

Heidelberg Catechism

Lord's Day 31

Overview/Purpose

“Having now shown who are to be admitted to the Lord’s supper by the church, the doctrine respecting the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, comes naturally next in order, which, in addition to other things, teaches in an especial manner, how those who are not to be admitted to the Lord’s table ought to be kept back and excluded from the sacraments, lest they profane them by coming. The things which claim special attention in regard to this subject are,

- What is the power of the keys given to the church, and what are the parts thereof?
- Is there any necessity for ecclesiastical discipline, and excommunication?
- To whom is this power committed; against whom and in what order is it to be exercised?
- To what ends ought it to be directed, and what are the abuses to be avoided?
- In what does the power of the keys differ from civil power?”

“The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism”, pg 440.

Method

Following the Trivium, the grammar stage calls for rote memorization. Constant drilling and recitation is absolutely necessary and will require direct parental participation.

Suggested Materials For Parents

See “The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism”, pgs 440-463.

Word Definitions

• According	• Admonition	• Again
• Appointed	• Believer	• Believers
• Brotherly	• Christ	• Christian Church

admonished		
• Christian Discipline	• Christians	• Christ's merits
• Church	• Command	• Command of Christ
• Complained	• Contrary	• Course of Life
• Declared	• Despise	• Doctrines
• Errors	• Eternal Condemnation	• Excluded
• Excommunication	• Exposed	• Forbidden
• God	• Gospel	• Holy Gospel
• Inconsistent	• Judge	• Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven
• Kingdom of Christ	• Kingdom of Heaven	• Life to come
• Maintain	• Members	• Opened
• Practices	• Preaching	• Promise
• Promise of the Gospel	• Publicly testified	• Real ammendment
• Really forgiven	• Receive	• Received
• Renounce	• Repent	• Sake
• Show	• Shut	• Sincerely
• Sins	• Stand	• Testified
• Testimony	• Thereunto	• Therewith
• True Faith	• Unbelievers	• Unconverted
• Use of the sacraments	• Wicked	• Wrath of God

Suggested Activities

- Review word definitions
- Memory game to review word definitions and catechism questions
- Spelling test using the words in this catechism lesson
- Memorize key bible verses
- Service projects to reinforce the lessons found in the catechism questions
- Many opportunities for creativity!

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LORD'S DAY 31

Question 83. What are [a] the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

Answer. The preaching [b] of the holy gospel, and christian discipline, [c] or excommunication out of the christian church; by these two, the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers, and shut against unbelievers.

Question 84. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the holy gospel?

Answer. Thus: when according to the command of [d] Christ, it is declared and publicly testified to all and every believer, that, whenever they [e] receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God, for the sake of Christ's merits; and on the contrary, when it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God, and eternal [f] condemnation, so long as they are [g] unconverted: according to which testimony of the gospel, God will judge them, both in this, and in the life to come.

Question 85. How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by christian discipline?

Answer. Thus: when according [h] to the command of Christ, those, who under the name of christians, maintain doctrines, or practices [i] inconsistent therewith, and will not, after having been often brotherly admonished, renounce their errors and wicked course of life, are complained of to the church, [j] or to those, who are thereunto [k] appointed by the church; and if they despise their admonition, [l] are by them forbidden the use of the sacraments; whereby they are excluded from the christian church, and by God himself from the kingdom of Christ; and when they promise and show real amendment, are again [m] received as members of Christ and his church.

[a]: Mat. 16:19

[b]: John 20:23

[c]: Mat. 18:15,16,17,18

[d]: Mat. 28:19

[e]: John 3:18,36; Mark 16:16

[f]: 2Thes. 1:7,8,9

[g]: John 20:21,22,23; Mat. 16:19; Rom. 2:2,13-17

[h]: Mat. 18:15

[i]: 1Cor. 5:12

[j]: Mat. 18:15-18

[k]: Rom. 12:7,8,9; 1Cor. 12:28; 1Tim. 5:17; 2Thes. 3:14

[l]: Mat. 18:17; 1Cor. 5:3,4,5

[m]: 2Cor. 2:6,7,8,10,11; Luke 15:18