

Lesson 19 - The Church in Council

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson the student should know that:

- Know that the Ecumenical Councils were called to settle issues involving the Church throughout the Empire.
- Know that the first and second Ecumenical Councils produced the Nicene Creed.
- Recognize that the first four Ecumenical Councils established the order of the five principal Churches of the Empire (pentarchy).
- Understand that icons were approved at the seventh Ecumenical Council because Christ had become one of us, making God visible.

For the Catechist

From its beginning, the Church lived the experience of a relationship with God; only later did it reflect on this relationship and begin to formulate teachings and doctrines in a detailed way. In the process of this reflection many questions arose which were not easy to resolve. Disputes came about that threatened to wreck the unity among the Churches. As the faith was experienced in different cultures, new questions were asked. The bishops would meet in council to discuss these issues and to resolve their differences while remaining faithful to the apostolic Tradition. Sometimes they were successful; at others times they were not.

The first "creeds" were probably affirmations like *Jesus is Lord* (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:3; Philippians 2:11). They were confessions of faith in Jesus as truly the Messiah, sent from the Father. In the early councils these statements of faith in Christ were expanded and the relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit expressed in more detail. This resulted in more inclusive statements of faith that we call creeds. The creed that we are familiar with, the Nicene Creed, was worked out by the Councils of Nicaea I and Constantinople I on the basis of earlier baptismal creeds and adopted by all the Churches of East and West.

The creed is called a *symbol of faith*, that is, it is a sign or expression of our faith. A dogma or creed is not our faith, for faith is a living relationship. Nor does it exhaust the content of our faith, for the Object of our faith, God Himself, is ultimately beyond human expression. Rather the creed gives us a proper way of expressing and teaching our faith in certain categories of thought and gives us a common affirmation that we can proclaim with one mind.

Materials Needed:

Opening Prayer: Icon corner, student texts

Introduction: Bibles, easel or wall pad, markers,

Guided Reading: Bibles

Activity A: "Churches of the Pentarchy" Worksheet, scissors

Activity B: "Creed" Worksheet, pencils, Bibles

Activity C: "Keep the Faith" Worksheet

Activity D: Kingdom Tree Worksheet, craft items

Icons and Pictures:

Come Bless the Lord: Three Holy Hierarchs (#30)

1. Opening Prayer

Pray the hymn on page 95 in the student text. Remind the students that the Fathers were the great leaders of the Church whose theology influences our Church to this day.

2. Review

Review Review the main points of the previous lesson using the pages from your wall or easel pad. Use the time line on the Unit Page to recall that the age of the Fathers fulfilled Christ's words that the Holy Spirit would inspire the Church's teachings.

Ask the students to share what they remember about the experience of Constantine the Great at the Milvian Bridge and what he did for the Church. Discuss how the activities of Saint Basil the Great illustrate the life of the Church in this age.

3. Introduction

Introduce the subject of vocabulary: how they study new words, how they are tested for vocabulary in school, and the like. Point out that different languages have different kinds of vocabulary, depending on what's important to them:

- The Klamath Indians of Oregon have five words for the *wiccus* seed, once their staple food, but no word for education (English has at least seven or eight: learning, schooling, instruction, etc.).
- Slavs have almost a dozen words for *potato* (English has one). Why? (*It was their staple food.*)
- In the Middle East there are eight words for *cousin* (English has one). Being precise about relationships is more important to them than to us.

Differences of language and vocabulary between the Bible peoples and those of the Roman Empire brought about an important development in the story of our Church. Let's see how.

Background Reading (Tradition, Work of the Holy Spirit):

"The Church has had a long history since the time of Christ. Perhaps in the beginning an expectation arose in some Christian communities that Jesus would return soon and that the Church would have only a temporary existence. This expectation proved inaccurate. The fullness of revelation was given by our Lord Jesus Christ, but the form of human society has changed dramatically many times since. In all these changes the living Church has tried to proclaim His Gospel clearly in words that each generation could understand. Accurate preservation of the meaning of revelation requires of us a constant reflection and reformulation in order to insure that the truth is adequately transmitted.

"Acts 15 records how the apostles in Jerusalem adopted collegial action as a means of guiding the Church in a time of crisis. After the apostolic age, the bishops, like the apostles before them, exercised a collegial responsibility for all the Churches. While each bishop is ordained as a shepherd over the local Church entrusted to his care, he has additional concern for the whole Church in union with his brother bishops. As St. Cyprian noted, 'The episcopate is one, of which each bishop holds his part in its totality' (*On the Unity of the Catholic Church* 5).

(Continued)

**4. Guided Reading,
Pages 96 - 98**

19 The Church in Council

In ca 313 the victorious Emperor Constantine the Great had made it legal for Christians to gather and worship in the Roman Empire. As we have seen, they were now able to build churches freely, to hold governments in the courts and to do in a public way all the things they had been forced to do in secret during the days of persecution. Now they were even able to publicly disagree about how to express their faith.

A great area of disagreement at this time was about how Christ was one with God the Father. Was He the same as the Father? Was He like the Father? Was He created by the Father? The Greek and Latin languages were more precise and detailed about such philosophical ideas than the languages of the Middle East. Christ could tell His disciples in Galilee that "the Father and I are one" (John 10:30). Greek-speaking believers wanted to know how.

All kinds of people were attracted in these questions. A few years later Saint Gregory of Nyssa would write, "The whole city is full of it, the squares, the market places, the cross-roads, the alleyways; old-woman men, money changers, food sellers: they are all busy arguing. If you ask someone to give you change, the philosophers about the Deity and the Trinity. If you inquire about the price of a loaf, you are told by way of reply that the Father is greater and the Son inferior; if you ask "is my bath ready?" the attendant answers that the Son was made out of nothing." The Church had to find answers in the light of the Gospel.



96 God With Us Grade 6 Unit 5: God Works in The Church

Before the reading, **summarize the objectives of the lesson** on a wall pad or easel pad so that the page can be preserved and used for review next week.

Have the students silently **read the first three paragraphs** of the text, then ask

- What do you talk about when you meet your friends? (*Game scores, favorite songs, TV shows, etc.*)
- People in the fourth century discussed philosophy.
- What do you understand by "philosophy"? (*Reasoning*)

Read the section "**Constantine Calls a Council**" and

- Stress the meaning of "ecumenical" (*of the empire*). Note that today the word means all-embracing.
- Point out that our faith is not based on reasoning about God (philosophy), but on what God has revealed of Himself in the Bible and in the experience of the saints

Constantine Calls a Council

From the time of the Apostles the Church had decided important issues in Councils, or gatherings of Church leaders. When the first Christians disagreed about the most important issue of their day (how non-Jews should be admitted to the Church), the Apostles and presbyters met together to discuss it. Their council is described in Acts 15. They expressed their views and trusted that the Holy Spirit would guide them to make the proper decision.

In the years that followed, bishops in different areas would gather to discuss common problems.

But in ca 325 the Emperor Constantine decided to call a council of all the bishops in the Empire to settle some important issues. It would be called an "Ecumenical Council," from the Greek word for empire (*oecumene*). Over 300 bishops met in Nicaea at this first Ecumenical Council. What they decided was to become the norm for all believers in the Roman Empire.

The Seven Great Councils

In the centuries that followed this first Ecumenical Council, there would be other councils that shaped the direction of the Church in the Empire. In all there were seven Ecumenical Councils between the years 325 and 787, whose teachings express the basic faith and practice of one Church. These Councils take their names from the cities where they met.

1. Nicaea I (ca 325) - The first part of the Nicene Creed was composed here to express how the Son and the Father are one. This Council also began to organize the Church according to the important centers of the Empire.

2. Constantinople I (ca 381) - It completed the Creed, writing the part that begins, "And in the Holy Spirit..."

3. Ephesus (ca 431) - It decided that the Holy Virgin should be called Theotokos.

4. Chalcedon (ca 451) - It discussed how Christ could be both human and divine. It also completed the organization of the Church in the Empire.

5. Constantinople II (ca 529) - It continued discussion on Christ's humanity and divinity.



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Note that the Church looked to the Apostles to see how to handle controversial issues. **Divide the students into three groups** and have them read Acts 15:1-10, 11-20, and 21-30 respectively. Ask the following:

- What started the debate? (*Conversion of Gentiles, v. 1, 5*)
- Who met in this council (*The Apostles and presbyters, v. 6*)
- Where did the Apostles look for guidance? (*The Scriptures, v. 15-18*)
- How did the Apostles come to a decision? (*Unanimously, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, v. 25-28*)

Background Reading (continued):

This collegiality is shown most clearly in the rite of ordination for a bishop, who must be ordained by at least three other bishops. This is a sign that he is in communion with other Churches. The bishop, presiding over the local Church at the Eucharistic assembly, realizes the unity of his community with the whole Church through the working of the Holy Spirit.

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Mention that the Church uses the same principles in calling councils. The Church leaders (bishops) would meet, search the Scriptures, and pray for guidance.

Review the section on "**The Seven Great Councils**" of the fourth to eighth centuries.

- **Refer to the map on page 176** ("The Growth of Christianity") to find Nicaea, Ephesus and Chalcedon, all in the eastern part of the Empire.
- Have the students **identify four main results of these Councils** that still affect our Church. (*The Creed, Church organization, Theotokos, icons*)
- Point out that the way we hold our hand while making the sign of the cross reinforces the Councils' teaching on the Trinity (*three fingers together*) and Christ's divinity and humanity (*two fingers together*).

Constantinople, A New City Page 98

Note that another important thing Saint Constantine did was to build a new capital. Ask the students

- What was the first capital of the United States? (*York, Pennsylvania in 1777-78*).
- Is that the only city besides Washington that served as the nation's capital? (*No -Philadelphia, 1778-83; Princeton, NJ, 1783; Annapolis, MD, 1783-84; Trenton, NJ, 1784; New York City, 1785-1790, and Philadelphia again, 1790-1800 before the establishment of Washington, DC*).
- Note that Constantine moved his capital around as well. He too founded a new city to serve as his permanent capital: Constantinople, the "New Rome."



Have the students **read the section, "A New City."**

Point out that Constantinople was richer and grander than any other city in the western world until it was destroyed by the Turks in the fifteenth century. Ask the students why they think people refer to this city's legacy as "Byzantine" rather than "Constantinopolitan" (*because its earlier name was Byzantium, and Byzantine is easier to say!*)

Refer to the Fact Sheet on terminology at the end of this lesson for definitions of ecclesiastical and political terms connected with the Church in this period.

Encourage the students to do web searches on "Byzantine Empire" and "Constantinople" to learn more about this, the longest existing nation in the Western world.

Direct the students to find the cities of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem in the map on page 178. Note that Rome, Alexandria and Antioch were important centers in Europe, Africa and Asia respectively. Ask the following:

- What have we already learned about Rome? (*It was the original capital of the Empire; Emperor Nero had started persecuting Christians there; Saints Peter and Paul had died there, Saint Ignatius of Antioch had been brought there and was thrown to the lions*)
- What have we already learned about Alexandria? (*It had a large Jewish population; the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament was made there; its Church is associated with St Mark the Evangelist*)
- What have we learned about Antioch? (*Its Church is associated with Saints Peter and Paul; it was the first place where Jesus' followers were called "Christians; " Saint Ignatius was its second bishop.*)



Background Reading (continued):

"From the beginning, the episcopate met frequently in local councils to deal with problems and issues that affected more than just the local church. This formed a consciousness within the Church of belonging to the one Church, the one body of Christ without division (Eph 5:4-5). At the beginning of the fourth century, a very serious problem arose that affected the whole Church. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, taught that the Son was subordinate to the Father, thereby undermining the Church's faith in the Trinity. The full divinity of Christ is crucial for the life of a Christian. If Christ is not fully God, union with Christ is not union with God and we are not 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pt 1:4). In the year 325, a general council was called to consider and deal with this problem. Because it was composed of bishops from all the Churches of the Roman Empire, it was called an 'ecumenical' or 'universal' synod. In the city of Nicaea, 318 bishops met and adopted a creed as the Church's official statement of the faith in response to Arius. This creed or profession of faith defined that Christ was equal to the Father, 'Light of Light,' and 'true God of true God,' because He is "of one essence (in Greek, *homoousios*) with the Father." In using the word *homoousios* the Fathers, on the authority given to them by Christ, went beyond the terminology of Sacred Scripture to explain and proclaim for the Church the mystery of Christ. This creed (in the expanded form dating from the Council of Constantinople in 381) has since become the rule of faith for all historic Christian Churches.

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Stress that the First Ecumenical Council decided that the most important Churches in the Empire would be the Churches of these cities. The Second Ecumenical Council put the new city of Constantinople (the new capital) in second place and the Fourth Ecumenical Council added the rebuilt city of Jerusalem (site of Christ's death and resurrection) to this list, making a total of five principal Churches.

Help the students explore the meaning of the words *pentarchy* (five leaders - compare to pentagram or pentagon or Pentecost) and *patriarch* (head of the line or group - compare to hierarch, head of the priests). Note that the patriarchs of these five centers are still important Christian leaders today.

Summarize by having the students **brainstorm a list of all that we have received from these councils** as mentioned in the students' book (*The Creed, Church organization, Theotokos, the pentarchy, the office of patriarch, icons*).

Stress that our own Church is connected to this age through all these elements of Church life we still employ today.

5. Activity A (Churches of the Pentarchy")

Choose five students to play "Who Am I?" Give each one of the city descriptions on Worksheet A and let them read it over for a minute or two. Tell them to read about their city one sentence at a time. Tell the audience to raise their hand when they think they can identify the city.

Background Reading (continued):

"The Fathers at the first ecumenical Council did not create the idea of having creeds, nor did they create a profession of faith out of nothing. They considered their task to be the defense of the true faith founded on the continuity of the Church's faith and life. Hence, they turned to the worship of the Church. Formulas of belief were used in the celebration of Holy Baptism, which marks the adoption of persons as children of God and their entrance into the Church. The candidates were asked to make a profession of their faith in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Their belief about the Trinity was elaborated in formulas that developed in the various local Churches. Such creeds were taught to catechumens on Good Friday as a part of the preparation for their baptism on Holy Saturday. The Council of Nicaea apparently accepted the baptismal creed as recited in the Church of Jerusalem as the norm for the whole Church. Later Councils would refer back to this creed as the basic expression of the Church's faith. Thus at the Council of Chalcedon, the Nicene faith was read; and the bishops declared, 'This is the faith of all of us: we all so believe.' The Creed was also called the 'symbol of faith,' (i.e. a verbal token of what we believe) or even just 'the faith.' It was included in the order of the Byzantine Liturgy by Patriarch Timothy of Constantinople about 511.

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6. Activity B (The Creed and the Bible)

Explain that our Church's faith is rooted in the Scriptures, but (and the Bible) that the Bible does not list the elements of our faith in a systematic way. That is why the Church needed to formulate the Creed. Distribute Worksheet B and have the students look up the Scripture references and identify the article of the Creed to which they are connected.

7. Activity C (Keeping the Faith)

Divide the class into groups of at least three. Distribute Worksheet C and give the students time to read it. Discuss what they think about what Theodora did. Remind them that once her husband had died, she moved to restore icons to the churches. Give the students five minutes to prepare their skits, then have them perform them for the whole group.

8. Activity D (The Kingdom Tree)

Remind the students of Jesus' Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32) and the project of the Kingdom Tree. Have the students add a branch representing the Ecumenical Councils and the Churches of the Pentarchy.

Background Reading (continued):

"The core explanations of the Church's basic dogmatic teachings were formulated by the Ecumenical Councils of the first millennium. These councils gathered the bishops of most dioceses of the Eastern Roman Empire together with representatives from the Pope of Rome and other Western dioceses. The teachings of these councils would be accepted or rejected by various local Churches leading to the establishment of various 'communions' of these historic Churches.

"The Catholic and (Byzantine) Orthodox Churches together recognize seven such councils as ecumenical: 1) Nicaea I (325), which defined the divinity of the Son; 2) Constantinople I (381), which defined the divinity of the Holy Spirit; 3) Ephesus (431), which condemned Nestorianism and proclaimed that Christ, truly God, was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary, who may truly be called 'God-bearer' (in Greek, *Theotokos*); 4) Chalcedon (451), which accepted the 'Tome to Flavian' of St. Leo, Pope of Rome, and defined that Christ was truly God and truly man, one person in two natures; 5) Constantinople II (553), which further explained the definitions of Chalcedon by condemning the 'Three Chapters' of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret and the letter of Ibas to Maris; 6) Constantinople III (680-681), which again further explained Chalcedon by defining that Christ, as true God and true man, has two wills, one divine and one human; and 7) Nicaea II (787), which condemned iconoclasm, the opinion that icons of Christ and the saints could not be made.

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9. Time Line

Refer to the time line poster. Have the students brainstorm the names of people mentioned in this lesson (*The Seven Great Ecumenical Councils, SS John of Damascus, Irene, and Theodora*) and indicate the period in which each lived. Write in the names and dates under each appropriate heading to show how the Church developed its structure and teachings.

10. Summary

End the lesson by summarizing the lesson from the aims on page 274, from the elements in the student text on which you focused and/or from any other points raised in the lesson.

11. Closing Prayer

Conclude with the reading of the hymn on page 100 in the student text.

Background Reading (continued):

"The Oriental Orthodox Churches (Armenian, Coptic and Syrian) did not accept the fourth council and consequently any that followed. For this reason they are often called 'non-Chalcedonian.' The Assyrian Church did not accept Ephesus and so recognizes only the first two councils as ecumenical.

"The Byzantine Churches venerate the seven councils during the course of the liturgical year. The first Ecumenical Council, Nicaea I, is always commemorated on the Sunday after the feast of the Ascension. The first six Councils are remembered together on the Sunday that falls between July 13-19. The seventh Council is commemorated on the Sunday that falls between October 11-17. The seventh Council has particular importance for the true worship of the Church, for the veneration and use of icons and for its vision that Christ was both God and man and is the image of the Father for us" (*LLI* 78-82).

A Note on Terminology

I - Roman vs. Byzantine

In the East, the political entity ruled from Constantinople has always been referred to as the *Roman Empire*, Constantinople being the New Rome. Its subjects were referred to as *Romans (Roum)*, even after parts of the Empire were conquered by Arabs or Turks. This is the term used in the student's text.

The term *Byzantine Empire* was coined by Western scholars in the modern era to distinguish it from ancient Rome, but this term has never been used in the East. This term may be explained as "another name of the late Roman Empire."

The same usage affects Church terminology. The Byzantine Church historically called itself the Roman Church, its members being *Roman Orthodox (Roum Orthodox)*. With the rise of Eastern Catholics, they in turn were called *Roman Catholics (Roum Catoleek)*. The people known as Roman Catholics in the West were simply called *Latins (Lateen)* in the East.

The terms *Greek Orthodox* and *Greek Catholics* were coined in the West much as the term Byzantine Empire had been and for similar reasons. With the rise of immigration in the twentieth century, the terms *Eastern Orthodox* and *Byzantine Catholic* were adopted by these Churches to distinguish themselves from ethnic Greeks. The term Greek is still used in these Churches abroad.

II - Catholic vs. Orthodox

The early Church employed these terms to distinguish the Apostolic Churches from those espousing heretical opinions. The term *Catholic*, meaning "universal" in the sense of embracing the full Gospel, was used in the East (e.g. in the Nicene Creed) but was more common in the West. The term *Orthodox*, meaning "right believing" or "right worshiping," was more common in the East. After the division of the Greek and Latin Churches, the West used the terms to distinguish between these Churches. The East continued to use both terms (as in the "Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church").

III -Arabic Terminology

In the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, those who accepted the Council of Chalcedon and those who did not all referred to themselves as "Orthodox Christians" and gave their antagonists demeaning nicknames. Those who accepted Chalcedon (Greeks, Latins, Maronites, etc) were called *Melkites*, meaning "followers of the king" (the Roman Emperor). Those who rejected Chalcedon were called *Jacobites*, from Bishop Jacob Baradaï who provided them with many of their bishops. Both referred to members of the Church of the East as *Nestorians* (from the Greek heretic Nestorius whose followers had taken refuge among them). When the area was captured by Arab Muslims, the conquerors considered each of these groups a subject nation, since they could not be citizens of an Islamic state. A similar policy was implemented during Turkish rule.

With the division of the patriarchate of Antioch into Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic branches, the term "Melkite" came to be reserved for the Greek Catholics. The terms "Jacobite" and "Nestorian" are no longer common; these groups' own preferred terminology (*Oriental Orthodox* and *Church of the East*) is generally respected.

Churches of the Pentarchy

In the Church I held a unique position from the humble days of my beginning until the glorious days of my era of splendor. ... The Apostle Peter came here to preach the Gospel and this gave me a special place of honor among the Churches. ... The other Churches often looked to me as the one who would settle the differences and disputes that occurred among them. ... I had the reputation of a pure faith that would enable me to be a good judge for the disputes of others. ... I have been sanctified by the blood of many martyrs, especially of St. Peter and St. Paul who are buried here. ... Many other people like St. Ignatius of Antioch were martyred here. ... I was the capital city of the Roman Empire until its move to Constantinople. ... Even after this move, I still was seen as a special place in the Empire. ... It was from me that missionaries set out to spread the Gospel to the countries of western Europe. Who am I?



I am an important seaport of Egypt, located on the left bank of the Nile River and founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BC. ... Tradition says that Christianity was brought here by Saint Mark the Evangelist. ... I am the home of one of the greatest schools of Christianity of my times, the School for Catechumens (those preparing for baptism). ... I am also known as the cradle of monasticism. ... It was in the desert areas around me that the monks began to live this life-style. ... I gave to the Church people like Saint Clement, the head of this famous school for catechumens. He was a pioneer of Christian scholarship and made this Christian school equal to or better than the secular places of learning. ... St. Cyril likewise claims me as home; he defended the title of Mary as truly *Theotokos (The Mother of God)*. ... The Great Martyr St Catherine and the Father of the Church, St Athanasius the Great, who powerfully defended the Church against heresy at the first Ecumenical Council held at Nicea, also came from me. Who am I?



Christianity was brought here by some of the Disciples who fled Jerusalem during the persecutions that followed the stoning of St. Stephen. ... Christianity grew rapidly here and great numbers of converts were made. ... It was here that the Disciples were also called Christians for the first time. ... St Peter preached and headed the Church here. ... Sts Paul and Barnabas also preached here for a while.... I was the starting point for many of Paul's missionary journeys.... After the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, I became the most important Christian city in the world. ... St. Ignatius was Bishop here. His heroic witness as he was being led to Rome to be martyred, and the letters that he wrote to the Churches during that time have been a great influence on the whole Church throughout the ages. ... St. John Chrysostom also came from here, and later went to the Church at Constantinople to serve there as Bishop. ... I was also the home of another great school like that at Alexandria, a center for learning in the early days of the Church. ... Who am I?

I am a city well positioned to unite Europe and the Middle East.... Even though I was so ideally located, I remained an unimportant place until Constantine moved the capital of the Empire here. ...I grew into a great city, and my Bishop was ranked second only to the Bishop of Rome.... At one time there were over 463 churches within my boundaries.... I am the site of the great Church of the Holy Wisdom, which was the splendor of the East and the model for Byzantine churches ever since. ... Much of the early development of the Liturgy also happened here, and thus the worship of the Church has many roots in me. ...In the year 612 there were 80 priests, 150 deacons, 40 deaconesses, 70 subdeacons, 160 readers, 25 cantors, and 75 doorkeepers on the staff of my greatest Church. ...Many Church Councils were held here, and I was the home of great Bishops like St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory of Nazianzus. ... St. Romanos, the writer of many hymns and the greatest liturgical poet of the Eastern Churches, and also St. Maximos the Confessor claim me as their home. ... It was from me that missionaries went forth to spread the Gospel to the Slavic countries and other nations. Who am I?



I am the site of many events in the life of Christ: the place of His passion, death, resurrection and ascension, the center of the religious life in New Testament times. ...This is why I am called "the Dwelling Place of God." ... I am the place where the Disciples gathered after the ascension of the Lord and where they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. ... It was from me that the Disciples were sent out to preach the Good News throughout the world. This is why I am called "The Mother of All the Churches." ... I am also the place where the Apostles first met to settle questions that arose in the early Church.... The Roman armies brought about my downfall in the year 70 AD, and the life of the Church was then dispersed throughout other centers of the world. ... Although there are not a great number of Christians living here today, I still occupy a special place in the Church because of the historical events that happened here.

Where Does the Creed Come From?

The Fathers of the Church did not "invent" the Creed. They drew its teachings from the Scriptures. Look up and read the passages listed on the left and connect them to the articles of the Creed listed on the right. See where the Creed comes from.

Colossians 1:15	I believe in one God, Father almighty,
Colossians 1: 16-17	Creator of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.
John 1:1-5	And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages:
1 Peter 4:5	Light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made;
Mark 15:21-41	who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man;
Matthew 27:57-61	who was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried; who rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,
Ephesians 4:3-5	and ascended into heaven, and is enthroned at the right hand of the Father; who will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; and of whose kingdom there shall be no end.
Ephesians 4:6	And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who together with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets.
Romans 6:22-23	In one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
John 1:2-4	I profess one baptism for the remission of sins.
John 1:14	I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.
John 1:18	

Keeping the Faith

During times of persecution, some people deny their faith. Others practice it publicly and suffer as martyrs. Still others practice their faith in secret, like Saint Theodora. Her husband was an iconoclast, but Theodora kept icons secretly hidden in a trunk. She would call her children to her room and bless them secretly with the holy icons.

In the palace there lived a dwarf, Denderis, who used to go wherever he wanted. One day he sneaked into the empress' quarters while she was venerating the icons. When Denderis asked what she was doing, Theodora answered, "I'm kissing my children."

Denderis ran to tell the emperor what he had seen. "I saw her kissing some paintings, just like this," he said. The emperor called his wife and asked her what she had been doing. "Oh, that fool!" she answered. "I was combing my hair and leaned closer to look at myself in the mirror. I wanted to tease him, so I told him I was kissing my idol."

If Christians were persecuted today, would you continue to practice your faith?

Prepare a skit about someone practicing their faith in secret today. Include in the skit:

- A person practicing their faith (e.g. reading the Bible, praying, helping the sick).
- A person reporting them to the authorities.
- How the believer might answer the authorities.



The Kingdom Tree

Add a branch marked The Church in Council, representing the seven Ecumenical Councils mentioned in this lesson.

