

**God as Father** (*for use with the catechism Questions 6-7, God & 8-11, God as Father*)

**Jonathan asks the question where is my dad?**

**...and what is he like?**

Knowing where and who we come from helps us understand who we are. That is why understanding God as Father is invaluable to us.

*Where do we learn about God?*

Bible, creeds, the church (the gathered people of faith).

**Consider and discuss the idea of God as a parent.**

*Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. (Is 49:15))*

**Mother and Father.**

The dominant imagery in scripture is God as a father. It is primary descriptor used in one of the three personal characters that is the unity of God. God is triune, three persons who are of one being. Three parts, one substance. Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The term father gives an overarching sense the progenitor; the one from whom creation springs forth. The parent – encompassing both mother and father – expressed as: Father of all creation.

**Father of all Creation**

Gen 1:1 In the beginning...

God the Father is our loving creator.

**We affirm the nature of God as Father in the creed.**

What is the creed? the church gathered and thrashed out some important issues of God's identity in the fourth century in a place called Niecea. This gathering of approximately 318 Bishops decided to agree on Christian definition of God. The result is the Niecean Creed. Who cares? It is a pretty important document which the orthodox Christian movement has affirmed time and again. It helps direct the church when both the church and society desire to make up its own description of God. It is important! It has been established as a universal Christian agreement for 1700 years.

The first part of the creed says:

*We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.*

This the response to Question 8 in the catechism.

**What do you feel or think about this description of God?**

## **Let us consider briefly the description of God in the Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father in Heaven, holy is your name. Your kingdom come your will be done on earth as in heaven*

I don't know about you, but this description can give any impression of God being far away in a different place... above all creation 'in heaven' ... distant. It makes me ask the question is God a distant father? ... the bible says no, he is not! He is near.

*How do we know this?* Jesus, and the Holy Spirit reveal God as near to us. As God the Father, Son and Spirit are in unity, when you talk about one part of God (Father), on some level you are also talking about the other parts as well. We don't just make this up, we receive this from scripture.

Read John 20:17

<sup>17</sup> Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

**Jesus** points toward the nature of God the Father, as Father.

Romans 8:14-16

<sup>14</sup> For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "*Abba*, Father." <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

The **Holy Spirit** points toward God the Father as our *Daddy*.

### **What do you think about this?**

#### **The love of a father**

Consider the prodigal son.

A father has plans and hopes for his children, for all people, the faithful and the rogue. God seeks relationship with all people. You have no doubt read or heard this tale many times. In it we encounter the gracious (undeserved), action of connection between a Father his broken and rebellious child. This parable sketches a personal God who both created and values you! His child.

As a parent, the sin and brokenness of our world breaks the fathers heart. Our Father has compassion. He offers hope and restoration to the people and parts of creation that miss his purpose. As a holy God, the father acts with purpose and in unity with the Son and the Holy Spirit to bring about what he longs to see in our lives.

Our Father is patient and he is kind (Romans 2:4), not wanting one of us to perish (2 Peter 3:9). He is interested in his creation. He has a purpose for us. The bible clearly establishes that our heavenly father cares for us. He is not just any father, he is a good father, a loving father. We can call him dad!

### **How do you feel about God as Father?**

**Share with your group what you feel and think about it, and why.**

**Which of the 10 (or more) attributes of God as Father mentioned by Jonathan, do you find most easy and most difficult to relate to?**