

The first followers of Jesus often scrawled the symbol of a fish on the wall of their house. They were not just identifying themselves as Christians – albeit secretly – they were declaring the Christian faith itself.

Five letters make up the Greek word for fish: *ichthys*. Each is the first letter one of the earliest creeds spelling the declaration: Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Saviour. There are others scattered through the New Testament. The first apostles handed on the heart of the faith in short, memorable ways often using a question-and-answer format.

In the early Church this process of formation for baptism and for life-long discipleship was called ‘catechesis’ (pronounced cat-eh-key-sis). The aim is to build a resounding inner echo of God’s word, an image of Christ at the centre of each disciple’s life through learning very simple core texts by heart.

From earliest times the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer formed the basis of what became known as a catechism: a simple and compelling way of forming disciples in the Christian faith and helping them to live out that faith with joy. The Commandments and the Beatitudes were also used from earliest times. The catechism in the Book of Common Prayer is the best-known example in the Anglican tradition.

This new Pilgrim catechism *The Pilgrim Way* stands in this great tradition, consciously drawing on all that has gone before. It also offers something new for today’s generation of Christians, helping us to understand and live out our faith and identity as followers of Jesus Christ. It is offered as a resource to help Christian people understand and grow in their faith in the conviction that the renewal and revival of catechesis is urgently needed in today’s Church.

Like the very first Christians we too must know, and understand, and share and live out our faith each day.

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