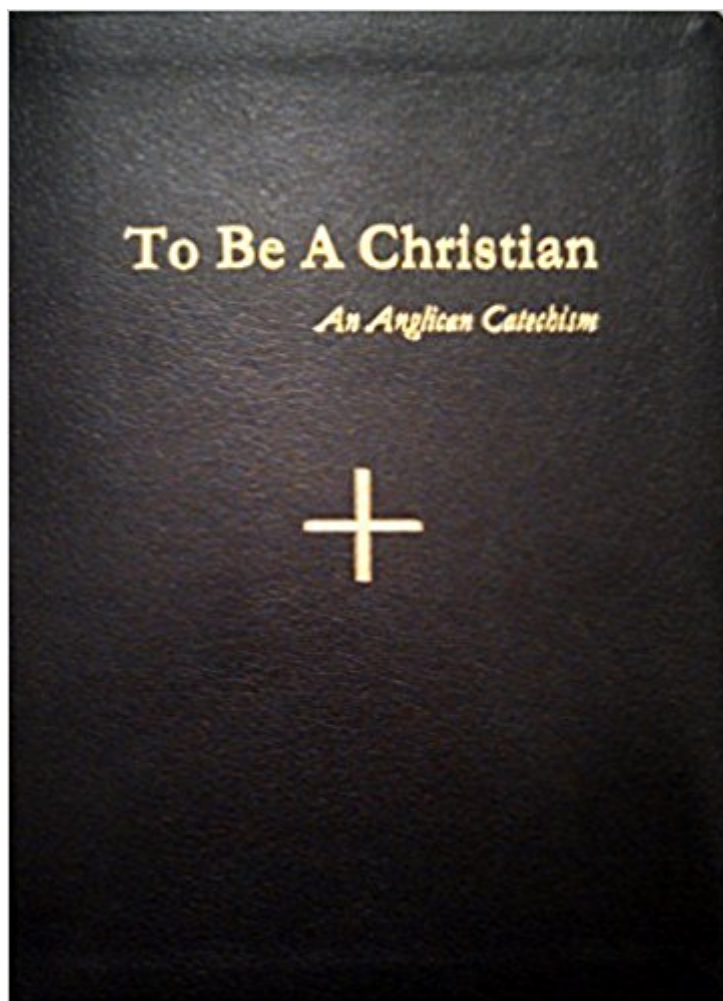


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# To Be A Christian: An Anglican Catechism



## Synopsis

Written by a team of theologians and teachers comprehensive of the various theological schools within the Anglican tradition, *To Be a Christian* is an in depth but very usable articulation of the Christian faith that will also prove to be a resource for Christians in other traditions. This catechism includes 345 Questions & Answers, with practical applications all in simple modern English. Each section begins with an explanation especially intended for those with no prior knowledge of Christianity. This superb special edition features bonded leather, gold foil cover, gilt-edge pages, ribbon bookmark, a presentation page, and an Introduction by the eminent theologian JI Packer. In the early church converts underwent systematic teaching, called catechesis, leading up to their baptism. Sadly, the practice of catechizing adults to any degree has declined to the point of ceasing altogether in most of today's churches. *To Be a Christian* aims to correct this. It is meant as a tool for all comers the adult inquirer, the new convert, and the long-time believer seeking deeper grounding in the full reality of Christian faith and life. Essential Christian instruction is presented in today's language, drawing on the three traditional foundations of catechesis: The Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. Tens of millions of Anglicans on six continents trace their tradition back through the centuries to laymen like William Wilberforce, who led the abolition of the slave trade in England, to the bishops and martyrs of the English Reformation, like Thomas Cranmer, and to missionaries like Augustine of Canterbury and St. Patrick who spread the Gospel throughout the British Isles. A lucid statement of the Apostolic Faith that Anglicans share with all Christians, *To Be a Christian* is truly a resource for the entire Body of Christ. It is offered with the prayer that it may serve to build up the Body of Christ by helping many to full Christian faith, and faithfulness, in today's increasingly post-Christian world.

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## Customer Reviews

Written by a team of theologians and teachers comprehensive of the various theological schools within the Anglican tradition, *To Be A Christian -- An Anglican Catechism* is an indepth but very usable articulation of the Christian faith that will also prove to be a resource for Christians in other traditions. This Catechism includes 345 Questions & Answers, with practical applications -- all in simple modern English. Each section begins with an explanation especially intended for those with no prior knowledge of Christianity. This superb special edition features bonded leather, gold foil cover, gilt-edged pages, ribbon bookmark, a presentation page, and an introduction by the eminent theologian JI Packer. In the early church converts underwent systematic teaching, called catechesis, leading up to their baptism. Sadly, the practice of catechizing adults to any degree has declined to the point of ceasing altogether in most of today's churches. *To Be A Christian* aims to correct this. It is meant as a tool for all comers -- the adult inquirer, the new convert, and the long-time believer seeking deeper grounding in the full reality of Christian faith and life. Essential Christian instruction is presented in today's language, drawing on the three traditional foundations of catechesis: The Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. Tens of millions of Anglicans on six continents trace their tradition back through the centuries to laymen like William Wilberforce, who led the abolition of the slave trade in England, to the bishops and martyrs of the English Reformation, like Thomas Cranmer, and to the missionaries like Augustine of Canterbury and St. Patrick who spread the Gospel throughout the British Isles. A lucid statement of the Apostolic Faith that Anglicans share with all Christians, *To Be A Christian* is truly a resource for the entire Body of Christ. It is offered with the prayer that it may serve to build up the Body of Christ by helping many to full Christian faith, and faithfulness, in today's increasingly post-Christian world.

While there are some copy-editing issues that still need to be sorted out (and I am sure will be in subsequent editions), "To Be a Christian" is a great resource for anyone who wants to know what Christians and Anglicans believe about a range of theological questions. Organized around the 10 Commandments, Apostles Creed and the Lord's Prayer, the Catechism strikes a good balance. It is

much more comprehensive than the very basic catechism included in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, but isn't as detailed and exhaustive as, for instance, the Catechism of the Catholic Church. These catechism books look like great gifts/tools for adult converts, as well as a good resource for Anglican clergy and others needing a clear and trustworthy statement of Anglican beliefs.

This is a great compromise in size between Luther's Small Catechism and the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church. It is a wonderful opportunity to draw a line in the sand between an increasingly pagan western society, innovative and progressive theology on the one hand and orthodox Anglican theology on the other. It was developed by and for the Anglican Church North America. It will be useful in a number of respects. It will introduce those in contemporary post Christian cultures to historical Anglican Christian theology and it will reintroduce contemporary Anglicans to their own beliefs historically held. Thus it will help form the identity of those within the ACNA and serve as a centripetal mechanism of unity. Those who worked on the task force like J.I. Packer and Stephen Noll are well grounded in Scripture and highly regarded scholars. As a retired psychologist, I believe it is also a great personal improvement book. Reading it is a faith and hope building experience. Fr. Dale

To Be A Christian serves as an excellent resource for any reader seeking a better understanding of Christian theology, the Bible, the church and living the Christian life. I have not used a better resource for small group studies on the above topics. This is an Anglican catechism, and it is certainly an essential book for Anglicans; however, this is a study of the Christian faith more than an Anglican book. The first thing that struck me in studying this book and what still stands out is the high quality of the devotional writing. The introduction by J.I. Packer and the Letter of Commendation by Robert Duncan are the perhaps best devotional writing I have read. Succinctly and precisely, they emphasize the highlights of Christianity and Anglicanism. These writings set the tone and standard for the catechetical text that follows. J.I. Packer, an Anglican theologian and evangelical stalwart, played an integral role in the development and completion of this catechism. His godly, faithful fingerprints are all over it. His isn't the only contribution, though, so we see the influence of other evangelical and charismatic authors. This is a comprehensive study of the faith that incorporates the evangelical, sacramental and charismatic streams of orthodox, Anglican Christianity. The authors boldly emphasize Biblical authority and a healthy balance of the elements of salvation and sanctification. Readers of this catechism will come away knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt whether they are saved and belong to Jesus. They will learn the gifts of God and the responsibilities

and disciplines of his children. I loved how both sides of several paradoxes are held side-by-side in this text. The introductions to each section continue the quality and profundity of the introduction and commendation. They provide eloquent summaries of the sections introduced. The question and answer format serves small group discussions and individual study very well. In small groups, we read the texts out loud and went around the group reading the questions and answers. Everyone was able to participate comfortably. Scripture references provide opportunity for further study and reflection, as well as offering support for the statements. I cannot recommend this book enough for Christians of any tradition and level of maturity. I encourage you to read and study it and find others to form a small group study for its discussion. Participants in our groups included seasoned Christians and those new to the faith. All had positive feedback.

As a pastor and a teacher in the ways of the Christian faith, I am always interested in the materials that can be helpful with my efforts to lead others in following Christ. This latest book from the Anglican Church in North America is a wonderful addition to my list of favorite resources. About the Book itself: Made of bonded black leather and embossed with gold lettering, the book is handsome with a clean aesthetic. It has dimensions of approximately 6 1/2" x 8 1/2" and weighs in with about 160 pages. It is not a thick book, but the weight of the paper and quality is such that it leaves me with no fears that I must handle the pages with a delicate touch to keep them from tearing. This book is meant to be used. There is also a single ribbon marker. Content and Instruction Philosophy: I love the premise for instruction and the flow of material presented. Truly, there is nothing new here and that is (in my opinion) part of the beauty. Likewise, I think there is an ecumenical bond when we hearken back to our most common denominators of the Christian faith. I believe this spirit is evident in the work produced in this Anglican Catechism. The primary teaching tools included in this work follow: Part One begins with the Gospel and the primary teachings of Christ concerning salvation; Part Two proceeds with Believing in Christ and enlists the Apostle's Creed as the center of focus for teaching "what we believe." A format of questions and answers following each line of the Creed helps to detail and explain the essence of each belief statement. Part Three introduces what it means to belong to Christ, Being Christ's, and teaches the basics of the Christian Life through the Lord's Prayer. The same line-by-line format of Q&A used with the Apostle's Creed is utilized in this section devoted to the Lord's Prayer. Part Four, Behaving Christianly, ventures deeper into the lifestyle of the Christian and continues the very effective format of line-by-line question and answer, this time using the Decalogue or Ten Commandments. While not novel, I think this "common denominator" approach is brilliant in simplicity and consists of the

most basic foundations of our Christian faith. In a day of consumeristic zeal for newer, fresher, better, and improved... I think there is a beauty and a grace for this approach to making disciples of Jesus Christ. It has worked for two millennia; there is no reason to attempt to reinvent the wheel. The Anglican Church has produced a beautiful and well-constructed catechism (discipleship tool). There are more exhaustive volumes available, but for the sake of simplicity and thoroughness as well as faithfulness to the core teaching of the Christian faith, I do not think you will find a better resource. You may find equals, but I am doubtful you will find better. This is a winner and I am blessed to add it to my favorite discipleship tools.

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