesus was God or Man*
- What did some people think about Jesus’s miracles? *That they were tricks that the devil made happen*
- Was Jesus possessed by a demon or doing magic tricks? *No!*
- Name some of the miracles of Jesus? *Water into wine; healed the crippled, healed the paralyzed, gave sight to the blind; calmed the storm; fed 5,000; got fish for fishermen*
- Where do we see miracles every day now? *In our hearts—making us more like Jesus*

We have seen that in worship there are certain things we generally do each week. They may not be the exact same things each week (like we don’t have the same sermon each week), but there is a general order we follow. Confessing our faith through creeds and confessions of faith is part of the order of worship.

*(Hearing the Word—Continued)*

About 400 years ago, people were confused about how to worship God. People would make up their own rules and try to make other people follow them, even if some of the rules went against Scripture. There were certain men in England who wanted to make sure that only rules from Scripture were taught. So, they came together to write down what they, as Christians, believed.

In the famous Westminster Abbey in London, England ([show picture](#)), they met together and determined, based on Scripture, the rules Christians should follow. The document they wrote is called *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. Since 1647, churches have been using this document to ensure they are following God's Word.

Sometimes Scripture is hard to understand on our own. The Holy Spirit teaches us, but it is also helpful for us to study what godly people have written so we can better understand what God is telling us. *The Westminster Confession* is a great resource which helps us understand Scripture. Remember the questions and answers we've used sometimes during the Confession of Faith part of our worship? They are called the catechism. There is *The Heidelberg Catechism* we discussed two weeks ago, and there is *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* which is a part of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. These questions and answers help us remember important teachings from the Bible. Today we'll talk about the first question of the catechism.

Let's pray first: "Dear Lord, thank You for giving us resources to understand Scripture more so we can know You better. Let us understand how to use these resources for Your glory. Amen."

Have you ever wondered what the purpose of something is? Like, why do giraffes have long necks or elephants have trunks? Why did God create them that way? One question many people ask is, "What is the purpose of man?" People throughout history have been asking why are we here on earth and what is our purpose? The writers of *The Westminster Confession* were no exception. The very first question in *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* is about our purpose. It asks, "What is the chief end of man?" The "chief end" means the main purpose. So, it's asking, why are we here on earth? Why are we living and what does God want with us? I know some of you might know the answer to this question. Can you tell it to me? The answer is: "To glorify God and to enjoy him forever!" What do you think that means?

Let's look at the first book of the Bible to find an answer. What is the first book of the Bible? (*Genesis*.) Do you know what that word means? (*It means, the beginning.*) The first words of Genesis are, "In the beginning." Genesis means just that—the beginning. And in that book, we find the purpose of our living. Do you know who wrote the book of Genesis? (*Moses wrote the first five books in the Bible.*) He wrote them while leading the Israelites out of Egypt, and each book was written to tell them things about God as they traveled for forty years in the desert.



*(Hearing the Word—Continued)*

During the early days of their travels, the Israelites were very upset with Moses. They didn't want to be traveling to this land they had never seen. They wanted to be back in Egypt because there were melons and cucumbers there. Can you believe it? They had rather be slaves with little food than to be free and fed by God. God wanted to remind the people there was a purpose for their struggles and they were supposed to be following Moses. So, God led Moses to write the book of Genesis. And the story starts with a beautiful, perfect picture of creation.

Let's read in Genesis how it is described, "In a garden, in Eden, the man who was formed was placed there. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A river watering the garden flowed from Eden . . ." and ". . . the Lord God formed of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air." *(from The Big Picture Story Bible)*

So, this perfect land was covered with vegetation, animals living together and water flowing from rivers around the garden. It was so different from the land of Egypt the Israelites had just left. The land they had been in was one of slavery, with the only good memories of cucumbers and melons. Moses wanted to make sure the people realized there was more to their life than being held as slaves. He wanted them to see that they also could walk with God in a land where they were free to worship God. He wanted them to go to a place where they could enjoy and glorify God.

The first question of the catechism, "What is the chief end of man?" asks what we should be focusing on while we are making choices as we live each day. The answer is that we are to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Just as the Israelites were living for the promised land, we are living for the day when Jesus will return to earth to reign—and we will fully enjoy and glorify God forever!

Now, how do we glorify God? ***(They may answer here with the Child's Catechism answer— "By loving Him and doing what He commands.")*** When we go where God leads us, when we follow His directions and obey what He teaches us in the Bible—that's glorifying God. When we recognize God makes all things happen, and none of it comes from our own doing, we are glorifying God. Remember the verse, "Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all for the glory of God"? This verse shows that everything we do is to bring glory to God.

When we bring glory to God, we find great joy in our purpose. What is better than working for the King and bringing Him glory? When we work for our own glory, we get tired, worn out, and we don't really enjoy it. However, by glorifying the King of kings we revel in the love He has for us. Jesus tells us that all of Scripture can be summed up in two commandments. Can you remember what they are? The first is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, and all your soul. That's glorifying God! And when we love God with all our being we can truly enjoy the goodness we see from God!

*(Hearing the Word—Continued)*

The second command is only possible when we love God with our whole selves. Loving our neighbor as we love ourselves only happens when we enjoy God, because in enjoying God, we see how good God is, how loving God is, and how much He has done for us. We can love others because we know we are loved. And that is the chief end of man—to glorify God and enjoy Him forever! We are able to do this because of what Jesus has done for us. His life, death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead assure us that His Spirit now lives within us and gives us all the power we need to glorify and enjoy Him.

**ACTIVITY: Read and Draw Creation** *Read the first chapter of *The Big Picture Story Bible* about Creation. Use it to reinforce the idea that Eden was the place to be, the place where God wanted to be with His people. While you read, give each child a large piece of white drawing paper. Tell them to draw a picture of what they imagine Eden was like.*

## Benediction

*Recite the following verse. (1 minute)*

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit (Phil. 4:23).



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