

Discussion Guide for Reading Groups

The
CATECHETICAL
Lectures

Cyril of Jerusalem

Resurrection Publishing

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THE CATECHETICAL LECTURES

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

One Orthodox voice on Scripture and unity

RESURRECTION PUBLISHING

Reading-group companion · 2026

The Catechetical Lectures — Discussion Guide
Cyril of Jerusalem

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This voice among four

How does Scripture hold the Church in one faith against division and heresy? Christians have answered that question with shared seriousness and with real differences in emphasis. This guide begins with Cyril because it is made to help a group read the *Catechetical Lectures* carefully, together, and all the way through.

Cyril of Jerusalem · one Orthodox voice on that question.

Cyril is one of four voices gathered around this question. Tertullian's *Prescription Against Heretics*, Jewel's *Apology of the Church of England*, and Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* belong in conversation: they share a concern for receiving the one faith, yet they do not flatten their traditions into one answer. Let their kinship be a help, and their honest difference an occasion for patient attention.

This guide is for Cyril's *Lectures*. For a reading group, the Cyril hardcover is available in a facilitator pack of 8, so each reader may have the work in hand.

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Facilitator norms

This is a conversation that may touch sensitive ground, but it need not become a place where anyone is pressed to disclose what they have not chosen to share. Invite candor; do not require it. A participant may speak from the text, from prayer, or from a question still taking shape. Silence is not failure, and no one is asked to prove seriousness by telling more than is wise.

Read the author with care before judging him quickly. Let people finish a thought. Ask what a passage says before asking how it applies. Where the group disagrees, name the disagreement plainly and return to the words on the page. The aim is neither to win an argument nor to make a display of self-knowledge, but to hear a Christian teacher faithfully and to seek the Lord together.

Keep Christ at the center. The counsel in these pages is not a set of religious techniques by which we repair ourselves. Faith looks to Christ, depends upon his Spirit, and receives the ordinary means of grace with humility. Pray at the beginning and end; make room for repentance and hope; leave one another with encouragement that is truthful, particular, and free of pressure.

Cyril — argument map

Cyril hands on the one faith in catechesis. The map below traces the course as a whole; the eight sessions read the *Lectures* straight through, in the order Cyril delivered them.

1. The candidate (Procatechesis, Lecture I). Cyril calls those who have come forward for baptism to sincerity, repentance, and attention. The faith is received by a person being formed, not by a debater.

2. Repentance and baptism (Lectures II–III). Cyril teaches repentance and remission of sins, and the meaning of baptism — the washing of regeneration into Christ.

3. The ten points and faith (Lectures IV–V). Cyril sets out the ten points of doctrine and the nature of faith — the foundation on which the whole course is built.

4. The creed: God the Father (Lectures VI–IX). Cyril expounds the first articles: one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

5. The creed: Christ (Lectures X–XII). Cyril expounds the articles on Christ — the only-begotten Son, begotten of the Father, by whom all things were made, incarnate and made man.

6. The creed: Christ’s work (Lectures XIII–XV). Cyril expounds the crucified and buried, the risen and ascended, and the coming judge whose kingdom shall have no end.

7. The creed: the Holy Spirit and the Church (Lectures XVI–XVIII). Cyril expounds the Holy Spirit, the one holy catholic Church, the resurrection of the flesh, and the life everlasting.

8. The mysteries (Lectures XIX–XXIII). Cyril leads the newly baptized into the mysteries — baptism, chrismation, and the Eucharist — the faith received and sealed. The one faith is handed down in catechesis, and it is known by being received.

Session 1

Reading: Procatechesis and Lecture I

Where we are: Cyril calls those who have come forward for baptism to sincerity, repentance, and attention. The faith is received by a person being formed, not by a debater.

Understand: Why does Cyril warn the candidates against hypocrisy, and what does he mean that the faith is received by a person being formed rather than by one merely disputing?

Discern: How does Cyril's call to sincerity and attention during the forty days shape the way a believer approaches the faith — as something to be received, not merely examined?

Trust: Where does this opening lecture direct a person who has come to the faith with a divided heart, unsure whether they are ready to be formed by it?

Tip: Let the group sit with Cyril's pastoral frame: he is not lecturing to a debate but forming candidates for baptism. The whole course is an act of handing on.

Session 2

Reading: Lectures II–III

Where we are: Cyril teaches repentance and remission of sins, and the meaning of baptism — the washing of regeneration into Christ.

Understand: Why does Cyril call the candidates to repentance, and what does he teach that baptism is — the washing of regeneration into Christ?

Discern: How does Cyril's teaching that baptism is a washing into Christ shape the way a believer understands the faith as received rather than earned?

Trust: Where does this lecture direct a person who is weighed down by sin and wonders whether the faith can really be received anew?

Tip: Let the group hear Cyril's pastoral urgency: repentance is not a technique but a turning, and baptism is the washing that seals the turning into Christ.

Session 3

Reading: Lectures IV–V

Where we are: Cyril sets out the ten points of doctrine and the nature of faith — the foundation on which the whole course is built.

Understand: What are the ten points of doctrine Cyril sets before the candidates, and what does he teach that faith is?

Discern: How does Cyril’s account of faith — as the foundation of the whole course — shape the way a believer receives the creed that follows?

Trust: Where does this lecture direct a person who wants to know the truth but is unsure what faith itself is?

Tip: Let the group notice that Cyril builds the whole course on faith before he expounds a single article. The creed is received in faith, not merely analyzed.

Session 4

Reading: Lectures VI–IX

Where we are: Cyril expounds the first articles of the creed: one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

Understand: Why does Cyril begin the creed with the unity of God, and what does he teach that the Father, the Almighty, and the maker of all things mean?

Discern: How does Cyril's confession of one God — against the heresies that divide him — shape the way a believer receives the whole creed?

Trust: Where does this lecture direct a person who has never been taught to say the creed, and wonders whether the one God can be known at all?

Tip: Let the group hear Cyril's confession as a prayer: one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of all things. The creed is received before it is analyzed.

Session 5

Reading: Lectures X–XII

Where we are: Cyril expounds the articles on Christ — the only-begotten Son, begotten of the Father, by whom all things were made, incarnate and made man.

Understand: Why does Cyril confess Christ as the only-begotten Son of God, and what does he teach that the incarnation — the Word made man — means?

Discern: How does Cyril's confession of Christ as very God and very man shape the way a believer receives the whole creed?

Trust: Where does this lecture direct a person who has heard Christ spoken of but has never been shown why the Church confesses him as the only-begotten Son?

Tip: Let the group hear Cyril's confession as a prayer: the only-begotten Son, begotten of the Father, by whom all things were made, incarnate and made man. The creed is received before it is analyzed.

Session 6

Reading: Lectures XIII–XV

Where we are: Cyril expounds the crucified and buried, the risen and ascended, and the coming judge whose kingdom shall have no end.

Understand: Why does Cyril confess Christ as crucified and buried, risen and ascended, and what does he teach that his coming to judge means?

Discern: How does Cyril's confession of Christ's work — his death, resurrection, ascension, and coming — shape the way a believer receives the whole creed?

Trust: Where does this lecture direct a person who is afraid of the judgment, and needs to hear that the risen Christ who will come is the same one who was crucified for them?

Tip: Let the group hear Cyril's confession as a prayer: crucified and buried, risen and ascended, coming to judge. The creed is received before it is analyzed.

Session 7

Reading: Lectures XVI–XVIII

Where we are: Cyril expounds the Holy Spirit, the one holy catholic Church, the resurrection of the flesh, and the life everlasting.

Understand: Why does Cyril confess the Holy Spirit as the Comforter who spake in the prophets, and what does he teach that the one holy catholic Church and the resurrection of the flesh mean?

Discern: How does Cyril's confession of the Holy Spirit and the Church shape the way a believer receives the faith as held in community rather than alone?

Trust: Where does this lecture direct a person who has been trying to hold the faith alone, and needs to hear that it is received in the Church?

Tip: Let the group hear Cyril's confession as a prayer: the Holy Spirit, the one holy catholic Church, the resurrection of the flesh, the life everlasting. The creed is received before it is analyzed.

Session 8

Reading: Lectures XIX–XXIII

Where we are: Cyril leads the newly baptized into the mysteries — baptism, chrismation, and the Eucharist — the faith received and sealed.

Understand: Why does Cyril teach the mysteries only to the newly baptized, and what does he teach that baptism, chrismation, and the Eucharist mean?

Discern: How does Cyril’s handing-on of the mysteries show that the faith is received and sealed in the Church, not merely examined?

Trust: Where does this whole course direct a person who has been trying to reason their way to the faith, and needs to hear that it is received and sealed in the mysteries?

Tip: Let the group end where Cyril ends: with the faith received and sealed in the mysteries. The one faith is handed down in catechesis, and it is known by being received.

Also on this question

If another voice would serve the group's next conversation, these editions take up the same question from different places in the tradition.

The Prescription Against Heretics — Tertullian

Patristic (West)

Tertullian sets the gate: heretics may not appeal to Scripture at all, because the question of who rightly possesses Scripture must be settled first. Discussion guide · Hardcover and facilitator pack on the title page.

An Apology of the Church of England — John Jewel

Protestant

Jewel answers the charge of novelty with a claim of return: the true faith is tested by Scripture and antiquity, and reform is not invention but recovery. Discussion guide · Hardcover and facilitator pack on the title page.

An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine — John Henry Newman

Catholic

Newman asks how doctrine can be the same and yet develop across time, and he offers the seven notes by which true development is told from corruption. Discussion guide · Hardcover and facilitator pack on the title page.

Letters from Resurrection Publishing

If this question is yours, Resurrection Publishing sends personal notes from Harvey, our founder — on reading these voices for real groups.

Sign up for the letters: <https://resurrectionpublishing.com/l/g>

Close

Thank you for giving this course the time it asks of you. Keep Cyril near enough to return to: not as a substitute for Scripture, prayer, or the Church's ordinary life, but as a serious companion in learning that the one faith is handed down in catechesis — and that it is known by being received.

If this question remains with your group, the other voices on it are in the Resurrection Publishing catalog as hardcovers and ebooks, each with its own free discussion guide. They are invitations for another season of reading, not requirements for completing this one.

This edition is for readers who want the work itself, not a summary.