
Foundations:

Basic Christian Teachings

Session 1: “The Story”

A Good Story

What is your favorite story?

What makes for a good story?

Are there common patterns to our favorite stories?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Story and Worldview

Every worldview has a big story which follows the same pattern:

- How did we get here?
- What’s the problem in the world?

- How can it be solved?
- What's the outcome when it is solved?

A few points about this:

- Different religions, philosophies, and worldviews answer these questions differently.
- There is a worldview that denies that there is a big story (postmodernism). But to say there is no story is a story.
- Parts from one story (worldview) may not fit in a different story. Think of the parts as pieces to a puzzle, and the big story is the picture on the lid of the box.

The Big Story of Christianity

Christianity has a story which answers these questions:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Important points about this story:

- It's _____
 - 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

- It's not about _____; it's about _____
 - 1 Corinthians 15:16-19
- It answers the _____
 - Romans 8:31-39
- It's _____
 - Luke 2:8-14

The purpose of this class is to explain the story of Christianity.

- It is important to see the big story, so we know how the pieces fit, as well as the parts of the story.
- By knowing the big story, we can also recognize pieces that don't fit, that belong to other stories.
- In the first session we will look at the big story. In coming weeks, we will walk through the story in more depth.

Big Questions

There are two big questions that often come up when people are considering the truth claims of Christianity:

- If God exists, why is there evil in the world?
- Why is Jesus the only way of salvation?

Overview of the Christian Story

There are five main parts to this story"

- _____
 - Genesis 1:1

- _____
 - Genesis 1:27; Genesis 3:6,7
- _____
 - John 1:14
- _____
 - John 3:16
- _____
 - 2 Corinthians 4:14

Along with unpacking this story in the coming weeks, we will also touch on these important parts of the Christian life today

- The Bible
- Prayer
- Baptism
- The Lord's Supper
- Worship
- The Christian Life (Ten Commandments)
- The Church

Next Session: God

Next session will focus on the beginning of the story, which is God

- We will explore the worldview differences between "Theism" (belief in God), and other popular worldviews (Naturalism, Pantheism)
- We will talk about science and faith, and how new scientific developments support belief in a creator
- We will discuss the meaning of the Trinity

What do I do next?

It does not matter whether you are a new Christian, a revived Christian, or a life-long Christian. Jesus calls each of us to a process of spiritual health and growth that includes the following:

- **Constant in Prayer** – *A disciple has an active prayer life, and is growing in praying with and for others.*
- **Grounded in the Word** – *A disciple is constantly in the Word – reading, studying, memorizing, and applying the Word for daily life.*
- **Faithful in Worship** - *A disciple is dedicated to faithful worship, worshiping with others weekly, and cultivating a personal or family devotion life*
- **Spiritual Friendship** – *A disciple lives his or her faith in relationship, participating in a discipling group or study group*
- **Loving Service** – *A disciple seeks to love all people, and strives to serve people inside and outside the St. John's family*
- **Intentional Generosity** – *A disciple is growing in generosity, giving time, talent and treasure to be a blessing to others and to serve God's mission.*
- **Compassionate Witness** – *A disciple shares the love of Jesus in word and deed, and so seeks to make more disciples*

For Further Growing

You are being given a marvelous little reference book as a gift from St. John's. It is called "Luther's Small Catechism".

The Small Catechism is a book written by Martin Luther, a reformer of the church, in 1529 to help sum up Christian teachings so that they could more easily be taught to children by their parents. It follows a question and answer format.

Each week you will be given readings from this book, which will give you additional information about the topics we have covered.

For this week:

- The Small Catechism, pp. 13-29

Sharpening The Sword

Each week you will be given a verse of the Bible to put to memory. The Bible calls God's Word "the sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). We want you to have a big, sharp sword!

For this week:

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*