



I BELONG

I Belong: Heidelberg Catechism Question and Answer 1 for Children, by Joyce Holstege (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2022). 49 pages. Approx. \$26 CDN.

I Belong is a book that delves into the comforting truths of Lord's Day 1, explaining these truths on a child's level. Joyce Holstege has written twenty-two beautiful devotionals for covenant children. The author goes phrase by phrase through the Lord's Day, making each phrase the focus of a devotional. Allow me to share two examples. One is on the phrase, "That I with body. . ." The author explains this truth in a devotional called, "My body belongs to God." Another one focuses on "not a hair can fall from my head," with the title "Since I belong to God, God has planned everything for my life." It is clear that the author intended to be God-focused. One of many such examples is, "Your body was made by God and it belongs to Him. Use your body to praise God—you were wonderfully made by Him!" Holstege is very good at including information that children can relate to. She includes Bible stories in some devotionals. Others have practical life examples that children would understand, such as sharing toys or how we pray. Both the reading of and listening to these devotionals is enjoyable. The illustrations, too, were well thought-out and attractive for a child. All of this was evident to me while reading with my own daughter. She would exclaim, "I want to read another one!" Indeed, *I Belong* will be a blessing for many children with its gentle and methodical way of explaining biblical truths.

Here are a few more comments on specific aspects of the book. First, the author made it easy for parents to find Lord's Day 1 by having it printed on one of the book's first pages. The re-reading and memorizing of this Lord's Day are encouraged in a "Note to

Parents." Second, the devotional on the phrase "and in death" talks about the fact that when you die you are not with your parents anymore. Perhaps, for some young children, a small amount of parental discretion may be needed. If your child is emotionally ready for this, a beautiful discussion on God's ways in our death may follow. Third, a couple of devotionals talk about God (and Jesus) as our friend. It would be important to explain to a child that this type of friend is different than the friends he plays with. The LORD is always much higher and greater than we are.

Finally, it is no surprise to me that author Joyce Holstege is a teacher. She has a calm, clear way of explaining concepts on a child's level. Holstege belongs to the Protestant Reformed Church in Michigan. She speaks of covenantal truths in this book. One example is, "[God] will always be your God and you will always be His child." If you are interested in the history between the CanRC and PRC, it would be helpful to read chapter 6 of *Inheritance Preserved* by W. W. J. VanOene.

Overall, this book is enjoyable and the author writes truthfully and humbly. I recommend this book for parents to read with their children ages 6–8. 📖



Amanda DeBoer Wife, mother, and author of *Teach Them Your Way, O Lord*, a Bible story book for children ages 2–4 deboerca@gmail.com