

The top portion of the page features a grayscale, high-resolution photograph of a rock face. The rock surface is highly textured, showing various cracks, crevices, and mineral patterns. The lighting creates shadows that emphasize the three-dimensional quality of the rock.

rocksolid

APPENDICES

What are Footholds?

A brief history

Various forms of the Footholds have existed since the Middle Ages in what is usually known as a catechism. These statements were used for instruction in Christian doctrine and focused on the creed, the sacraments, the virtues and vices and the seven capital sins. Usually the material was organized in a question and answer format.

The Reformation introduced many versions of the catechism as each region or diocese defined its own statements clarifying important Christian doctrines. Martin Luther was one of the early reformers to write a catechism and versions of his catechism continue to be used today. One story relates that while visiting churches in Germany, Martin Luther was shocked by the lack of understanding by both clergy and lay persons of basic Christian ideas. As a response he developed the small catechism for lay persons and the large or German catechism for clergy. The common practice was for the pastor to visit parishioners' homes and quiz them on the catechism. The pastor asked the question and the parishioners responded with the answer.

Covenant catechism

Each time the Evangelical Covenant Church's discipleship/confirmation material is revised, the catechism is evaluated; some questions are added and others are revised or deleted. The previous catechism provides the beginning point for this revision. Older versions of the Covenant catechism are reviewed along with templates from other denominations.

The most recent catechism was prepared by the curriculum revision committee then revised and approved by the denomination's Board of Ordered Ministry. Each word was carefully considered so that the statement communicated as clearly as possible the intended meaning. The curriculum revision committee also decided to name the catechism Building Blocks for *The Journey* discipleship/confirmation curriculum in an attempt to make these statements more "user friendly." In *Rock Solid* these statements are called Footholds.

The Building Blocks or Footholds are intended to:

- Be understandable at a 6th grade reading level, and
- Incorporate a minimum number of statements with a maximum impact

The catechism order is generally based on biblical chronology as presented in the biblical survey curriculum, *The Journey*. (The order is slightly different in *Rock Solid*.) These statements can help us remember a simple biblical order: God, creation, sin and God's faithfulness, Jesus, Holy Spirit, the church, the Christian hope and the Christian life.

A Scripture passage accompanies each question and statement in order to show the biblical definition or understanding. The passage listed is only one reference as each statement is often addressed throughout the Bible. For example, God's faithfulness is introduced in the Abraham stories but faithfulness is part of every book in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. *Rock Solid* includes Scripture passages from several books of the Bible in each session to help participants expand their understanding of each statement.

These statements can also become a resource for meditating on key elements of the Christian faith and also a resource for influencing our Christian life. For example, the Foothold says that God is personal. The personal nature of God is something to think about, i.e. meditation, and to practice as we know that God is always with us in a personal way.

The statements provide common language to help us explain our faith. By becoming familiar with the language used in the Footholds, we have a "place to begin" when questions arise with friends and family. What questions? Here are some examples: Why do you believe in God? Why do you go to church? Why do you read the Bible? Why is Easter so important? I was baptized, do I need to have my children baptized?

The catechism is not a magic formula for understanding the Christian faith but is a good place to begin. It has been a powerful tool used by many to help explain complex issues of faith in words that can be memorized, discussed and lived.

Timeline

The Old Testament

| Date | Books of the Bible | People | Footholds / Key Ideas |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| In the beginning | Genesis 1-2, Psalms | God | Who is God? |
| | | | What do we believe about the Bible? |
| | Genesis 3 | Adam & Eve | What is God's relationship with the world? |
| | Genesis 4-11 | Cain, Abel, Noah | What does it mean to be a human being? |
| | | | What is sin? |
| | | | What are the results of sin? |
| 2000 BC | Genesis 12-50 | Abraham & Sarah Isaac & Rebecca Jacob, Rachel, & Leah Joseph | What is meant by a covenant between God and his people? |
| | | | What is meant by God's faithfulness? |
| 1300 BC | Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy | Moses, Aaron | From Egypt to the Promised Land Ten Commandments |
| 1200 BC | Joshua, Judges | Joshua and Judges | The sin cycle: people sin, God punishes, people repent, God forgives |
| 1020 BC Solomon builds the temple | Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs | Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon | |
| 922 BC 721 BC 587 BC | Kingdom divides Israel Falls Judah captured and temple destroyed Exile | Isaiah to Malachi | Many kings and prophets including Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and Hosea in the northern kingdom, and Isaiah and Jeremiah in the southern kingdom |
| Who are the prophets? | | | |
| 537 BC 515 BC 67 BC 63 BC | Jews begin to return to Jerusalem Temple rebuilt Maccabean revolt Romans control Jerusalem | Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther | Isaiah, Nehemiah, Ezra |

The New Testament

| Date | Books of the Bible | People | Foothold / Key Ideas |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 BC | Matthew, Mark, Luke, John These Footholds are also addressed in the Epistles | John the Baptist Mary & Joseph Jesus Simon Peter Andrew James John Philip Bartholomew Thomas Matthew James Thaddaeus Simon the Zealot Judas Iscariot Mary Magdalene Joanna Susanna | Who is Jesus Christ? What is the sacrament of baptism? How does one become a Christian? What is the kingdom of God? What did Jesus teach us concerning life in the kingdom of God? What is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? |
| 33 AD | Revelation | | What is salvation? What was accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? What is meant by atonement? What is the Christian hope? |
| 50-100 AD The New Testament was written during this time period. | Acts, Epistles | Holy Spirit comes to the disciples. James heads church in Jerusalem. Peter realizes the gospel is for Gentiles too. Paul brings message of Jesus to Gentile world and expands the Church. | What does it mean to believe in the Trinity? Who is the Holy Spirit? What is the source of the Church's life? What is the Christian Church? What is the purpose of the Church? What is a sacrament? How do we grow as Christians? |

Prayer Resources for Individuals and Groups

ACTS

ACTS is an acronym to guide a time of prayer for individuals and groups. It helps prayer become more than just asking for God's help. It helps prayer become more balanced. The ACTS acronym means:

- Adoration
- Confession
- Thanksgiving
- Supplication

Use this acronym to guide the group through a time of prayer. When hearts are quiet before God, say the first word, "Adoration," and invite the group to respond with prayers of adoration. After an appropriate amount of time say, "Confession" and again allow time for the group to respond. This continues until all four words have been used to guide the prayers. Close the time of prayer with the Lord's Prayer.

Another approach to the ACTS prayer divides the participants into four groups and assigns one of the words to each group. Group members work together or individually to find a verse or two from the book of Psalms to illustrate their word. For example, a verse or two from Psalm 150 could be used to illustrate Adoration. After the leader states the first word, the group members read the related verses. The group pauses for a moment of silent reflection and then responds out loud. Continue this pattern for each of the ACTS words.

Pray the "Footholds"

Use one of the Footholds to provide an effective guide for a prayer time. Begin by inviting the group into an attitude of prayer through centering. When hearts are quiet ask the group members to join you in reading aloud the entire Foothold statement followed by a time for silent reflection. Next, lead the group through the statement one phrase at a time. Pause between the phrases and encourage participants to pray out loud in response to that phrase. Two of the Footholds are included below to illustrate one way of dividing the statements for meditation and prayer. Close the prayer time with a unison prayer. The Bible verse for some of the Footholds could be appropriate for this prayer. At other times you may prefer to pray in unison the Lord's Prayer, a Psalm or another printed prayer.

Who is God?

- God is personal, (pause for response)
- Eternal Spirit, (pause for response)
- Creator of the universe, (pause for response)
- Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (pause for response)
- And our Father. (pause for response)

What is sin? (Because of the personal confession nature of this question, silent prayer may be most appropriate.)

- Sin is all in thought, (pause for response)
- Word, (pause for response)
- And deed (pause for response)
- That is contrary to the Word of God.

Lectio Divina—holy reading

Select an appropriate Scripture passage.

Centering/relaxation exercise: Sit comfortably, breathe deeply, relax body, acknowledge and release distractions, invite God's presence.

Read the passage (one or two times). Stop when a word or phrase stops you, becomes vibrant or attracts you. Is there a word or image that impresses you? Bring your senses to the text. Allow for one to two minutes of silence.

Read the passage again. Listen to discover how this passage touches your life today. What does it mean? What is God trying to say? Do not try to force a meaning. Stay open. This is a time of reflection, involving thinking, feeling, and/or intuition. Allow for one to two minutes of silence.

Read the passage once more. Listen to discover the invitation. What is God calling you to do or be today or this week? Be aware of resistance. Open your heart and will to the action that may be called for. Allow for two to three minutes of silence and response to God.

Share and pray. Take time to express what you have heard from God. If you are alone, write your impressions, or words or a prayer that expresses your response to God in your Journal. In a group, share aloud the word, image or invitation received. Pray for God to help the person next to you respond to the invitation or word received.

Adapted by Christian Formation Department, Evangelical Covenant Church

Centering prayer

This prayer suggests *being* with God and not *asking*.

Find a place to pray that is quiet and relaxed. Sit in silence, breathing deeply and setting aside the concerns of the day. If your body is tense, spend some moments consciously relaxing each part of the body.

Focus your attention on God. Become aware of God's presence surrounding you and allow yourself to be present to God.

Choose a word for God as a focus for your prayer. A one-syllable word works best—Love, Peace, Joy, Christ, Friend, etc. Slowly and effortlessly, repeat the word until you become more and more deeply aware of God's presence at the center of your being.

Continue to wait in God's presence. If you find yourself straying from your awareness of God or if other thoughts intrude, gently return to the word you have chosen. Let God draw you into wordless communion of adoration, love and praise.

When your prayer feels complete, slowly leave the silence at the center and return to words—perhaps offering the Lord's Prayer as a conclusion, savoring the words and meaning of the prayer.

From Soul Care: How to Plan and Guide Inspirational Retreats, Rose Mary Stutzmann, ed.

Breathing as prayer

Think about how important it is for you to breathe. If you stop breathing you stop living. Rabbi Kushner in his book, *The Book of Words*, suggests that the sound made in breathing could also be considered a prayer: "The letters of the Name of God in Hebrew are yod, hay, vav and hay. They are frequently mispronounced Yahveh. But in truth they are unutterable. Not because of the holiness they evoke, but because they are all letters you cannot pronounce without risking respiratory injury. This word is the sound of breathing. The holiest Name in the world, the Name of the Creator, is the sound of your own breathing." Just think—every time you take a breath you whisper the name of God.

For some people, an effective way to pray is to become conscious of breathing as whispering God's name. The next step is to spend time focusing on breathing and the meaning of that sound. Each time you inhale envision the spirit of God filling your being. Each time you exhale expel the tensions and frustrations that separate you from God.

Another prayer that uses breathing invites you to breathe using a different pattern. In this method, focus on breathing in the spirit of Christ as you inhale and expelling the tension and frustration that come from sin as you exhale. As you exhale, you will gain a sense of peace. The following phrases have been used for many centuries to guide this form of prayer:

- (Inhale) Jesus Christ who takes away the sins of the world,
- (Exhale) Have mercy on us.
- (Inhale) Jesus Christ who takes away the sins of the world,
- (Exhale) Grant us your peace.

Body prayer

Sit in your chair, upright but comfortable, with your back supported. Let your body relax (without slouching), with your feet on the floor in front of you and your hands at rest on your thighs or joined in your lap.

Close your eyes, or fix them on some point in front of you. Now let your whole attention focus on what you can feel in your body. You may start at your feet and work upwards, letting your attention dwell, perhaps only for a few seconds, on whatever part of the body you can feel. Shift attention from one part of the body to another, although the longer you can hold attention on one part, the better. Your attention is on what you are feeling, not on thoughts about feeling. If you are uncomfortable, or itch or want to move position, just acknowledge the discomfort, assure yourself that it is all right and, without moving, continue to focus attention on what you can feel in your body.

The mind rarely leaves us long in peace to do this because it begins to demand attention. This is a waste of valuable time. What has this to do with prayer? Is this some kind of Hindu thing? What is the point of it? Deal with the questions and comments as you dealt with the itch—acknowledge them, then return to feeling the body.

You can, if you like, move into more explicit prayer by repeating to yourself St. Paul's phrase, In him I live, and move, and have my being.

From www.sacredspace.ie, adapted from God of Surprises by Gerry W. Hughes SJ

Reviewing your day

First step—Recall you are in the presence of God. We are always in God's presence, but in prayer we place ourselves in God's presence in an especially attentive way. God knows you intimately. He loves you in the deepest way possible. In John 15, Jesus says, "Abide in me and I will abide in you." This invitation is to make our home in him. As you still yourself, be aware that God is present both around you and within you.

Second step—Look at your day with gratitude. After a few moments, begin to give thanks to God for the gifts of today. Special pleasures will spring to mind: a good night's sleep, the smell of the morning coffee, the laugh of a child, a good meal or lesson learned. As you move in gratitude through the details of your day give thanks to God for his presence in the big and the small things.

Third step—Ask help from the Holy Spirit. Ask that God's Spirit might help you to look at your actions and attitudes. Ask for help to understand the motivation of your heart, to see the gifts of God and how you've responded to them. Ask that you'd learn and be shaped as you reflect. Remember, this is not a time to dwell on your shortcomings. Rather, it is a gentle look at how you have responded to God's gifts. It is an opportunity for growth of self and relationship with God.

Fourth step—Review your day. This is the longest of the steps. Here you review your entire day, watching it like a movie that replays in your mind. Be sure to notice the details, the context of what happened and how you acted. As you look through the day, notice especially your motives and feelings. This is not psychoanalysis; rather it is a time for you to discern your daily motives, actions and reactions. Don't try to fix everything in this stage, just examine how conscious you have been of God's presence and actions in your life. End with giving thanks for the day.

Based on the Examination of Consciousness from St. Ignatius

A morning resolve

I will try this day to live a simple, sincere and serene life, repelling promptly every thought of discontent, anxiety, discouragement, impurity and self-seeking; cultivating cheerfulness, magnanimity, charity and the habit of holy silence; exercising economy in expenditure, generosity in giving, carefulness in conversation, diligence in appointed service, fidelity to every trust and a childlike faith in God.

In particular I will try to be faithful in those habits of prayer, work, study, physical exercise, eating and sleep, which I believe the Holy Spirit has shown me to be right.

And as I cannot in my own strength do this, nor even with a hope of success attempt it, I look to thee, O Lord God my Father, in Jesus my Savior, and ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

From Forward Movement Publications (www.forwardmovement.org)

1) Who is God?

God is personal, eternal Spirit, Creator of the universe, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father.

"Lord, through all the generations you have been our home! Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, you are God."—Psalm 90:1-2, NLT

footholds

2) What do we believe about the Bible?

We believe that the Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work."—2 Timothy 3:16-17, NLT

footholds

3) What is God's relationship to the world?

God created the world by his Word, sustains it by his power, and entrusts it to the care of human beings.

"You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased."—Revelation 4:11, NLT

footholds

4) What does it mean to be a human being?

To be a human being means to be created by God in his likeness, free and responsible in relation to God, the world, neighbor, and self.

"Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.'"—Genesis 1:26, NLT

footholds

5) What is sin?

Sin is all in thought, word, and deed that is contrary to the will of God.

“Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.”—James 4:17, NRSV

footholds

6) What are the results of sin?

The results of sin are broken relationships, a weakening of ability to obey God, and finally, eternal separation from him.

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.”—Isaiah 59:2a, NIV

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”—Romans 6:23, NIV

footholds

7) What is meant by a covenant between God and his people?

A covenant between God and his people is an agreement in which God promises his care and faithfulness as his people respond in faithful obedience.

“Understand, therefore, that the LORD your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands.”—Deuteronomy 7:9, NLT

footholds

8) What is meant by God’s faithfulness?

God’s faithfulness means God loves and cares for us throughout all our lives, both in good times and bad times.

“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning, great is your faithfulness.”—Lamentations 3:22-23, NIV

footholds

9) Who are the prophets?

The prophets are chosen by God to show nations and individuals their sin, to call them to obedience, and to present the hope of the Messiah.

“Then the LORD said to me, ‘What they have said is right. I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell the people everything I command him. I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf.’”—Deuteronomy 18:17-19, NLT

footholds

10) Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, fully human and fully divine, the promised Messiah who came into the world to redeem people from sin and establish his kingdom on earth.

“Then he asked them, ‘But who do you say I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’”—Matthew 16:15-16, NLT

footholds

11) What is the sacrament of baptism?

Baptism is the sacred use of water, commanded by Jesus Christ, to signify God’s cleansing of our sins and our welcome into the family of God.

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”—Matthew 28:19-20, NLT

footholds

12) How does one become a Christian?

A person becomes a Christian by trusting in what God has done through Christ’s death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. This is God’s gift received through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

“But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.”—John 1:12-13, NRSV

footholds

13) What is the kingdom of God?

The kingdom of God is the rule of God breaking into history through Jesus Christ, working in the world and expressed in the hearts and lives of God's people.

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink but of righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."—Romans 14:17, NRSV

footholds

14) What did Jesus teach us concerning life in the kingdom of God?

Jesus taught us that life in the kingdom of God means we are to live in a loving relationship with God and others.

"...And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."—Mark 12:30-31, NLT

footholds

15) What is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper is the sacred use of the bread and the cup as commanded by Jesus Christ. At the Lord's Table, believers recognize his presence, remember his suffering, proclaim his death until he comes, and partake of him in faith.

"For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.' In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it.' For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again."—1 Corinthians 11:23-26, NLT

16) What is salvation?

Salvation is the work of God through Christ by which God forgives us our sin, frees us from guilt, and restores us to a right relationship with God.

"I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life."—John 5:24, NLT

footholds

17) What was accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

By the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God conquered sin, death, and the devil, offering forgiveness for sin and assuring eternal life for those who follow Christ.

“For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”—John 3:16, NLT

footholds

18) What is meant by atonement?

Atonement means the work of God in Jesus Christ by which we, being guilty, are justified; being enslaved to sin, are redeemed; being alienated from God, are reconciled; and being unholy, are sanctified.

“Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.”—Colossians 1:22, NLT

footholds

19) What is the Christian hope?

The Christian hope is the confident expectation of Christ's triumphant return when he will reign forever with his Church.

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.”—1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, NLT

footholds

20) Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God, everywhere present and powerful, working in us, in the church, and in the world.

“But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me.”—John 15:26, NLT

footholds

21) What does it mean to believe in the Trinity?

To believe in the Trinity is to confess that God is one, and that he continually and personally makes himself known to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”—2 Corinthians 13:14, RSV

footholds

22) What is the source of the Church’s life?

The life of the Church has its source in God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is created and renewed by the Spirit and Word, the holy sacraments and prayer.

“Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.” —Ephesians 3: 20-21, NLT

footholds

23) What is the Christian Church?

The Christian Church is all who confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and who are united in one body with Christ as head.

*“Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”
—Ephesians 4: 15-16, NLT*

footholds

24) What is the purpose of the Church?

The purpose of the Church is to glorify God, celebrate new life in Christ, build up one another in faith and love, proclaim and teach the gospel everywhere, and care for the needs of the world.

*“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
—1 Peter 2:9, NRSV*

footholds

25) What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a visible and outward sign of an invisible and spiritual grace. The sacraments commanded by Jesus Christ are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

“So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”—Acts 2:41-42, NRSV

footholds

26) How do we grow as Christians?

We grow as Christians as we devote ourselves to the spiritual disciplines of corporate worship, participation in the sacraments, prayer, Bible study, service, stewardship, and Christian fellowship.

*“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”
—Colossians 2:6-7, NIV*

footholds

