

# As Church, We Believe

**Objective:** The students will be able to explain that the Creed is a statement of our faith.

## **For the Catechist**

Most children in Grade 3 have learned to trust their parents to take care of their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. Some children might have other family members or guardians they trust as their caregivers.

This lesson builds on that feeling of trust. The children will discover that trust is also part of their spiritual life.

God wants us to trust our whole life to Him. We must learn to let go of our need to be in control and let God take charge of our life. Also, we must learn to trust God's promise to be with us always.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told the apostles: "I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28:20). But the early Church started to have problems understanding everything Jesus told them. The interpretation of Jesus as God and man led to many disagreements. There was no definitive statement identifying the truth for the followers of Jesus Christ. As a result the Council of Nicaea was called in 325 A.D. The members of the council wrote a statement of the faith called the Nicene Creed. The statement identifies our belief and trust in God based on Scripture and Tradition.

This statement of faith is said at all baptisms. Through Baptism we join with the every member of the Church (past and present) to profess our belief and trust in God. As members of the Church, we continue to state these beliefs every time we say the Creed during the Divine Liturgy and during our prayers.

## **Lesson Plan Overview**

**Opening:** The Creed

**Introduction:** Discussion of trust

**Need:** white cloths for blindfolds

**Read Text Aloud:** Have students volunteer to read the text. Use questions in the teacher manual to discuss the lesson with the students.

### **Activity Tracks:**

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity to reinforce the lesson (detailed on the pages that follow).

- *Basic:* I Believe
- *Group:* The Creed
- *Craft:* "I Believe" Refrigerator Magnet

**Closing:** The Creed

## **Icon Packets:**

*Come Bless the Lord:*  
Christ Pantocrator

## **Teaching Pics:**

Nativity of Christ (F3)

## ***Background Reading***

*(Direct quotations from the sources noted)*

### **The Nicene Creed**

"A good example of a creed used to defend the Christian faith is the Nicene Creed. With the rise of Arianism (a heresy which maintained that Christ was a perfect creature created by God the Father), the Church saw the need to devise a statement extracted from Scripture and Tradition as a pronouncement against the error. The Council of Nicaea was convened in 325 A.D. to discuss the heresy. The participants formulated a creed which stated in clear terms that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and that He is, 'consubstantial' with the Father. The Greek word, **homoousios** means *the same nature*. This creed was used as a touchstone to separate those who kept to the true faith from those who embraced the erroneous concept of Christ, a way to test the accuracy of the faith of individual members of the Church—or rather, to see who was indeed a true member of the Church as opposed to those who had slipped from the fold by embracing a lie" (*SLW 72*).

### **The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed**

"This Nicene Creed is not the one we know today. Rather, a further development of this creed (known as that of Nicaea-Constantinople) is the one most used and recognized today. But the Nicene Creed was the model for the other creeds which developed afterwards. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed was confirmed in 451 A.D. by participants in the Council of Chalcedon, who saw the roots of it in the further development of doctrinal synthesis at the earlier Council of Constantinople. Through the action of the Council of Chalcedon, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed supplanted the earlier statement of Nicaea and made it the one which we regularly use in our services.

"The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed adds to the simpler Nicene Creed further statements concerning the Holy Spirit: 'And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, and Who together with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.' Here the Holy Spirit is clearly recognized as being divine in nature by stating that the worship due the Father and the Son is similarly due the Spirit.

"The Council of Chalcedon reaffirmed the necessity of accepting the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and finalized its development by decreeing that no change should be made in it.

"The later addition of the words 'and from the Son' (Latin: *filioque*) in the Latin West would cause grave theological problems for the Eastern Churches, ultimately contributing to the Great Schism of 1054" (*SLW 72-73*).

# *The Lesson Plan*

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## **Opening**

*Today we are going to continue saying the Creed. Did you say this prayer during the Divine Liturgy this week? Let's begin with the sign of the cross. [Use the prayer page according to your jurisdiction.]*

## **Introduction**

*Today we are going to play a game that requires all of us to cooperate. We are going to help each other walk to his or her chair. Does that sound difficult? The problem will be the person you are helping will be wearing a blindfold. Let's have partners working together. Let's have everyone come to the front of the room. [Either have them choose friends, or you can match them. Give each group a cloth.] Help your partner wrap the cloth around his or her eyes. Make sure he or she cannot see. Now lead your partner to his or her seat. Don't bump into anything. Now let's do the same thing except this time we change roles. The first leader will now become the follower.*

*Now that everyone is at his or her seat, let's talk about what you thought when I told you to do this. Were you afraid you might bump something? Did anyone not like wearing a blindfold? Why not? Did we have to trust our friends? Why did you have to trust them? (We had to trust that they would not let us get hurt.) Did we have to believe they would help us? [Give the children time to share their feelings.] Did anyone ever play this game before? Do you ever have to trust someone like this even when you don't have on a blindfold? Whom do we have to trust? Each day we have to trust our family to be therefor us. Each week we believe that the priest will be at church for the Divine Liturgy. And people trust us. What do our parents believe we are doing at school? (Learning and being good) They trust us to do what we say we are doing.*

*We also trust God every day. We believe that God will take care of us as He promised.*

*Let's turn to our books to read the words we say to announce our trust in God.*

11  
As Church, We Believe



The people who followed Jesus liked to hear the stories He told them. Jesus wanted the people to hear how much God loves them. He also wanted them to hear how much they are to love God. Jesus' followers believed His words because they knew Jesus was leading them to God. They knew Jesus was telling the truth.

We listen to the truth every time we listen to the Word of God. The Bible tells us how we should live to keep close to God. We need to listen and believe the words that we hear. God wants us to believe and trust His words.



46 Good Book 1, a Grade 1 Good Book 1, a Grade 1

## Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

**God wants us to believe and trust His words.**

*Jesus' followers listened when He spoke. Why? (He spoke the truth; He was leading them to God.) We tell the truth to the people we love. Jesus loves us and tells us the truth.*

In the Bible we read stories about people who trusted Jesus. One of these stories is about a father and his daughter who was sick. Let's read the story.



**A** man named **Jairus**, who was chief of the synagogue, came up and fell at Jesus' feet, begging that he come to his home because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

Because many people were around Jesus, He could not leave at once. Jesus was speaking to some people when a man came from Jairus' house. He said, "Your daughter is dead; do not bother the teacher any longer."

On hearing this, Jesus answered him, "Do not be afraid; just have faith and she will be saved."

When they arrived at Jairus' house, all were weeping and mourning for her. Jesus said, "Do not weep any longer, for she is not dead, but sleeping."

He took her hand and said, "Child, arise!" Her breath returned and she immediately arose. He then directed that she should be given something to eat.

(Luke 8:40-55)

Jairus believed Jesus when He said, "Just have faith and she will be saved." Jairus' daughter was healed because he believed Jesus' words.

47

**...Jairus' daughter was healed because he believed Jesus' words.**

*What was wrong with Jairus' daughter? (She was dying.) What did Jesus say even after He heard the news that she died? (Trust) Did Jesus wake her? (Yes) How do you think everyone felt? (Surprised) What would you think if you were there?*

**... teachings of the Church.**

*When we say the Creed, we say we believe in whom? (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)*

**... starts with the words "I Believe."**

*What news do we believe in? (The Good News) What is the Good News? (Jesus saved us from eternal death and granted us eternal life.) Why is the Creed said at every Baptism? (We become members of the Church, and we say what we believe as members.)*

*We say the Creed during the Divine Liturgy to tell God we Church members believe in Him and His teachings. Do you say the words of the Creed during the Divine Liturgy? What is the Creed? (A statement of our belief)*

We, too, must learn to trust God and believe His Word. Our Church gives us a statement that lists our most important beliefs as members of the Church. This statement is called the Creed. Every time we say the Creed, we express our belief in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and we state we believe in the teachings of the Church.

The Creed is said at every Baptism. As members of the Church, we promise to follow God and to believe in His Word. Even babies who are baptized are called to follow God. Because they cannot say the words, their godparents say the Creed for them. The godparents promise that the baby will believe the Good News that Jesus saved us from eternal death and gave us eternal life.

We say the Creed at every Divine Liturgy. We join together to say or sing the words that tell God we believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We state we believe in the teachings of the Church. Our statement of our belief starts with the words "I Believe."



As Church, we believe.  
We state our belief and faith every time we say the Creed.

**Words to Remember:**  
**Believe:** To trust God in everything and to trust that what He tells us is the truth.  
**Creed:** The statement of what the Church believes.

48

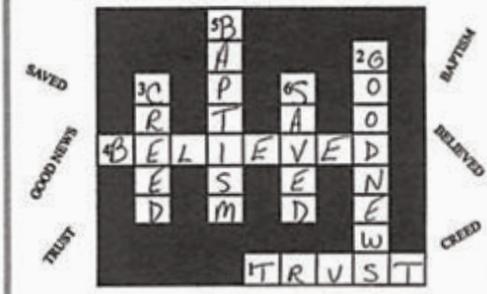
**Activity Tracks**

**Basic: I Believe**

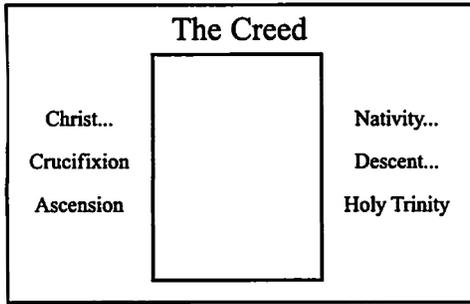
[This worksheet is in the student text.]

*The Creed is the statement of everything we believe as members of the Church. Use the words to complete the statements about our belief and complete the crossword puzzle.*

**I Believe**  
Use the words to complete the sentences and the crossword puzzle.



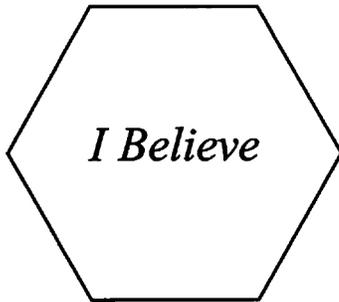
1. If we believe in God, we will TRUST Him.
2. We believe all that God tells us in His GOOD NEWS.
3. Every time we pray the CREED, we express our belief in God.
4. In the Gospel many were healed because they BELIEVED.
5. As Church, we accept BAPTISM.
6. All those who accept Baptism will be SAVED.



**Group:** The Creed

*Materials:* poster board and the following icons from the *Come Bless the Lord* icon packet: Christ Pantocrator, Nativity of Christ, the Crucifixion, the Descent into Hades, the Ascension, and the Holy Trinity

*Today we learned about The Creed. What is it? (A statement of our belief) When we look at our icons, we see events that recall these beliefs. Today I have some icons that show what we believe. We are going to make a picture that matches our icons with our statements of belief. After we match them to words of The Creed, let's write the name of the icon on the poster board. [Enlarge your jurisdiction's words on the prayer pages in the last lesson.] Let's glue The Creed in the center of our poster board. Now let's write the names of the icons. [If possible, take pictures of the icons or duplicate the ones in the icon packet and glue them onto the poster board.]*



**Craft:** "I Believe" Refrigerator Magnet

*Materials:* Construction paper, clear contact paper, magnet strips, "I Believe" worksheet, markers

*Today we are going to make a magnet for our refrigerator. Cut out and color the "I Believe" strip. Cover it with contact paper to make it sturdy, and paste a magnet strip on the back. Where can you put this to remind you that you are a member of the Church and you believe and trust God?*

**Closing:**

*Remember to say the Creed during the Divine Liturgy every time you are in church. Let's pray it now. We will begin with the sign of the cross. [Have the children use their prayer books.]*

