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TRUTH AND
GRACE MEMORY
BOOK

BOOK 1

Ages Two to Nine

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	9
A Catechism for Boys and Girls	23
Scripture Memory	49
Bible Basics	69
Hymns	75
Track Your Progress	87

“

He established a testimony in Jacob
and appointed a law in Israel,
which he commanded our fathers
to teach to their children,
that the next generation might know them,
the children yet unborn,
and arise and tell them to their children,
so that they should set their hope in God
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments.

”

PSALM 78:5-7

To
Donna,
our children,
our grandchildren,
and children yet unborn

“

Give your children big truths they can grow
into rather than light explanations they will
grow out of.

”

TEDD TRIPP

“

I learned more about Christianity from my
mother than from all the theologians in England.

”

JOHN WESLEY

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Thomas K. Ascol

Psalm 78 casts a multi-generational vision for the people of God. Asaph declares his intention to pass on to his children that which he and his generation learned from their fathers. By doing so, his children, in turn, can teach their children. "He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children" (Psalm 78:5-6).

The Bible teaches that children are "a heritage from the Lord" and that "the fruit of the womb is His reward" (Psalm 127:3). Each child is a gift from God. This makes parents stewards of God, entrusted with one (or more) of His greatest blessings. It also means that those who work with children are involved in a high calling.

The Truth and Grace Memory Books (*TAG* books) are designed to help parents, churches and children's workers as they fulfill that calling. Three primary ingredients are found in each book.

TRUTH AND GRACE BOOK 1

First and foremost is the Word of God. Several passages have been carefully selected for memorization. All Scripture throughout the Scripture Memory section is in the English Standard Version. Key Bible verses as well as longer portions are designed to introduce children to the overall scope and purpose of God's creative, providential and redemptive activity. The student who completes all three books will memorize (among other texts) the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the Lord's prayer, 1 Corinthians 13, various Psalms (including 119!), plus all the books of the Bible.

Why place such an emphasis on memorizing Scripture? Listen to the Psalmist's answer: "I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11). Furthermore, consider the great promise God makes in Isaiah 55:10–11: "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." God's Spirit uses the Scripture to speak to adults and children of all ages, calling them to faith in Christ and directing in the paths of real discipleship. Therefore, as a parent who prays for the salvation and spiritual growth of your child, you must be diligent in teaching him or her the Word of God.

INTRODUCTION

A second element in the workbook is a selection of sound Christian hymns to be learned and memorized. Many of these are familiar (such as the Doxology) and can be learned by very small children. Others are not so well-known but are profound in their communication of biblical truth. In all, more than 2 dozen great hymns of the faith are included.

A WORD ABOUT CATECHISMS

The third, and perhaps least familiar, ingredient are catechisms. A good catechism is a very effective tool in the hands of a dedicated parent or teacher. Each TAG book is built around a trustworthy, Baptist catechism. That term —“Baptist catechism”—may sound strange to many modern Baptists. They may think, as I did early in my life, that “catechism” is a Roman Catholic, Lutheran or, at best, Presbyterian word.

Of course, that simply is not true. “Catechize” is anglicized version of the Greek word, *katekeo*, which simply means “to teach.” It appears, in various forms, several times in the Greek New Testament (it is translated as “taught” in Luke 1:4 and Acts 18:25).

Anyone, then, who has been taught has in some sense been catechized. But the word came to refer to a specific type of instruction early in church history. New Christians were taught the essentials of the faith by learning how to answer specific questions, which were eventually grouped

TRUTH AND GRACE BOOK 1

together and came to be referred to simply as a “catechism.”

Tom Nettles has called the 16th-century Protestant Reformation the “golden age” of catechisms. In 1562 what is arguably the most influential one of all was published as the Heidelberg Catechism. Leading reformers, most notably Martin Luther and John Calvin, produced catechisms to teach both the essentials and distinctives of their faith. In the next century, the first modern Baptists followed suit.

Early Baptist leaders regarded catechetical instruction as a valuable method to teach both children and adults the doctrinal content of the Bible. Keach's Catechism (whose author, Benjamin Keach—a 17th-century English Baptist—modeled it after the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly) was widely used among Baptists in both England and America. Charles Spurgeon (19th-century English Baptist leader) revised it slightly and reissued it for use in the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

Early Southern Baptists freely employed catechisms. One of the first publications which the Sunday School Board produced was a catechism by James Boyce, founder and first President of Southern Seminary. John Broadus also wrote a catechism which was published by the board in the 19th century. Lottie Moon used a catechism in her missionary work in China.

The TAG Books stand firmly in this stream of Orthodox, Protestant, and Baptist catechetical instruction. Each of the three books is based on a

INTRODUCTION

specific catechism. *The Baptist Catechism* is reproduced in the second book, and we use this original version of the catechism so that it matches *The Baptist Catechism* set to music (which can be purchased from Founders Ministries). A simpler, more elementary one, *A Catechism for Boys and Girls*, is used in the first and *The Heidelberg Catechism for Baptists* (which draws on *The Orthodox Catechism* of 1680) is used in the third.

A WORD TO PARENTS

Raising children in the 21st century is challenging, to say the least. The temptation on parents to merely get by is great. Sometimes moms and dads simply want to make it through with the fewest possible conflicts. When this attitude is adopted parents become passive and children learn to be manipulative and the result is that neither parents nor children are happy. Though tragic, it is sadly not uncommon to see Christian homes where parents have defaulted on the responsibilities that God has entrusted to them.

Teaching their children the Word of God is at the forefront of responsibilities for Christian parents. God specifically calls Christian parents to raise their children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). You cannot be passive and fulfill this responsibility to “bring them up” in the proper way. Prayer, discipline, godly example, and consistent, continuous, clear instruction are required.

TRUTH AND GRACE BOOK 1

The comprehensive nature of this responsibility is spelled out in Deuteronomy 6:4–6.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

In the face of such a daunting responsibility I cannot overstate the value of a well-constructed catechism to help parents in this work. By learning such a catechism a child (or adult for that matter) will be introduced to the overall biblical scheme of salvation. Such discipline will frame the mind for receiving and understanding every part of the Bible. A good catechism trains a person to read the Bible theologically.

God places the responsibility for raising children squarely on the shoulders of their parents. It is not primarily the job of church leaders or the pastor. If you are a parent then recognizing and accepting this responsibility is one of the most important things you can do. If you do not invest your time and effort to teach your children about God, be assured someone else will. Your children will be disciplined by someone. They may get their ideas about God primarily from

INTRODUCTION

television, music, or social media. If so, then they are likely to be taught that God, if He exists at all, is an irrelevant, indulgent being that is little more than a nice, kindly old man. If you do not teach your children truth and righteousness, be assured that there are a multitude of teachers in this world who would deceive them into thinking that truth is personal and morality is relative.

As a pastor I have spent my life teaching the church I serve to believe sound doctrine and to stand against the false teachers of our age whose views would destroy the souls of our young people. As a Christian you have every right to expect that the sermons and teaching heard in your church will reinforce the godly principles which you are trying to teach at home. But you have no right to expect your church to take the place of the home. God has given to parents the responsibility of teaching their children divine truth.

The *TAG* books have been designed to help you fulfill that assignment. The emphasis is on memorization. Some modern educators question the wisdom of teaching young children to memorize. Concern usually centers on the fear that the child is merely committing to memory meaningless words. This is a real danger—that we will be satisfied with hearing our children merely recite back to us words and sentences of which they have no understanding. That is why parents should carefully teach their children the material in these books. Personal understanding should always be the goal of our teaching. But

TRUTH AND GRACE BOOK 1

understanding grows over time (mine has; hasn't yours?). Truth committed to memory provides the building blocks for such growth.

I originally produced the *TAG* books in the late 1990s for the parents and children in Grace Baptist Church of Cape Coral, Florida. I borrowed from and leaned on the work of many people, including Paul Settle, Fred Malone, Bill Ascol, Karen Leach, Judy Veilleux and, of course, my wife, Donna. Founders Press first published the *TAG* books in 2000 and then again in 2005. For this new edition I owe a debt of gratitude to Jared and Heather Longshore, whose determination, thoughtfulness and creativity have made this work more accessible to a new generation of parents and children. It is a testimony to God's grace in reviving the work of His gospel that they continue to find a wide readership. My prayer has been and remains that the Lord will use these books to help parents raise generations of men and women who are mighty in His Word and Spirit and who will take the wonderful news of Jesus Christ to the remaining hard places in our world.

Donna and I loved catechizing our children. Now we love watching our children who have become parents catechizing our grandchildren. It is to those children, their spouses, and our grandchildren that the Truth and Grace Memory Books are dedicated.

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS MEMORY BOOK

I remember how intimidated I was when Donna and I made our first attempts to start catechizing our firstborn. After many starts and stops and lots of mistakes, we finally settled into a healthy rhythm of incorporating questions from the catechism both in set times and informal times with her and her siblings. Following are some of the lessons we learned along the way.

Discuss the material being memorized with your child. This should be done during the actual memorization as well as at other opportune times in the day. Daily experiences and observations provide a world of opportunities to illustrate and apply God's Word. For example, those pesky night frights that young children occasionally have become wonderful occasions to comfortingly remind them that, though we cannot see God, He always sees us.

Take time to define difficult terms. Question your child in order to discover the level of his understanding. When you feel that understanding is being achieved, pray with and for the child, including in your prayer some of the concepts just discussed. Expect your children to learn, and rejoice with them over their growth in knowledge and understanding of God's Word.

No matter what the age of your children, if you will begin immediately, and continue consistently, to teach them with this workbook, you will instill in them a comprehensive awareness of the Bible's whole system of revealed truth. Obviously, the earlier a child begins, the better. But these books

TRUTH AND GRACE BOOK 1

have been designed to be useful to young people as well to children and preschoolers.

Following are some specific suggestions that come from my experience.

1. Make this workbook something very special in your child's life. Emphasize the importance of learning God's Word. If you are genuinely excited about it, most likely your children will be also.
2. Incorporate it into your regular time of family prayer and devotion. After you have read a portion of God's Word, or some Bible story book, and have prayed, take a few minutes to work on a specific verse or question. Learn to sing the hymns together as a family. You can do it! You simply have to make the effort.
3. Encourage precise memorization. If they are going to spend the time and effort to learn it, they might as well learn it accurately.
4. Be very positive. Try not to let the workbook become a battleground where a contest of the wills (child's vs. parent's) occurs. This does not mean that you let the child dictate when he will or will not work on the material. Rather, do not let yourself get into the position where you are violating biblical principles (by employing

INTRODUCTION

rage, sarcasm, ridicule, empty threats, etc.) in your zeal to have your child learn the Bible! Instead, make it an enjoyable—and at times, even fun—time. Donna and I would often let our children ask us the questions.

5. Date and sign each step. At the back of the workbook there are places for the parent to signify that the student has completed the assignments. Treat each one as a significant milestone and encourage your child to keep progressing.
6. Go at your child's own rate. Children, like adults, learn differently and at different tempos. The workbook is designed so that the material can be covered as quickly or slowly as needed. Do not hesitate to move beyond the stated age levels. Remember, these are merely suggestions.
7. Discuss the content of the verses, catechism questions, or hymns being learned. Help your child understand what they are saying. Remember, the goal is spiritual understanding, not mechanical regurgitation.
8. Review. Avoid placing such an emphasis on advancement that your child is tempted to utilize only his or her short-term rather than long-term memory.

TRUTH AND GRACE BOOK 1

9. Rejoice. Your child is learning Bible truths which some adults will never know. Thank the Lord for the privilege of teaching your children about Him. Be encouraged as you hear them reciting the Word of God and expressing important biblical truths.

10. Pray. Ask God to drive His Word deep into the heart and conscience of each child. Pray that He will send His Spirit to teach them inwardly the truth about sin and judgment, heaven and hell, Jesus, and salvation. As you diligently teach your children, labor in prayer for them until you see Christ being formed in them.

11. Encourage other parents. We all need it. Make a conscious effort to give it. Training our children in the way of the Lord is a high calling. We are constantly tempted to neglect it. We all fail at some point and at some time. Resolve to be an encourager.

“

Believe me... the church of God will never be
preserved without catechesis.

”

JOHN CALVIN

A CATECHISM FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

1. Who made you?
God made me.
(Genesis 1:26–27; 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Acts 17:24–29)
2. What else did God make?
God made all things.
(Genesis 1, esp. vv. 1, 31; Acts 14:15; Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16)
3. Why did God make you and all things?
For His own glory.
(Psalm 19: 1; Jeremiah 9:23–24; Revelation 4:11; 5:13)

TRUTH AND GRACE BOOK 1

4. How can you glorify God?
By loving Him and doing what He commands.
(Ecclesiastes 12:13; Mark 12:29–31; John 15:8–10; 1 Corinthians 10:31)
5. Why ought you to glorify God?
Because He made me and takes care of me.
(Romans 11:36; Revelation 4:11; cf. Daniel 5:23)
6. Are there more gods than one?
There is only one God.
(Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10; Mark 12:29; Acts 17:22–31)
7. In how many persons does this one God exist?
In three persons.
(Matthew 3:16, 17; John 5:23; 10:30; 14:9–10; 15:26; 16:13–15; 1 John 5:20, 2 John 9; Revelation 1:4, 5)
8. Who are they?
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
(Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20–21)
9. Who is God?
God is a Spirit, and does not have a body like men.
(John 4:24; 2 Corinthians 3:17; 1 Timothy 1:17)