***Q. 14. What is sin?***

*Sin is any want of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God.*

The Bible tells us that sin is a very serious thing. Since God is holy, he cannot stand the presence of sin. It provokes him to anger and kindles his wrath. This is why one pastor has said, “Do anything rather than sin!” He went on to say that it would be better to experience great sickness or pain rather than sin. Because sin is so serious, we should understand exactly what it is.

1. **The catechism says that there are two basic ways we sin.**

* Sometimes we call “a want of conformity to the law of God” a sin of **OMISSION**.

That means we ***do not do what God tells us we should do***.

Give three examples of this kind of sin:

* Sometimes we call “a transgression of the law of God” a sin of **COMISSION**.

That means we ***do that which God forbids.***

Give three examples of this kind of sin:

*Explain that the 10 commandments have both a positive and a negative aspect to them. When it says, “Thou shall have no other gods before me” it means that we should not go out and worship another deity. But the flip side of the command is assumed and implied. We should love this God with all our heart, mind, and soul and worship and fear him always. You can also look at the “put on” and “put off” examples in the book of Ephesians or examine the section of the catechism dealing with the commandments.*

*The point: The kids need to understand that failure to do what God commands and doing what he forbids are both equally sinful. Most think that if they just don’t do what God forbids, they will be ok. However, this is not true. God commands us to do!*

*This is why faith in Christ is so important. Those who do not have their sins pardoned will be shocked at how long the list is when the books are opened on the last day. This is why too we shouldn’t think that the good things we do will ever outweigh the bad. The list of commissions alone will be staggering. Add to this the list of omissions and you have an incredible amount of sin!*

1. **The Bible uses many different words for sin. We find a couple of them in Psalm 32. What are the words and what do they mean?**

***transgression*** (Pesha) means ***a revolt, a refusal to submit to authority.***

*If there is a mutiny on a ship, the crew revolts against the Captain. They do not want to be under his leadership and law anymore. Emphasize that this is more of an attitude that expresses itself in not obeying.*

***Sin***  (chatta’th) means ***a missing of the mark, a deviation from the right way.***

*Example: Think of an arrow that deviates from its course and misses the target. It is wrong. Sin is a deviation from the right course of living (as defined by God’s law).*

***Iniquity***  (avon) means ***perversion, distortion of nature, corruption.***

*Kids might know what mutants are from their tv or toys. Sin is like a mutation, it perverts the good things of God. Sex is good, but sex outside marriage is a perversion of God’s good gift. Truth is good, but twisting the truth for your own ends is evil.*

***guile*** (remiyah) which means ***deceit, treachery.***

*Sin is actually lying to yourself and to God. When you sin you are convinced that doing this wrong will actually be good for you. That couldn’t be farther from the truth!*

*The great theologian Augustine said that the beginning of knowledge is to know oneself to be a sinner. It is no surprise then that Psalm 32 was the favorite of this brilliant man. As he lay dying, he had it posted next to his bed, so he could constantly remind himself not only of his need to admit his sin, but be reminded of God’s forgiveness. Knowing that we are sinners in need of forgiveness and that God offers His mercy to those who confess their sin should be the greatest delight of every person. God’s provision of forgiveness is the theme of Psalm 32.*

1. **The catechism makes clear that the law of God is to be what guides our lives. But not everyone does this. The following are a few “laws” men live by. Explain why each is wrong.**

*We need to do that which brings about the most good for the most people.*

*No one knows exactly what “the good” is without a standard by which to measure good. Abortion might be considered the best action for a nation if people are left to their own whims. Hitler convinced many millions of people that getting rid of the Jews would be the best course of action for the world.*

*We should follow our hearts and let our conscience be our guide.*

*Scripture is clear that the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). The Bible also says, “Lean not on your own understanding.” (Proverbs 3:5). What’s more, if everyone is following their own heart & conscience, we fall into relativism: What may be right for you, might not be right for me. In the end, we end up like the book of Judges where “everyone did what was right in their own eyes.”*

***Challenge***: Sin is essentially a lack of faith in God’s word. God tells us not to do something because he has a reason for it, just as a parent would tell a child not to touch a fire because he does not want the child to be burned or do not eat the cookies because it will spoil the wonderful dinner I have for you.

First, challenge the kids to name the commandments (this, after all, is necessary to knowing sin!). Then go through each of the commands and attempt to find the promise behind each. Help your kids see that God’s laws should be upheld because he has wonderful promises behind them.

Have no other God’s: I will be your God and take care of you

Make no images: Worshipping God in purity and simplicity will bring you closer to him and help you grow spiritually

Use God’s Name reverently: God’s glory will be more glorious to you.

Honor God’s day: You will be refreshed and enjoy God more

Honor parents: long life is promised,

Do not murder: God will take vengeance for you

No adultery: God will provide a means of physical satisfaction

No lying: The truth will set you free

Do not steal: I will provide you with everything you need.

Do not covet: What God gives is enough to make you happy.