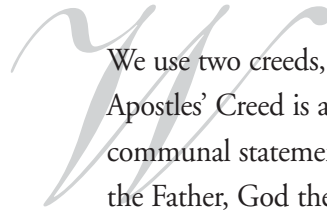




Course One: *A Journey of Faith*

SEGMENT 3: WHAT WE BELIEVE

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE



We use two creeds, statements of belief, in the Episcopal Church. The Apostles' Creed is a personal statement of belief and the Nicene Creed is a communal statement of belief. In both we affirm our belief in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, you have revealed to your Church your eternal Being of glorious majesty and perfect love as one God in Trinity of Persons: Give us grace to continue steadfast in the confession of this faith, and constant in our worship of you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; for you live and reign, one God, now and forever. Amen. (BCP 251)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is a creed?

What is the Apostles' Creed?

What is the Nicene Creed?

How does reciting these creeds help define your worship experience?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord

I believe in the Holy Spirit

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class the first and third promises are particularly relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

You might find it helpful to review pages 6-7 for facilitating tips.

1. What things do you believe in that you cannot see?

2. How did you first learn about God? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?

3. The group may want to refer to the Apostles' Creed on page 96 and the Nicene Creed on pages 358-59. Or use the large sized copies placed side by side and highlight the similarities in one color and the differences in another.

4. Refer to the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed on page 168 or in *The Book of Common Prayer* (page 96 or 358-359) as you discuss the following questions.

What do we mean when we say we believe in God the Father Almighty?

What do we mean when we say we believe in Jesus Christ?

What do we mean when we say we believe in the Holy Spirit?

Apostles' Creed (BCP 96)

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

*He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.*

*He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.*

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

*He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Nicene Creed (BCP 358-59)

*We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.*

*We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.*

*For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.*

*For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.*

*On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven*

*and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.*

*With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.*

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins,

*We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

5. Think about other creeds you might know, such as the Pledge of Allegiance, scout oaths, 4-H Club Motto, etc. How are they like church creeds? Different from church creeds?

6. Look in your church for various symbols of the Trinity. You might look at some of the reference books listed in this section that deal with the Trinity. What element does each share?

7. Draw your own symbol for the Trinity or the Kingdom of God.

W R A P - U P

We affirm our relationship to “The Story” in the Creeds. We say that we believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ cross symbolizes for us the process by which we also grow, both individually and by giving ourselves to others. As we challenge and stretch ourselves in pursuit of goals, we grow. The crucifixion of Jesus did not end his interaction with us. The resurrected Christ lives among us.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The Hymnal 1982

#366 - Holy God, we praise Thy Name

#368 - Holy Father, Great Creator

Wonder Love and Praise

#743 - O threefold God of tender unity

#752 - There’s a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#198 - Love lifted me

