



COMMUNICATING THE MEANS OF GRACE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Session 3: Discipling the Next Generation

❖ REVIEW OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

- The sacraments do two things:
 - They help us **remember** who and whose we are in light of God's work of redemption
 - They help us enjoy and mature in our **relationship** with God
- How is Baptism about remembrance and relationship?
- How is the Lord's Table about remembrance and relationship?

❖ ADMITTING CHILDREN TO THE TABLE

- Children being admitted to the Table is a matter of *spiritual maturity*, not a matter of age
 - It can happen sooner or later. We are looking for spiritual maturity, which means there is no age limit.
- Spiritual maturity is a *simple profession*, not a finished product
 - Children answer the same five membership questions that all members answer in the affirmative
 - This is why the five questions form the backbone of the Communicant's Workbook
- A simple profession is the *fruit of the Holy Spirit's work*, not the product of our persuasion
 - It is critical that we do not force or coax our children into coming to the Table.
 - Slow maturation over the long haul is always better than quick-fix results!

❖ PREPARING CHILDREN FOR THE TABLE

- How to Help Your Children Improve Their Baptism

- Refer to/think of them as “Baptized ones.”
 - You can do this when praying with/for them.
- Remind them of the forgiveness signified by their baptism when they struggle with guilt and shame for their sin
 - Be careful not to use their baptism as leverage to make them behave properly! (e.g., “You’re baptized! You shouldn’t have acted like this!”)
 - Baptism is not a call for us to be perfect. It is a sign and seal of Christ’s perfection for us.
- Share how you are improving your baptism. Let them see you grow in your discipleship!

- How to Help Your Children Come to the Table

- Set the right mood for the Lord’s Table: joyful celebration of remembrance and relationship
 - Joyful communion/relationship with Christ and His body
 - Joyful remembrance of the fullness of the Gospel
- Tell them about your experience at the Table
 - Be specific about how the Table encouraged you through remembrance and relationship that day.
 - E.g., “I have been struggling with anxiety about the future. The bread and the cup reminded me that Jesus gives us our daily bread. They also reminded me that Jesus is the bread from Heaven and that He will drink the cup with us when He comes again. He is what I truly need today and He gives me hope for tomorrow!”
- Emphasize that the Table is *for them*. They do not come to the Table for us or for the church.

❖ KEY QUESTIONS

- Questions for us

- What do you want your children to know about Baptism/The Lord's Table?
- How do you hope they will experience Baptism/The Lord's Table?
- Are there any fears or anxieties you have about preparing your children for the Table?

- Questions for our children

- What have we taught you about . . . (Baptism, the Lord's Table, the Gospel, joy, etc.)?
- What did you notice about Baptism/The Lord's Table this morning?
- Do you want to come to the Lord's Table? Why or why not?

❖ OUR CALLING AND RESPONSIBILITY

- What is your calling and responsibility as parents? (BCO 56-4)

- To trust God as the sole Author of salvation – both for yourselves and for your children
- To catechize your children. This means:
 - To proclaim the Gospel to them
 - To train them, to the best of your ability, in the principles of our religion as contained in Scripture
- To pray with and for them
- To set before them an example of Christian character

- What is our calling and responsibility as a church? (BCO 56-5)

- To “undertake the responsibility of assisting the parents in the Christian nurture of this child?”
- Notice how broad this vow is. There is plenty of room for creativity! Examples include:
 - Sunday school
 - Mentoring
 - Leading catechesis at small groups
 - Setting a godly example in our use of the sacraments in worship. We are witnessing to the meaning of Baptism and the Lord's Table every time we celebrate them together. What story are we telling?

❖ SUMMARY

The main point is to point to Jesus. We do not want to coerce our children into coming to the Table. Nor do we want to make this a fearful endeavor. The entire journey must be saturated in prayer. Draw upon the love and help of your brothers and sisters in Christ. This is our church's largest mission field! Above all else, remember: as parents you serve God as a steward of your children. God is their heavenly Father, not you. As the church we serve God as your co-laborers in discipleship. He gives the growth, not us. Be faithful over the long haul and trust Him. If you've catechized, you've done your responsibility. Continue to cultivate, and patiently trust that God will cause the seeds you've planted and watered to grow!

❖ LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Communicant's Workbook](#)
- [Dr. Ligon Duncan: 'Is There an Age of Accountability?'](#)