

HOW TO USE CATECHISMS IN THE HOME AND CHURCH

QUESTIONS THAT TRANSFORM



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**THE POWER OF
A QUESTION**

THE POWER OF A QUESTION

- ▶ A question can be a simple **request** for information
- ▶ But questions can be used for **good** or **ill**
- ▶ Consider some **important questions** in Scripture...

GENESIS 3:1 (NET)

“Is it really true that God said, ‘You must not eat from any tree of the orchard’?”

GENESIS 3:9 (NET)

“Where are you?”

GENESIS 18:25 (NET)

“Will not the judge of the whole earth do what is right?”

JOB 2:9 (NET)

“Are you still holding firmly to your integrity? Curse God, and die!”

PSALM 119:9 (NET)

How can a young person maintain a pure life?

ISAIAH 6:8 (NET)

“Whom will I send? Who will go on our behalf?”

MATTHEW 16:15 (NET)

“But who do you say that I am?”

MATTHEW 18:21 (NET)

“Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother ^[a] who sins against me? As many as seven times?”

MATTHEW 27:22 (NET)

“Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?”

MARK 8:36 (NET)

“For what benefit is it for a person to gain the whole world,
yet forfeit his life?”

ACTS 16:30 (NET)

“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

ROMANS 6:1 (NET)

What shall we say then? Are we to remain in sin so that grace may increase?

ROMANS 8:31 (NET)

What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

**WHAT QUESTION IN SCRIPTURE DO YOU
FIND MEANINGFUL THAT I MISSED?**

THE POWER OF A QUESTION

- ▶ It seems that God **wired** people with a natural sense of **curiosity** and **wonder**
- ▶ And this is nowhere more true than within **children**

**WHAT ARE SOME QUESTIONS KIDS LIKE TO
ASK?**

THE POWER OF A QUESTION

- ▶ It seems that God **wired** people with a natural sense of **curiosity** and **wonder**
- ▶ And this is nowhere more true than within **children**
- ▶ Did you realize that God **counts on kids asking questions?**

JOSHUA 4:4–7 (NET)

4 Joshua summoned the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one per tribe. **5** Joshua told them, "Go in front of the ark of the Lord your God to the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to put a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the Israelite tribes. **6** The stones will be a reminder to you. When your children ask someday, **'Why are these stones important to you?'** **7** tell them how the water of the Jordan stopped flowing before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the water of the Jordan stopped flowing. These stones will be a lasting memorial for the Israelites."

THE POWER OF A QUESTION

- ▶ Questions are an important part of the traditional **Passover Seder**
- ▶ Asked by the **youngest person** at the table:
 - ▶ How is this night different from all other nights?
 - ▶ On all other nights we eat leavened foods and matzah. Why on this night, only matzah?
 - ▶ On all other nights, we eat all vegetables. Why on this night, only bitter herbs?
 - ▶ On all other nights, we don't dip even once. Why on this night do we dip twice?
 - ▶ On all other nights, we eat either sitting upright or reclining. Why on this night do we all recline?

THE POWER OF A QUESTION

- ▶ What we want to do as **ministry leaders** and what we want to help our **parents** to do is capitalize on a child's natural tendency to ask questions
- ▶ This is where a **catechism** comes in

**WHEN YOU HEAR “CATECHISM,” WHAT DO
YOU THINK?**

**WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR FAMILIES
THINK?**



QUESTIONS THAT TRANSFORM

**WHAT IS A
CATECHISM?**

WHAT IS A CATECHISM?

- ▶ A catechism is a **series of questions and answers** concerning the basics of the faith that are meant to be recited and memorized
- ▶ It comes from the Greek word ***katēcheō***, which means to “teach by word of mouth” or “instruct”
- ▶ This word is used **seven times** in the New Testament
 - ▶ Notably of **Apollos’s instruction** (Acts 18:25), **Paul’s desire to instruct** others (1 Corinthians 14:19), and **Paul’s command** that those who receive instruction in the word must share good things with those who teach it (Galatians 6:6)

WHAT IS A CATECHISM?

- ▶ **Catechism**: the content of instruction
- ▶ **Catechesis**: the method of instruction
- ▶ **Catechumen**: the recipient of instruction
- ▶ **Catechist**: the giver of instruction
- ▶ **Catechize**: the process of instruction
 - ▶ When it comes to catechesis, the catechist uses a catechism to catechize the catechumen.

WHAT IS A CATECHISM?

- ▶ Catechisms have been used since at least the sixteenth-century **Protestant Reformation**
 - ▶ Martin Luther: ***The Small Catechism*** (1529) = intended for families
 - ▶ John Calvin: ***Geneva Catechism*** (1542) = intended for families
 - ▶ The ***Heidelberg Catechism*** (1563)
 - ▶ The ***Westminster Shorter Catechism*** (1646)
 - ▶ The ***Baptist Catechism*** (1677)

WHAT IS A CATECHISM?

▶ Examples

- ▶ **WHO IS GOD?** God is our creator and he is the ruler of everything.
- ▶ **WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT GOD IS OMNISCIENT?** That God is omniscient means he knows everything that was, that is, that will be, and that could be.
- ▶ **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A NEW IDENTITY IN CHRIST?** To have a new identity in Christ means the core of who we are has changed; we have been recreated to live the way God made us.

WHAT IS A CATECHISM?

- ▶ I learned about catechisms in **seminary**
- ▶ I wanted to use one with my kids, but I **couldn't find one** I loved
- ▶ So I wrote one; it was later published as **Cornerstones**
- ▶ This method was key to our dinner **discipleship conversations**
 - ▶ Provided a safe, fun, meaningful, nonthreatening **context** for discipleship
 - ▶ Embedded **core truths** and sparked meaningful **follow-up** discussions



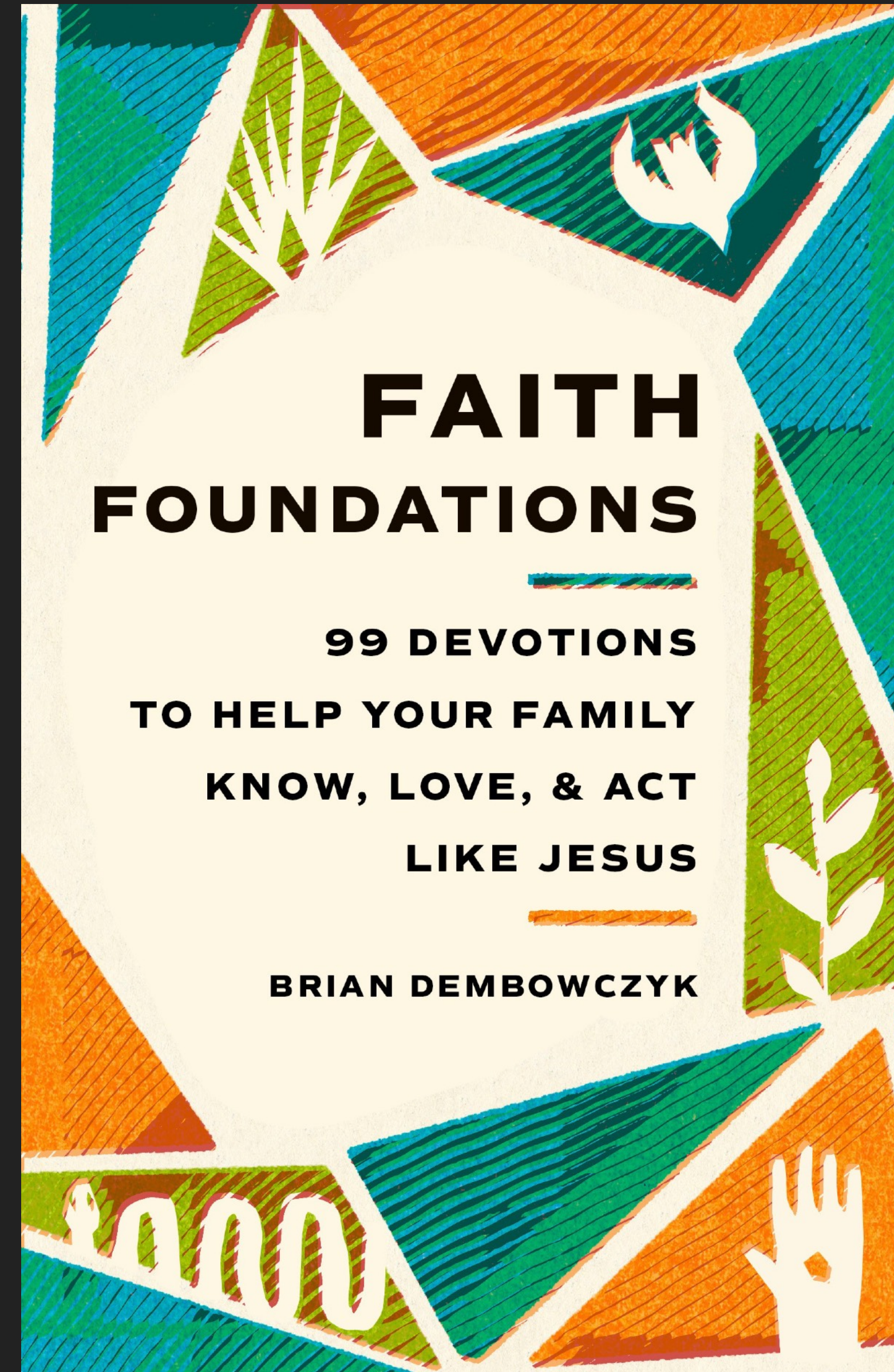
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CATECHISM RESOURCES

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- ▶ ***Faith Foundations***

- ▶ 99 Q&A Devotions



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- ▶ ***New City Catechism for Kids***

- ▶ 52 Q&A

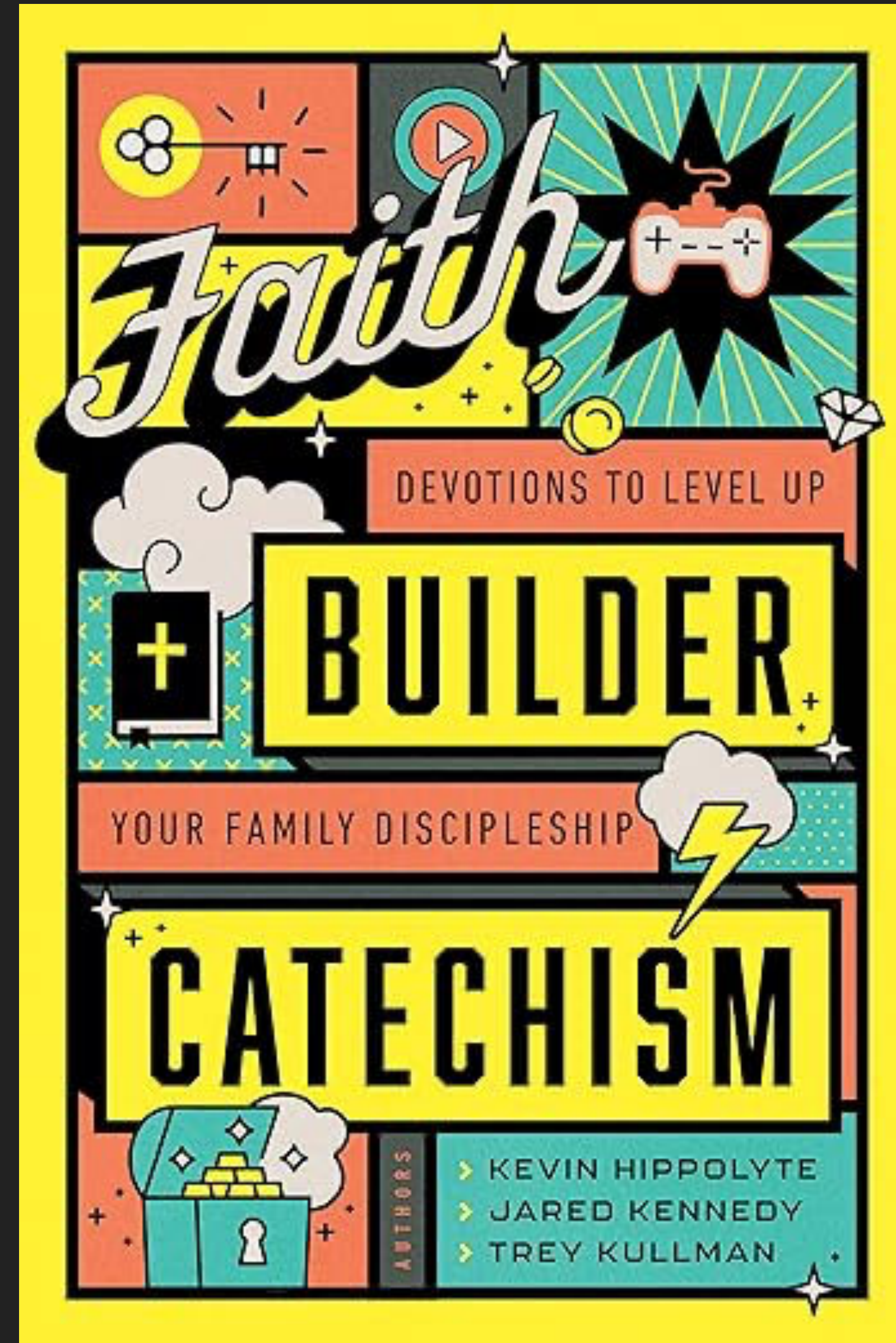
The New City
Catechism **for Kids**



52 Questions
& Answers
for Our Hearts
& Minds

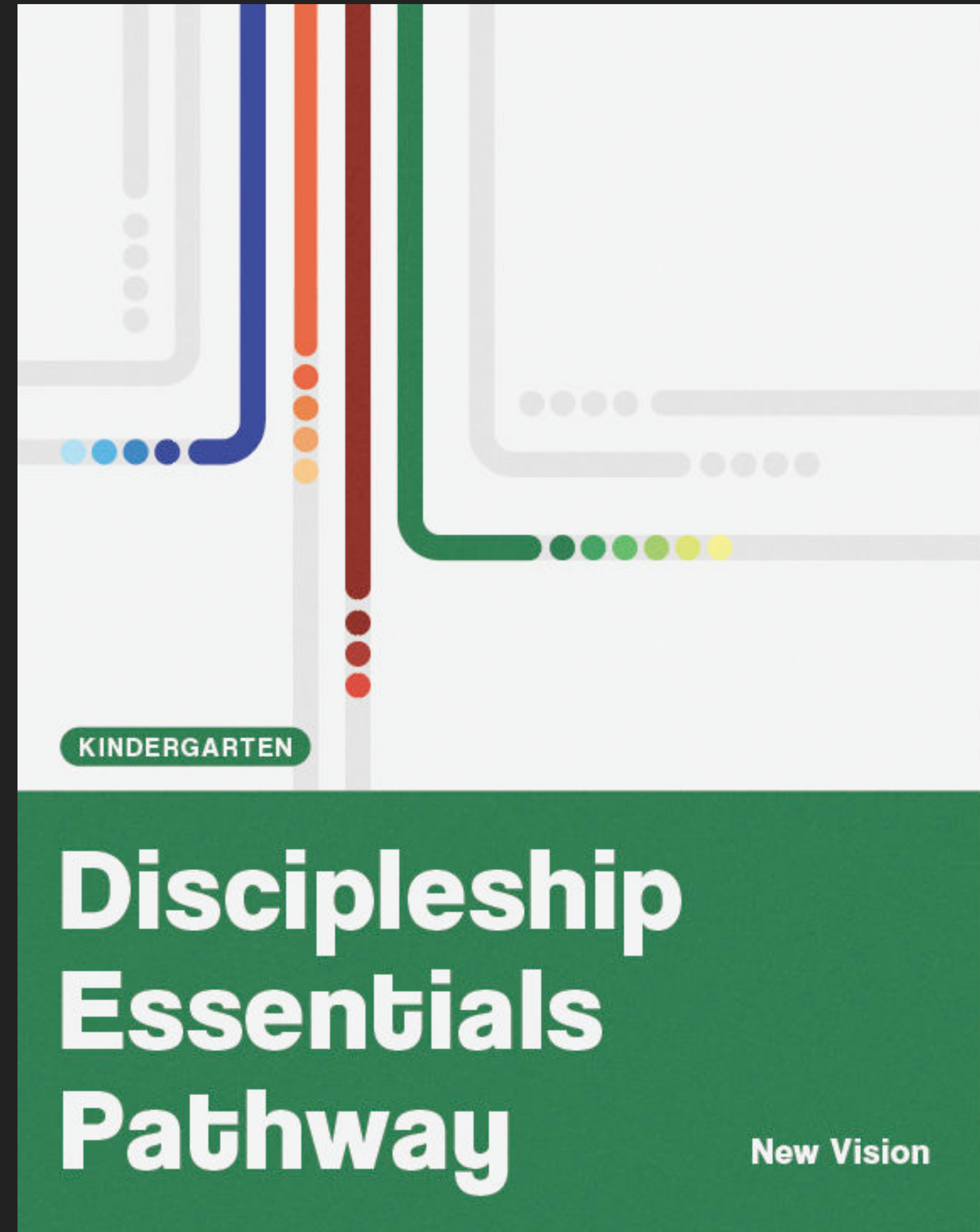
CATECHISM RESOURCES

- ▶ **Faith Foundations**
 - ▶ 99 Q&A Devotions
- ▶ **New City Catechism for Kids**
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- ▶ **Faith Builder Catechism**
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- ▶ ***Faith Builder Catechism***
 - ▶ 52 Q&A Devotions
- ▶ ***Discipleship Essentials Pathway***
 - ▶ 12 Q&A/year for K through college



CATECHISM RESOURCES

- ▶ Use a **historical** one
- ▶ **Create** your own

**ARE THERE ANY OTHER CATECHISM
RESOURCES YOU KNOW OF?**



QUESTIONS THAT TRANSFORM

**USING CATECHISMS
ON CAMPUS**

USING CATECHISMS ON CAMPUS

- ▶ Option 1: Make a catechism the **central** part of your **Sunday AM curriculum**
 - ▶ *Small Catechism* (374 questions = 7 years of content)
 - ▶ *Westminster Shorter* (107 questions = 2 years of content)
 - ▶ Option 1a: **Add** a catechesis time to your existing curriculum
- ▶ Option 2: Make a catechism the **central** part of your **mid-week curriculum**
 - ▶ Option 2a: **Add** a catechesis time to your existing curriculum

USING CATECHISMS ON CAMPUS

- ▶ Option 3: Use a catechism for a **season's special focus** (e.g., summer)
 - ▶ Choose one subject of a catechism per summer
 - ▶ e.g., (1) The Bible, (2) God, (3) Jesus, (4) the Holy Spirit, (5) Salvation, etc.
- ▶ Option 4: Use a catechism for a **short-term discipleship focus** (e.g., 8 weeks)

**DO YOU KNOW OF ANY OTHER WAY TO USE
A CATECHISM ON CAMPUS?**



QUESTIONS THAT TRANSFORM

**USING CATECHISMS
OFF CAMPUS**

USING CATECHISMS OFF CAMPUS

- ▶ Option 1: **On-campus to off-campus**
 - ▶ Introduce catechism Q&A and coach families to learn and dig deeper
 - ▶ Review the following week, and introduce a new one
- ▶ Option 2: **Push catechism Q&A** weekly to families
 - ▶ e.g., Email, text, social media
 - ▶ Families do on their own

USING CATECHISMS OFF CAMPUS

- ▶ Option 3: **Provide** a structured family discipleship effort
 - ▶ e.g., *Faith Foundations, Family Builder Catechism, Discipleship Pathways*
 - ▶ Train and position a catechism as the primary means of family discipleship
- ▶ Option 4: **Equip** families with catechism resources
 - ▶ Provide info about catechisms and other discipleship tools
 - ▶ Coach parents as they are interested

**DO YOU KNOW OF ANY OTHER WAY TO USE
A CATECHISM OFF CAMPUS?**

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