

LEADER

Apostles' Creed

REVISED EDITION



To Know, To Live,
To Grow

Series Overview

To Know, To Live, To Grow

To Know, To Live, To Grow is a holistic approach to confirmation. With Christian education as a key component, this material

helps youth integrate their faith with their families and into their congregational lives.



This curriculum is designed for groups of up to 10 youth participants and one leader. The leader

engages youth in their personal faith searches—walking with them, staying in dialogue with them, and encouraging them to be open about their questions and concerns. Leadership can come from young adults, parents, lay leaders, or clergy.

In addition to serving as confirmation curriculum, this series can be adapted for use with retreats, camp experiences, service opportunities, and other small-group activities.

Foundations

1. Confirmation is a ministry rather than religious education. This ministry is a joint effort of confirmands, parents, lay leaders, and church staff.
2. Confirmation ministry is Christ-centered, a place for people who need a Savior.
3. Confirmation ministry is not only about gaining knowledge but also about creating experiences in Christian community and serving others.
4. Confirmands exist within a family community. The family bears the primary responsibility for the faith development of the confirmand.
5. It is essential to meet young people's needs for acceptance, self-worth, and community as they prepare for the adult world by testing boundaries and questioning values while learning the message of the gospel.

To Know

Confirmands:

- understand how to read and interpret the Bible.
- learn about important people and events in the Bible.
- learn the central teachings of the Lutheran church.
- discuss the Scriptures and faith-related topics in small groups.
- complete in-class and homework assignments.

To Live

Confirmands:

- see the relevance of biblical events in their lives today.
- understand the church as the body of Christ, which functions by helping people.
- discover appropriate service opportunities in the church and the community.
- accept responsibility for serving God.
- express a willingness to confess the Christian faith.

To Grow

Confirmands:

- discover that Christian growth is a lifelong process.
- understand that Christian growth takes place through worship, prayer, education, and service.
- integrate the Bible and the Christian traditions into their daily lives.
- see how faith affects personal decision-making and the way we treat others.

Apostles' Creed

REVISED EDITION

Contents

Session 1: God Our Creator 2

Session 2: Christ Our Redeemer 5

Session 3: The Holy Spirit 8

The Apostles' Creed 12

To the Leader . . .

Format

The To Know, To Live, To Grow confirmation curriculum is designed for use in a small group setting with up to 10 participants and one adult leader.

This material is intended for use over several sessions, with each session lasting 60 to 90 minutes. The flexible format allows you to make adjustments to fit your situation.

Many of the session activities can work during your time together as a group or as homework assignments between sessions.

The questions within each session often promote discussion rather than finding a specific answer. Some sessions may require more direction than others. Be prepared to spend extra time on topics of particular interest to your group.

Materials

Each participant should have a Participant book, writing materials, and a Bible. This curriculum uses the NRSV translation.

The Participant books follow the same format as this Leader guide—but with writing space instead of answers and without many of the margin notes that appear here.

Some activities may suggest additional items, such as maps, videos, or outside reading materials. Review upcoming sessions in advance to see what you will need.

May God bless you in your ministry!



Augsburg Fortress
MINNEAPOLIS

LEADER

Apostles' Creed

REVISED EDITION

Writer

Terri Martinson Elton

Editors

Jeffrey S. Nelson
Jill Carroll Lafferty
Connie Sletto

Graphic Designer

Marti Naughton

Copyright © 2004 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in critical articles or reviews, no part of this book may be reproduced without prior written permission from the publisher. Write to: Permissions, Augsburg Fortress, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440.

The original edition of this resource was published by Changing Church, Inc., Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Burnsville, Minnesota.

Scripture quotations are from New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission.

ISBN 978-0-8066-4916-0

Manufactured in U.S.A.

Session 1

God Our Creator

First Article

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

The English translation of the Apostles' Creed is prepared by the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET), copyright © 1970, 1971, and 1975.

Leader's Note

**Unit objectives: Through
studying the Apostles'
Creed participants will:**

- understand God as creator and provider of our every need.
- learn of God's offering of forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
- become aware of God's presence among us through the Holy Spirit.

**Each participant will need
a Small Catechism and a
Bible (preferably NRSV).**

Materials

**Drawing paper, markers,
scissors, paste, and so
fourth.**

Begin by sharing your name and ...

- one thing you've made (created) this past year; or
- one thing that you need right now.

As a group, make a list of your daily needs. **Food, shelter, clothing, water, love, and so forth.**

Now, look over your list and write down how these needs are met or who provides these things for you.

Open with prayer.

A creed is a statement about what we believe and what we teach to others. The Apostles' Creed is a brief statement of the beliefs and teachings of Jesus' followers (apostles). This creed is one of the statements of faith in the Lutheran church. During the next three sessions, we'll look at what this creed means, and talk about how it applies to our lives today.

What Happens When We're in Charge

Be prepared for some questions about the creation of the earth. Participants have been exposed in school to a variety of theories regarding the creation of the world. If they question God's method of creation, discuss these theories in a nonjudgmental manner, basing answers on Scripture.

For the next few minutes, think like "God." Form groups of two or three and use the supplies provided to create a world. Brainstorm ideas. Think of what is needed, how it will work, and who will live there. Your world does not need to be identical to the world we live in, but it should be able to support life. For instance, your newly created world must have air for us to breathe, but we may be able to breathe differently than we do now. Get as detailed as you can in the time allowed.

- How was it? Easy? Hard? Exciting? Frustrating? Name three things you liked and disliked about the process.
- What was the goal or hope you had for your world?
- Do you think your world will turn out the way you planned?
- Do you trust the decisions you made as "God"? Why or why not?
- Compared to our world, what would you do differently? What would you do the same?

What the Apostles' Creed Teaches Us

Open your Small Catechism to the First Article of the creed. Read the First Article together. What does the First Article teach us about God?

I believe in God, ...

- Name a few synonyms (words that mean the same thing) for the word *believe*. **Think, understand, am convinced, know, have faith, trust, count on, and so forth.**
- This statement focuses on personal belief: "I believe." Why is this important? **It is important because our relationship with God is personal. This is not about us as a church or a family, but me as a person or individual.**
- Why is it important to believe in God? **Individual answers.**
- Could you say you believed in the "God" of your creation activity? Why or why not? **Individual answers.**
- How do you make decisions about what you choose to believe? **Individual answers.**

What God Is Really Like

... the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Look up the following verses and write down some of God's characteristics:

Genesis 1:1—**creator**

Psalms 10:16—**sovereign or king forever**

Psalms 27:1—**light and salvation**

Psalms 34:18—**near**

Psalms 46:1—**refuge, strength, very present help**

Psalms 103:8—**merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love**

Psalms 121:7-8—**keeps us from all evil**

Psalms 145:13—**faithful, gracious**

- Can you think of any other characteristics? **Individual answers.**
- Why is it important for us to understand the characteristics of God? **God is our creator and wants to be in relationship with us. If we are to be in relationship with God, we need to know something about God.**
- Could we substitute the word *mother* in place of the word *father*? Why or why not? **Participants may have strong opinions about this. Don't look for a correct answer, but encourage the participants to share their beliefs.**
- How is God like a parent? **God loves us, wants the best for us, and so forth.**
- Why do we acknowledge God as creator of heaven and earth? **Out of respect for God and God's awesome powers.**
- What was missing in the character of "God" during your creation activity? **In the activity, "God" did not necessarily have the characteristics listed above.**
- What do you think God is like? How does this make you feel? **Individual answers.**
- Based on the First Article of the creed, name one thing we are expected to remember about God: _____

Read and discuss the meaning of the First Article in the Small Catechism.

Creation Walk

As a group, take a walk around your church grounds. Look for things God has made. Choose one thing (grass, flowers, a tree) and examine it closely. Try to describe it to another person, and have him or her guess what it is. Then, try to list all of the possible uses of that thing. For example, a twig could be described as brownish, rough textured, about six inches long, and so forth. Some uses for the twig might be starting a fire, building a bird's nest, composting, and so forth.

Assignment

Rewrite the First Article of the Apostles' Creed in your own words.

Close with prayer.

Read together the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed in the Small Catechism.

Session 2

Christ Our Redeemer

Begin by sharing your father's or mother's name and ...

- the best gift you've ever received; or
- one thing someone has done for you to make you feel special.

As a group, make a list of things that make you feel important or special. **Gifts, special outings, new clothes, good friends, hugs, and so forth.**

Open with prayer.

God's Gift

Tell participants that the two presents you brought to class are gifts to them from God, then have them guess what's inside. Give the gifts to two participants to unwrap. After they've unwrapped them, talk about what these gifts are and what they mean to us. End this activity by giving each participant a small cross. As you hand each person a cross, say, "Jesus Christ died for you."

Discuss

- Why is Jesus important to our Christian faith? **Jesus is God's gift of love to us. He is our assurance of life with God. He died for our sins.**
- Why is the cross important in our Christian faith? **The cross is the symbol of this loving gift from God. It reminds us of Jesus' sacrifice.**
- What significance does the heart have in our Christian faith? **The heart symbolizes God's unconditional love for us.**
- What do these symbols represent? **They are reminders of the cornerstones of our faith: that God loves us and wants to forgive us.**

The Second Article of the Apostles' Creed focuses on God's special gift to us: Jesus. God sometimes seems very far away and bigger than we can imagine. It's hard to imagine that God cared enough for each of us to send Jesus to earth. God, in the person of Jesus Christ, endured overwhelming suffering on our behalf. The sacrifice of a parent losing a beloved child must have been terrible. In addition, Jesus endured the terrible pain of the crucifixion. Truly, God loves each of us as if we were the only person on earth.

Second Article

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 into hell.

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.

Materials

Bring two wrapped presents, one containing a cross or a picture of a cross, and the other containing a paper heart or a picture of a heart. Also bring a small cross (real or a cardboard cut-out) for each participant. Pocket crosses are very inexpensive at most Christian bookstores.

How Jesus Died

As you look at the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed, keep God's sacrifice in your mind. While you may not be able to imagine yourself as a parent losing a child, you can think about the physical pain of crucifixion.

- Jesus was whipped and beaten before he was crucified.
- He had to carry his heavy cross through the streets of Jerusalem.
- His hands (wrists) and feet were nailed to the cross with spikes.
- While hanging on the cross, his weight rested on the painful holes in his hands and feet.
- Jesus had to push up on his injured feet in order to take a breath.
- As Jesus grew weaker, it became harder for him to breathe. He probably died of suffocation.

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

- What difference will it make if you believe in Jesus? **You will receive the gift of life with God by God's grace through faith.**
- Is it important that Jesus was God's Son? Why or why not? **Think of the love a parent feels for her or his child. God's child was our gift. The love is overwhelming. And remember, God and Jesus are one being. God's gift was God.**

**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 into hell.

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.

Look up the following verses and write down what Jesus said about himself:

John 6:35—I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

John 12:44-46—Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come as a light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness.

John 14:6—I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 15:5—I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

Look up the following verses and write down what role Jesus has in our Christian faith.

2 Corinthians 5:21—**For our sake [God] made [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

2 Timothy 1:10—**...but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.**

1 Peter 2:24—**He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.**

Jesus is not only part of the earthly world, but also of the heavenly world. What is Jesus' role in heaven? **Jesus is sovereign in heaven and continues to lead and love us.**

- Based on the Second Article of the creed, name one thing we can learn about God: _____

Read and discuss the meaning of the Second Article in the Small Catechism.

Letters of Affirmation

Write a letter to someone who is special to you. Tell the person:

- how much he or she means to you.
- that you've been thinking about him or her.
- one hope you have for his or her life.
- what you've been up to.
- how you've been feeling and what you're looking forward to.

The next time the group meets, bring your special person's address so that the letter can be mailed. Use a separate piece of paper for your letter.

Assignment

Rewrite the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed in your own words.

Close with prayer.

Read together the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed in the Small Catechism.

Materials

Writing paper or stationery and envelopes.

Session 3

The Holy Spirit

Third Article

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.

Materials

Bring stamps and envelopes.

Also bring a number of different items that depend on something else to work. Each item can only be useful when it is in “relationship” with something else. Ideas include a baseball glove, a shoe, a balloon that hasn’t been blown up, or a puppet. For example, the baseball glove is useful if there is a hand inside. Alone, a baseball glove is useless.

Begin by sharing the name of your best friend and ...

- a high and low point you experienced in the past week, and
- a time in your life when you were very excited.

As a group, make a list of things that get you excited about life.

Address and mail the letters you wrote last week.

Open with prayer.

Like Birds of a Feather

Ask participants to examine the items you brought, trying to discover what they have in common.

- What do these items have in common? How useful are they by themselves? What would make these items useful? **They all need something—a person or air or a foot—in them to be used the way they were made to work.**
- How might these items be similar to a person and our relationship with God? **People in a relationship with God function the way God created them. People who lack a relationship with God are empty and are not functioning as they were designed.**

Discuss

Think of special people you don’t get to see often, perhaps a grandparent who lives far away or a special friend who moved.

- When you are with these people, how do you spend your time? What is exciting about being with these people? How do you feel when you are separated from them? **Individual answers. Ideas: catching up on what’s been happening; doing our favorite things together. It is exciting to be with them because we care for each other very much. Feelings when separated might include sadness, anticipating the next time we will be together, thankful for the time we had.**
- How might your time with special friends be similar to experiencing time with God? **This might be tough for participants. Explain that time with God might be spent praying, reading the Bible, talking with friends, or worshiping. It might occur at church or in the wilderness. Participants should see time with God as a special time that they look forward to, rather than a requirement they have to fulfill.**

Everyday life can become monotonous, but every now and then things happen in our lives to pick us up and give us new energy for living. Sometimes it's a chance to be with special friends at a party, or having relatives come to visit. Sometimes it's a surprise call from a friend, or making the team. Sometimes it's a quiet time alone in our room, or seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time. Today we're going to look at the special part of our life that re-energizes us.

Breath of Life

Read together the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed in the Small Catechism.

I believe in the Holy Spirit ...

- Can you see the Holy Spirit? Can you touch, hear, smell, or taste the Holy Spirit? **The Holy Spirit is not visible in our lives, but its presence is felt within us and other Christians.**
- How do you know the Holy Spirit exists? **Participants may not be able to answer this question. Be prepared to talk about the presence of the Holy Spirit in your own life, perhaps giving an example of when you have experienced the Holy Spirit.**
- How is the Holy Spirit present at a basketball game? A funeral? A rock concert? A parade? A Fourth of July celebration? A contest? **Responses will vary, but consider some of these answers: The Holy Spirit guides my choices, comforts me and gives me a sense of peace, makes me feel excited.**
- How is God's Spirit alive in you today? **The Holy Spirit is in us, guiding us, helping us grow our gifts, and giving us the confidence to live out our faith every day.**
- In the Lutheran church, what sacrament celebrates our receiving the Holy Spirit into our lives? **Baptism.**
- What does it mean to you to know that God's Spirit is alive today? **Individual answers.**

Read Genesis 2:7 and 1 Corinthians 3:16.

- What do these verses say to us about the presence of God in our lives? **God breathed life into us, God's Spirit lives in us.**
- Explain in your own words how the Holy Spirit is part of God.

As we were formed, God breathed life into us. God promises to fill each of us with life from the day we are born until the day we die. This means the Holy Spirit is with us each and every day, whether we know it or not. The Sacrament of Baptism is the time we celebrate the Holy Spirit coming into our lives. This is our “birth” into the Christian family

... the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, ...

As we say, “the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,” we are reminded that baptism joins us together as one united church, with those here on earth, those who have gone before us, and those who will come after us. Baptism is a very powerful event in our Christian journey.

Read Genesis 2:18.

- Why is living in community or with other people important? **Other people give us support when we need it, let us know when we are doing wrong, and help us get back on the right track.**
- Name ways the Spirit reveals itself to us through other people. **When other people are caring or loving toward us, when someone gives us significant advice or help, or when we learn something new.**
- Name some people who have influenced your faith. **Individual answers might include parents, friends, pastors, camp counselors, or Sunday school teachers.**

The purpose of the church, or Christian community, is to help one another live lives connected to God. As a community, we often hurt each other and ourselves. Communities need forgiveness. Christ came offering us forgiveness that we might live together in harmony; that we might be restored with each other and God. When we are baptized, not only are we filled with the Holy Spirit, but we are also connected to the forgiveness Christ offers us through his death on the cross. We receive eternal life with God.

... the forgiveness of sins ...

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

- What importance does Christ have in our community? **Jesus reconciles us to God. Others can see Christ working in us and experience the love of God.**
- What is our role in the Christian community? **We are to act as ambassadors.**
- How can we “see” the actions of the Holy Spirit? **As acts on God’s behalf in the world. We see evidence of the Holy Spirit in how Christians treat each other and how we treat others outside of the Christian community.**

When we say we believe in the Holy Spirit, we are acknowledging God’s presence in each of us, our connection to other Christians, Christ’s death and resurrection, and our belief in the forgiveness he offers. We are stating our belief that we will have eternal life with God.

... the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Read Romans 8:1-4 and Philippians 3:17—4:1.

- What role does the Holy Spirit have in our lives? **The Spirit frees us from death and helps us live out Christ's example in our lives.**
- How does the Holy Spirit lead us? **The Spirit transforms us, allowing us to live by God's ways, not the ways of the world.**
- How do we know that God's Spirit is present in our lives? **When we have the courage to stand up for our faith or have words of encouragement for a friend.**
- Based on the Third Article of the creed, name one thing we are expected to learn about God: _____

Read and discuss the meaning of the Third Article in the Small Catechism.

Go back to your list in the beginning of this session.

- How is the Holy Spirit present in the things that make your life exciting?

Assignment

Rewrite the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed in your own words.

Close with prayer.

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.

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 into hell.

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.

The English translation of the Apostles' Creed is prepared by the
International Consultation on English Texts (ICET), copyright
© 1970, 1971, and 1975.



To Know, To Live,
To Grow

Apostles' Creed
Building the Christian Church
Jesus of Nazareth
Lord's Prayer
Meaning of Service: Living in Love
My Faith
New Testament
Old Testament
Ten Commandments
What Is a Lutheran?

ISBN 978-0-8066-4916-0



9 780806 649160

Augsburg Fortress
www.augsburgfortress.org