

*Everything in the Creed comes together when we are baptized "in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." All that happened at Jesus' baptism is bestowed upon us.*

*First of all, Christ's righteousness is given to us like new clothing (Gal. 3:27). Jesus being in our place and doing for us is given to us and counts for us. His righteousness is our righteousness.*

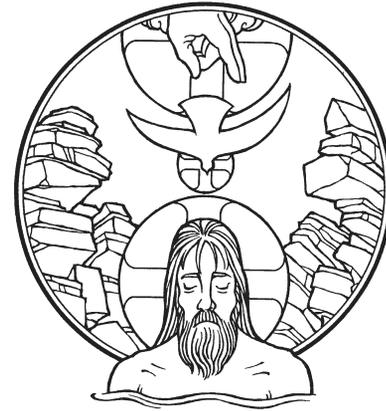
*Next, the Spirit who is hovering over the baptismal water and comes with the Word, descends upon us, marking us as no longer God's enemies but now at peace with God.*

*Finally, because we are baptized into Christ, the Father declares that we are His beloved Sons. (If the girls protest that they are not God's Son, remind them that the boys are part of the Bride of Christ!)*

*In Baptism, all that the Triune God is and does is given to us and bestowed upon us. In this way, we see the way in which the True and Triune God is all about one thing: saving us and making us His own!*

*Encourage the youth to pray the Creed each day, thinking about what the Lord is giving them in each part.*

## **Dust Off Your Catechism** **A Review of the Six Chief Parts** **of the Christian Faith**



### **The Second Chief Part:** **The Apostles' Creed** *Leader's Guide*

[www.higherthings.org](http://www.higherthings.org)

*Note: Leader's Comments are in italics.*

**Opening Hymn: 953/954**

### **The Apostles' Creed**

*Read/recite together.*

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker 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. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

Where is the Creed found in the Bible?

*The text of the Creed is not in the Scriptures. It was developed over about two centuries of the church's instruction in preparation for Baptism. However, every bit of the Creed is taught in the Scriptures. Put another way, there is nothing in the Creed that is not in the Scriptures. In fact, the Creed is a great summary (think "Spark's Notes") of the entire Bible. Some churches would say, "We believe the Bible, not man-made creeds." To which we can easily reply, "Well what part of the Creed is not in the Bible or isn't true?"*

What are the three Creeds the church confesses:

*The Apostles' Creed, which is the Creed of Baptism and our daily prayers.*

*The Nicene Creed, which especially emphasizes the divinity of Jesus and is used primarily in the Divine Service.*

*The Athanasian Creed, the longest of the Three (traditionally read on Trinity Sunday), lays out with careful*

*You can explain what "righteousness" is by simply saying "Jesus taking my place." Jesus is fulfilling all righteousness by taking our place under the Law, under our sins, and under the Father's judgment. Whatever Jesus is and does for us, that is our righteousness.*

Why does the Holy Spirit descend as a dove? Where else have we seen doves in the Scriptures?

*The dove is a sign of peace with God. The dove bearing an olive branch to Noah after the Flood, was the sign that God's judgment against the sinful world had ended. The destructive Flood which killed sinful man was over. The dove marks that as true peace with God.*

*You should point out that "peace" does not mean what the world thinks it means: absence of conflict, no more wars, etc. Peace as the Scriptures teach is peace with God (Romans 5:1). Peace with God means that God, who was our enemy when we were sinners, is no longer our enemy. Even though we are still sinners, we are God's children in Christ and therefore God is not going to condemn us but has saved us.*

*This peace is also a peace of conscience. The Devil uses our conscience to rob us of peace, saying, "If you were a Christian, you would never do such and such..." But peace with God means the Devil cannot accuse us before God.*

What does the Father say about His Son?

*"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" It's really an "atta boy!" from the Father. The Father loves His Son and is pleased with Him because He is obedient to Him. The Son does what the Father tells Him to do, which is to take on our sins and die for them on Calvary. This also points us to the connection between Father and Son: if we would know the Father, we must know the Son and be in Jesus Christ, who is the image of God.*

How do all these things that the Holy Trinity does at Jesus' Baptism become yours? (Hint: Make the sign of the cross and say..."In the name...")

hint: see **John 1:1**)

*God the Father is active in creating the heavens and the earth. The Spirit is hovering over the waters (as He does in our Baptism!) The Son is a little trickier to see, but the verse from John's Gospel helps. When the Father speaks His Word and creates, there is the Son, because He is the eternal Word of God. The Father creates through the Word, by speaking. Jesus is what God has to say to us. And the Spirit works through the Word.*

### **Matthew 3:13-17.**

**13** Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. **14** And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

**15** But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

**16** When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

**17** And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The Baptism of Our Lord shows us how the Triune God works together for our good.

Why does Jesus come to be baptized if He is not a sinner?

*Jesus is baptized to fulfill all righteousness. When Jesus is baptized, he is taking his place with sinners. Not that He is a sinner, but He comes to be treated like one. Think of Jesus' baptism not as a washing away of His sins but of a getting covered in our sins (like dirty bath water!) At His baptism, Jesus becomes sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) and carries our sins to the cross.*

What does it mean that Jesus "fulfills all righteousness?"

*language the biblical teaching of the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son.*

How many Gods are there? How many Persons? How do we describe this Tri-Unity?

*The "technical" language the church uses to express what the Scriptures teach is the following: There is ONE God. There are three Persons. Each person is truly God. We say Three Persons in One God and one God in three Persons.*

What did the Son do that the Father and Holy Spirit did not?

*The Son was made incarnate, that is, He became man. We speak of the two natures in Christ, his divine (begotten of the Father) and human (born of the Virgin Mary) natures.*

**The Large Catechism (Concordia 406.5-6) on the True God:**

**These articles of the Creed, therefore, divide and separate us Christians from all other people on earth. Even if all people outside Christianity—whether heathen, Turks, Jews, or false Christians and hypocrites—believe in an worship one true God, they still do not know what His mind toward them is and cannot expect any love or blessing from Him. Therefore, they abide in eternal wrath damnation. For they do not have the Lord Christ, and, besides, are not illumined and favored by any gifts of the Holy Spirit [1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Hebrews 6:4-6].**

How does the Creed set Christians apart from all other people on earth?

*The Creed teaches us who God is and what He has done for us. Since the center of the Creed is the Son becoming man and dying for our sins and rising again, we know that God's heart toward us is merciful in Jesus. Jesus tells his disciples that "if you have seen me, you have seen the Father," (John 14:9) and the apostles preached that*

*"there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved than Jesus. (Acts 4:12). Rather than just One God who is unknowable (as the Muslims teach) or many gods or spirits (as many tribal or ancient religions teach) the Creed lays out what God's own word teaches us about Him.*

What do we say to people who say, "All religions worship the same God." or "Jews, Muslims and Christians all worship the True God?"

*Because both Jews and Muslims deny that Jesus Christ is true God, they cannot truly know God' heart toward them. While they may speak of the "Father" or the "God of Abraham" this is not accurate. The God of Abraham is the Triune God, of whom the Son became man to die for ours sins. To deny Christ is to deny the Father. You will find that many "Christians" trying to be sensitive, claim that these religions worship the same God. Muslims and many Jews certainly do not!*

Why can't non-Christians worship the True God?

*They cannot have true worship because they do not have Christ. They cannot worship God truly when they deny the Son who is true God and Man who is the One who takes away their sin.*

**From this you see that the Creed is a doctrine quite different from the Ten Commandments. For the Commandments teach what we ought to do. But the Creed tells what God does for us and gives to us. Furthermore, apart from this, the Ten Commandments are written in all people's hearts [Romans 2:15]. However, no human wisdom can understand the Creed. It must be taught by the Holy Spirit alone [1 Corinthians 2:12]. *The teaching of the Ten Commandments, therefore, makes no Christian.* For God's wrath and displeasure abide upon us still, because we cannot keep what God demands of us. But the Creed brings pure grace and makes us joyful and acceptable to God.**

How is the Creed different from the Ten Commandments?

*The Ten Commandments teach us what God wants US to do. The Creed teaches us what GOD has done and still does for us. Put another way, the Commandments are God's Law and the Creed teaches the Gospel, how the Lord saves us from sin and death, makes us holy and gives us eternal life. The Law we know more or less by heart. For example, we are born knowing that we shouldn't whack someone over the head and take their stuff. The Creed, on the other hand, must be learned from God's Word.*

Who is the subject of the commandments? Who is the subject of the Creed?

*WE are the subject of the commandments, that is, we are the ones who are to do them. GOD is the subject of the Creed, that is, He is the one who makes, preserves, redeems, and sanctifies (makes holy).*

How would you respond to someone who says, "Religion is all about how you live your life." or "Being a Christian means trying to keep the Ten Commandments?"

*The central teaching of the Christian faith is NOT how we live but how Christ has lived for us. The main message of the church is not how we can avoid sin but how Christ has taken away our sins. Every religion on earth is really just a variation on the theme that a person has to figure out how to save themselves. The Christian faith, on the other hand, is all about how the Lord saves us.*

**Genesis 1:1-3**

**1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. **3** Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

From the very beginning of the Scriptures, the work of the Triune God is evident. Can you spot the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity in these very first verses of the Bible? (For a