

Learn the Faith

Traditional Catholic Catechisms

COMMON NAME	AUTHOR	DATE first ed.	TITLE + DESCRIPTION	ONLINE HERE	RATED
The Roman Catechism	Council of Trent	1566	<i>Catechism of the Council of Trent</i> , or <i>Catechism of Pius V.</i> Comissioned by the Council of Trent, composed in session, overseen by St. Charles Borromeo, approved and issued by Pope St. Pius V. Remains the most authoritative catechism in print. Expositive format.	LINK	★ ★ ★
A Catechism or Christian Doctrine	Fr. Laurence Vaux	1567	<i>A Catechisme, Or Christian Doctrine</i> The first Catholic catechism printed in (early modern) English after the Reformation, running in multiple editions. Longer Q&A format.	LINK	★
Catechism of St. Robert Bellarmine	St. Robert Bellarmine	1597	<i>A Christian Doctrine</i> . Two editions (long and short), penned by a great Saint and Doctor of the Church at the command of Pope Clement VIII. Later proposed by Vatican Council (I) as a model for a universal Catechism. Short Q&A format. Illustrations in 1614 edition.	LINK	★ ★
The Douay Catechism	Fr. Henry Tuberville	1649	<i>An Abridgement of the Christian Doctrine: With Proofs of Scripture on Points Controverted, etc.</i> Modeled on Trent, penned to combat English Protestantism in elegant prose. Remains one of the clearest and most direct English works. Short Q&A format.	LINK	★ ★
Hay's Catechism	Bp. George Hay	1781	<i>The Sincere Christian Instructed in the Faith of Christ from the Written Word</i> . First of three catechetical volumes from the redoubtable Scot Bp. Hay. Extensive, drawing heavily on Scripture. Longer Q&A format. Compelling treatment of <i>communicatio in sacris</i> .	Hay 1 Hay 2	★ ★
Keenan's Catechism	Fr. Stephen Keenan	1846	<i>A Doctrinal Catechism</i> . Written to refute heresy, Q&A format. Rejected false notion of infallibility, improved the doctrine's positive exposition in editions after Vatican I.	LINK	★
Deharbe's Catechism	Fr. Joseph Deharbe	1848	<i>A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion</i> , or <i>Fander's Catechism</i> . A master catechist, Fr. Deharbe was commanded by his superior to pen what became the most eminent German catechism, English translation by Fr. John Fander. Expository and Q&A format.	LINK	★ ★
Catechism of Perseverance	Abbé Gaume	1849	<i>Catechism of Perseverance: an historical, doctrinal, moral and liturgical exposition of the Catholic religion</i> . Fr. Francis B. Jamison's translation from the French. Longer Q&A format.	LINK	★ ★
Catechism of St. John Neumann	St. John Neumann	1852	<i>Small Catechism of the Catholic Religion</i> . First and smallest of St. John Neumann's two (later three) volume work. Short Q&A format. Illustrations added in 1882 edition.	LINK	★
Familiar Explanation of Christian Doctrine	Fr. Michael Müller	1874	<i>Familiar Explanation of Christian Doctrine</i> . Once controversial in American for its firmly Catholic treatment of the dogma <i>extra ecclesiam nulla salus</i> . Q&A format.	LINK	★ ★
The Baltimore Catechism	Bishops of the United States of America	1885	<i>A Catechism of Christian Doctrine, Prepared and Enjoined by Order of the Third Council of Baltimore</i> . The most widely used catechism in the USA for over a century. Multi-volume Q&A format with varying answer length per volume: Concise edition for students (No. 1), Main edition (No. 2), Expanded edition (No. 3), Annotated edition for teachers (No. 4).	No. 1 No. 2 No. 3 No. 4	★ ★
Maynooth Short Catechism	Bishops of Ireland	1891	<i>A Short Catechism Extracted from the Catechism Ordered by the National Synod of Maynooth, etc.</i> Abridgement of the longer catechism ordered by the Irish Synod of Maynooth, based on Bp. Butler's earlier catechism of 1775. Short Q&A format.	LINK	★
Letters on Christian Doctrine	Fr. Francis De Zulueta	1897	<i>Letters on Christian Doctrine</i> . Three longer volumes of doctrinal letters for catechists, topically arranged. Expositive, at times narrative approach. Helpful and highly practical section on duties of faith toward non-Catholics, addresses <i>communicatio in sacris</i> .	Zulueta 1 Zulueta 2 Zulueta 3	★ ★
The Catechism Explained	Fr. Francis Spirago	1899	The Catechism Explained: An exhaustive exposition of the Christian religion, with special reference to the present state of society and the spirit of the age. Title says it all. Thorough, clear, edifying, and prayerful. Patterned on Trent. Extensive use of Scripture, Church Fathers, Popes and Councils. Unique formatting, and helpful indices.	LINK	★ ★ ★
The Penny Catechism	Bishops of England & Wales	1905	<i>A Catechism of Christian Doctrine</i> . Approved and endorsed by bishops of England and Wales, with numerous English reprints since. Tract size, short Q&A format with 370 clear, memorizable answers. Perhaps still the best "pocket catechism" available.	LINK	★ ★ ★
Catechism of Pope St. Pius X	Pope St. Pius X	1908	<i>Compendium of Christian Doctrine</i> . Written by a Pope and great Saint, intended for the laity by a champion of orthodoxy. Patterned on Trent and Bellarmine. Q&A format.	LINK	★ ★ ★
Catechism of the Summa Theologica	Fr. Thomas Pègues	1922	<i>Catechism of the Summa theologica of Saint Thomas Aquinas</i> . Helpful introduction to Aquinas' major work and Thomistic thought in general. Short Q&A format.	LINK	★ ★
The Catechism Simply Explained	Can. Henry Cafferata	1922	<i>The Catechism, Simply Explained</i> . Concise Q&A format, intended for teachers.	LINK	★
The Catechetical Instructions of St. Thomas Aquinas	St. Thomas Aquinas	1939	<i>The Catechetical Instructions of St. Thomas Aquinas</i> . Translated from Aquinas' <i>Opuscula</i> and arranged by Fr. Joseph Collins. Expository format. Helpful supplemental text.	LINK	★
My Catholic Faith	Bp. Louis Morrow	1949	<i>My Catholic Faith: A Manual Of Religion (A Catechism in Pictures)</i> . Contains many instructive lists and graphics that became well-known. Longer Q&A format.	LINK	★ ★
Sources of Catholic Dogma	Fr. Heinrich Denzinger	1854	Enchiridion Symbolorum, etc. Comissioned by Pope Bl. Pius IX and often simply called Denzinger. Longtime and definitive reference volume, formatted as a compendium of dogmatic source texts, its 30th edition (1957) is most recommended. Superb indices.	LINK	★ ★ ★
Attwater Catholic Dictionary	Donald Attwater	1931	<i>A Catholic Dictionary</i> . Helpful text catalogues an array of Catholic terms and concepts. (Note: Lacks entries for "ecumenism," "dialogue," and "pastoral accompaniment.")	LINK	★ ★
Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma	Fr. Ludwig Ott	1952	Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma. One of the greatest summaries of Catholic dogma ever composed, systematically unpacking Church teaching with exhaustive references to Scripture, Fathers, Councils, and Popes. Expositive format. Superb indices.	LINK	★ ★ ★