

QUESTION 1:

WHAT IS OUR ONLY HOPE IN LIFE AND DEATH?

ANSWER : THAT WE ARE NOT OUR OWN BUT BELONG, BODY AND SOUL, BOTH IN LIFE AND DEATH, TO GOD AND TO OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

50 minute Lesson Outline:

- Catechism Recap (5 mins)
- Introduction to Question (5 mins)
- Teaching Outline (15 mins)
- Discussion and Question Time (20 mins)
- Virtue Vision (5 mins)

Bible Passage: Romans 14:7-12

Memory Verse: Romans 14:7-8

Big Idea: Certain hope is found only in relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Aim: To help us understand that God's children belong to Him and should desire to live for Him.

Virtue: Forgiveness

LEADER'S NOTES:

People may not be inclined to regularly consider the purpose of their existence, but they will daily encounter messages that seek to teach them about the meaning of life. Media, friends, and family are all seeking to shape our focus for the future. Some will say the purpose of life is to be successful and make money; others will teach that the purpose of life is to simply be happy; while others may insist that the point of life is to make a positive impact on the world. Our hearts are conditioned to place hope in ourselves or other created things, rather than the Creator. **This lesson aims to help us understand that we were made by God and for God. The lesson will show us how to put our hope in God through the forgiveness won for us by Jesus Christ and that He alone is trustworthy in life and death.**

INTRODUCTION TO QUESTION 1:

Ask the group if they can figure out which stories these sentences refer to:

"The prince's only hope was to find the owner of the glass slipper."

Cinderella

"The rabbit's only hope was that Mr. McGregor would not find him in the watering can."

The Tale of Peter Rabbit (Beatrix Potter)

"The children's only hope was Aslan."

The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe (C.S. Lewis)

"Her only hope was Obi-Wan Kenobi."

Star Wars: A New Hope

What does the phrase "their only hope" mean?

Each character was in a situation that required some help to escape from it.

Hope often involves trusting somebody or something.

Ask the group about the kinds of things they hope for their future.

TEACHING OUTLINE

QUESTION 1: WHAT IS OUR ONLY HOPE IN LIFE AND DEATH?

Explain: People hope for many things, but in actual fact the Bible teaches that there is only one certain hope in life and in death, and that is **that we are not our own but belong, body and soul, both in life and death to God and to our Savior Jesus Christ.**

Romans 14

Explain: This letter was written by Paul and in this chapter he is trying to sort out some disagreements among the people in the church in Rome. This was a family squabble! The people who were arguing were all people who had found forgiveness in Jesus and had been adopted into God's family; they just couldn't agree on how they should live. Paul explains to them that in some situations, people in God's family will do things differently, but that the important thing is that they seek to do things to bring praise and glory to God.

READ: Romans 14:7-12

7 For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.

8 For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

11 for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

What does verse 8 mean?

What does it mean to belong to the Lord?

Is it a good thing or a bad thing?

Explain: Most people believe that their lives are their own. However, those who have found forgiveness in Jesus and have been adopted into God's family recognize that they have been rescued from God's anger and punishment.

- The Bible says that those who do not believe in Jesus are slaves to sin. (John 8:34, Romans 6:17-22)
- In order for slaves to be freed, a price must be paid for their release. (1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23)
- Jesus paid the ultimate price for sinners by sacrificing his own life and paying the price for sin on the cross. (Philippians 2:8)

Explain: Being a child of God is the most wonderful way to live life – the most joyful, freeing, and fulfilling. Paul is helping the Romans understand that their lives are not their own. Everything that they are and have belongs to God.

Do you think it's easy to live for God?

What might stop you from living for Him?

Consider this: Remembering what Jesus did on the cross might motivate us to live for God.

Share: Sometimes, we may prefer to be Lord over our own lives. Give some examples where they might struggle to submit to the lordship of God.

Explain: Paul helped the Christians in Rome to focus on their own lives and not worry about how others are living. Verse 12, *"So then each of us will give an account of himself to God."* reminds us that one day everybody will answer to God for how they lived their lives. Because of the price Jesus paid on the cross, those who've been adopted into God's family should desire to live fully for him.

Conclusion: Being adopted into God's family means that we get all the great things that come with being part of the family. We trust God in life and in death, knowing that He is with us and that He alone is where our hope is found.

Review Question 1 and the answer.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Activity: Lay out two large pieces of paper, one with “My Family” and the other with “God’s Family.” Identify and list the things that are great about belonging to one’s particular family. Possible answers may include: the love of their parents, their childhood home, or the fun vacations they’ve enjoyed.

1. If another child were adopted into a family, would they benefit from the same great things that come with that family?

Identify and list the things that are great about belonging to God’s family. Possible prompts may include: “Think about why Jesus died on the cross,” or “What do we look forward to after death?” Write down their answers.

Everyone is born into a human family (it may be worth acknowledging that some of these families are less than ideal.), but not everyone is born into God’s family. God brings people into His family and makes them His children through adoption! Adoption into God’s family allows us to have certain hope and that adoption happens after we realize that we are sinful and turn to Jesus for repentance and forgiveness.

CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS TOGETHER: (allow for several answers before reading to provided response.)

1. Does this mean that we move from being slaves to sin to being God’s slaves?

We are made for relationship with God, which is where perfect freedom is found. So while the world might think that Christianity is all about rules and regulations, the truth is that being part of God’s family is how to best enjoy life in all its fullness.

2. What if I can’t live for God all the time?

In this life, it will be a struggle to live for God, but God will help you through His Spirit. You can prayerfully ask for help.

3. How will this catechism affect you personally?

- **How will you respond to the messages the world communicates about the meaning of life?**
- **How will you seek to always have your hope in God?**
- **How could you explain what your hope is to someone at work or school?**

VIRTUE: FORGIVENESS

Remember the benefits of being in a family? When God adopted us into His family, we received forgiveness through Jesus. We belong to God and enjoy all the privileges of being in His family. While it may be easy to *accept* forgiveness, it can be hard to *give* forgiveness. As members of God's family, we should want to imitate our Father. God showed sinners great mercy when He sent Jesus to die on the cross. God's children must be quick to forgive because we have been forgiven.

Read this short testimony for encouragement:

Corrie ten Boom was imprisoned for helping Jewish people during the Holocaust escape from the people who wanted to kill them. Many years later, after she was released, she was at a church service when she saw a man who had been her prison guard. Corrie had spoken all about the forgiveness that God offers through Jesus. The man came up to her after she spoke and told her that he had found forgiveness in Jesus and had been adopted into God's family. He wanted to shake Corrie's hand, but Corrie remembered all the of the horrible things that had happened to her and others in prison. She just couldn't bring herself to shake his hand. But then she remembered who she was: a child of God who had been forgiven. As one who belonged to God, she was to live for Him. So she prayed and asked God for strength to forgive this former guard and rejoice that he was part of God's family too. God answered Corrie's prayer.

MEMORIZE ROMANS 14:7-8

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