

LESSON 28: THE APOSTLES' CREED

Instruction for Faith Educators

For Basic Level / Age 8	:	Cover points 1 to 18
For Intermediate Level / Age 11	:	Cover points 1 to 18
For Advanced Level / Age 14	:	Cover points 1 to 18

Revision from previous lesson:

In the previous lesson, we learned about the four last things, experiences that every human person must go through at the end of our earthly life. In order to be saved and to be with God, we must believe what is right about God. In this lesson and the next, we will learn about the Creeds that are passed down by the Church to people who want to be saved. Two of the most important Creeds for us are the Apostles' Creed (which we will learn in this lesson) and the Nicene Creed (which we will learn in the next lesson).

Current lesson:

1. From the days of the early Church, Christians were already trying to put together words to express what they believed. Because of this, from the beginning, the faith had been handed on to people through a series of statements (or formulae), especially to candidates preparing for baptism (CCC 186).

CCC 187: "Such syntheses are called 'professions of faith' since they summarize the faith that Christians profess. They are called 'creeds' on account of what is usually their first word in Latin: *credo* ('I believe'). They are also called 'symbols of faith'."

CCC 188: "The Greek word *symbolon* meant half of a broken object, for example, a seal presented as a token of recognition. The broken parts were placed together to verify the bearer's identity. The symbol of faith, then, is a sign of recognition and communion between believers. *Symbolon* also means a gathering, collection or summary. A symbol of faith is a summary of the principal truths of the faith and therefore serves as the first and fundamental point of reference for catechesis."

2. Among all the creeds, two of them occupy a special place in the life of the Catholic Church. They are the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed (CCC 193-5).
3. It is believed by many that the Apostles' Creed was formulated by the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. It is very possible that the Twelve Apostles, including Matthias who replaced Judas, contributed to the formulation of this profession of faith. This was done sometime before they left Jerusalem to preach the Catholic faith around the world.

Among some early writers, Saint Ambrose and Rufinus were two who believed that the Apostles' Creed was composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit during Pentecost with each of the Apostles contributing one of the twelve articles. (Rufinus was not a saint,

but a great scholar and translator, a master of Greek and Latin. He was the first Christian writer to produce a lengthy commentary on the Creed.)

The Catholic Church does not have an official view on whether the Apostles' Creed was formulated by the original Twelve Apostles. But we do believe wholeheartedly that all the points of the Creed are part of the Catholic faith.

4. The Apostles' Creed was originally not written down, but rather, memorised and recited. This was the way the faith was taught and learned throughout the history of the early Church. Catechumens (i.e. people who were preparing to receive baptism) committed the Apostles' Creed to memory and professed it aloud at their baptism.
5. CCC 194: "The Apostles' Creed is so called because it is rightly considered to be a faithful summary of the apostles' faith. It is the ancient baptismal symbol of the Church of Rome. Its great authority arises from this fact: it is 'the Creed of the Roman Church, the See of Peter, the first of the apostles, to which he brought the common faith.'"

St Ambrose (4th century): "This Creed is the spiritual seal, our heart's meditation and an ever-present guardian; it is, unquestionably, the treasure of our soul."

6. The Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God,
the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
He descended into hell;
on the third day He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from there He will come 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 life everlasting.
AMEN.

7. **Article 1 (CCC 385-421):** *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.* This affirms that God exists, that He is a Holy Trinity (three Persons in One Godhead). He is also the Creator of the known universe, which consists of the visible world and the invisible world.

8. **Article 2 (CCC 422-455): *And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.*** This attests that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He is most certainly divine. The word “Lord” implies divinity, because the Greek *Kyrios* and the Hebrew *Adonai* both mean “lord” and are ascribed only to God. So the use of “Lord” with Jesus is meant to profess His divinity. The name Jesus comes from the Hebrew *Yeshua*, meaning “to save, to deliver”. As Catholics, we believe that Jesus is the Saviour of the world.
9. **Article 3 (CCC 456-570): *Who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.*** This affirms the human nature of Christ, meaning He had a real, true human mother. It also affirms His divine nature, meaning He had no human father but by the power of the Holy Spirit was conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He is therefore both God and man, fully divine and fully human.
10. **Article 4 (CCC 571-630): *He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.*** The human nature of Christ could feel pain and actually die, and He did on Good Friday when He was tortured and crucified. Like all human beings who die, the remains of Jesus was buried, meaning that His bodily death was real.
11. **Article 5 (CCC 631-658): *He descended into hell. On the third day he arose again from the dead.*** Upon His death, Jesus entered into the realm of the dead. He entered into that realm in order to deliver those who were to be saved, for they had not yet experienced the vision of God while awaiting the Redeemer. On the third day after He died, Jesus resurrected. He was not resuscitated the way people sometimes get revived when they die. In His own power, Jesus resurrected with a glorified and risen body.
12. **Article 6 (CCC 659-667): *He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.*** The Ascension reminds the faithful that after the human and divine natures of Christ were united in the Incarnation, they could never be separated. In other words, after the saving death and resurrection, Jesus did not lose his human body as if he no longer needed or wanted it. We believe that His human body will exist forever, and in that way, God has forever been united to humanity. Where Jesus went, body and soul, into heaven, the faithful hope to follow one day.
13. **Article 7 (CCC 668-682): *From there He will come again to judge the living and the dead.*** This article affirms the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the world to be its judge. Judgment Day, Day of Reckoning, Doomsday – they’re all metaphors for the end of time when what’s known as the Last Judgment will occur. Catholics believe that after the death of any human person, immediate private judgment occurs and the person goes directly to heaven, hell, or purgatory (an intermediate place in preparation for heaven).
14. **Article 8 (CCC 683-747): *I believe in the Holy Spirit.*** This article reminds us that God exists in three persons – the Holy Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a distinct Person equal to God the Father and God the Son.
15. **Article 9 (CCC 748-750): *I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.*** We believe that the Church is more than just a building or an institution. The Church

is the Mystical Body of Christ and consists of different facets. The part of the Church that exists on this earth is called the Church militant because its members struggle against sin in this world. The Church suffering refers to the souls of the dead who are experiencing purgatory or purification in preparation for their union with God. The Church triumphant refers to the souls who are already in heaven. The unity and cooperation of the members of the Church on earth, in purgatory, in heaven is also called the Communion of Saints. Together, we are the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

16. **Article 10 (CCC 751-987): *I believe in the forgiveness of sins.*** Christ came to save the world from sin. We believe that because of the work that Jesus did in His suffering, His death, and His resurrection, as well as His continuous saving work in the Sacraments of the Church, we are privileged to experience God's forgiveness for our sins.
17. **Article 11 (CCC 988-1019): *I believe in the resurrection of the body.*** A human being is a union of body and soul, so death is just the momentary separation of body and soul until the Second Coming of Christ, which will be followed by the Last Judgment and the resurrection of the dead. As human beings, we are not meant to exist merely as disembodied souls forever after we die. We will receive resurrected bodies that will be reunited with our souls upon the Second Coming of our Lord. Our ultimate experience of eternity, whether it is heaven or hell, will take place in the state of that union of body and soul.
18. **Article 12 (CCC 1020-1065): *And in life everlasting.*** As Jesus Christ Our Saviour died, so too will we. As He rose from the grave, so too shall we. Physical death is the only way to cross from this life into the next. At the very moment of our bodily death, a particular judgment takes place. Souls of those who are judged to be holy and virtuous will experience heaven, either directly or after experiencing purification/purgatory. Souls of those that are judged to be evil will be eternally separated from God, and this experience is called hell.



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