

## **“Outlining Our Faith” – A look at the Catechism of the Book of Common Prayer**

In the earliest days of the Church, Baptism was for adults only. Converts to the Faith would be required to enlist on a lengthy process of learning and formation. They would attend the first part of the Eucharist in order to hear the scripture readings and the sermon. They would then be excused, and they would go to learn their lessons. As their training ended the process would intensify with daily prayer, fasting and more teaching. Finally, the convert would be baptized, and they would attend the whole Eucharist for the first time.

These ancient practices give us the roots of Ash Wednesday, Lent, and the Easter Vigil.

Christians in training would be referred to a “Catechumens” and their training was called “Catechesis”. This comes by combining the words “kata” (according) and “acouo” (hearing). This term referred to teaching that was “according to the ear” with a teacher orally transmitting information to the student who usually memorized the basics of the faith.

While the spiritual path can begin almost anywhere, HOW we begin is always a telling thing. For example the Baltimore Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church began with the question

**Who is God?** *God is the Supreme Being who made all things.*

There are other ways to begin of course. Many begin with a look at themselves, having made a Spiritual Autobiography. The Catechism of the Book of Common Prayer begins with a look at humanity:

**Who are we by nature?** *We are part of God’s creation, made in the image of God.*

Let’s take a closer look at the Book of Common Prayer, page 845