

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Abiding Savior Free Lutheran Church Confirmation**

### ***Introduction to The Apostle's Creeds***

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to:

- Describe what a Creed is
- Explain why Creeds are important
- Identify the difference between knowing and believing
- Begin to memorize Apostles' Creed (you will need to write it out word for word on the Celebration of Knowledge)

### **THE APOSTLE'S CREED**

The Apostle Paul wrote the church in Corinth, “*Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*” – 1 Corinthians 15:1-2

The Gospel is the core belief of Christianity. It is where we receive the hope and the assurance of our salvation. Today we are going to be studying the the Apostle's Creed and what we will find is that it is an accurate summary of the Gospel. You have likely said it very often in church, and now we will take several lessons and dig deeper into what these words mean to us and how they describe our faith and our salvation.

### **THE APOSTLES' CREED**

*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, dead, and 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 there 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.*

The word “creed” comes from the Latin credo, which means “I believe.” A creed is a statement of what a person (or a church body) believes; it is a confession of faith.

Creeds are not authoritative on their own, or just because someone says so. The reason we use creeds is that they are accurate summaries of what the Bible teaches. In other words, we believe what a creed says because and only because it is saying what the Bible says, not the other way around. We do not fit our perception of scripture into a man-made saying, rather believers have constructed these statements to help

us remember what the Bible says. Our authority is Scripture, first and alone, but we affirm that these statements are accurate reflections of Scriptural teaching.

The Apostles' Creed, one of the best-known creeds of Christendom, is accepted by all Christians. Although named after the Apostles, it was not written by them, but it was named such because it expressed what the Apostles believed and taught. As it stands today, it first appeared as part of a book from around 750AD. We have a copy of a creed from about 400AD that is pretty close, and we have an almost identical creed to the modern-day version from the early 500's AD. Early Christians were not popular, and claiming this creed as your own could cost you your life. This creed was precious to early Christians and they believed so strongly in it that they were willing to stake their lives upon its words. One of the creed's main purposes was to refute (argue against) the many false teachings that were being presented as true. The creed became an essential summary of what all Christians believed.

The Apostles' Creed consists of three “articles”, or three short statements of truth. These statements tell what Christians believe about God as He has revealed Himself to us as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- I. The First Article is that of **Creation**, which reveals God as the Creator and Provider.
- II. The Second Article is that of **Redemption**, which tells of God's work in His Son, Jesus.
- III. The Third Article is that of **Sanctification**, which speaks to how God reveals Himself as the Holy Spirit.

1. What is a creed?
2. Where did we get the Apostles' Creed?

## CREEDS ARE IMPORTANT

Creeds are often born out of intense arguments over doctrine. False teachers appear in the church and lead people astray, so the Church gets together and crafts a declaration or clarification of the teaching of scripture. In this way, creeds help us spot errors that have already been dealt with. If we know the creed, we know when someone says something that isn't right.

Additionally, Creeds help us understand Scripture, because they are written from scripture. Some people have this idea that they, by themselves, with their Bible can figure everything out. First, this has simply not been the case most of the time. Notice how many different denominations there are? Part of that is because people tried to figure things out by themselves without recognizing that God has been working through his Church for centuries. So creeds help us come to a right understanding of Scripture, because

we have the wisdom and guidance of hundreds and thousands of Christians over hundreds and thousands of years guiding us.

3. Why are creeds important?

4. Why do we use creeds?

5. What is one good reason to say the Apostles' Creed corporately (aka: together as a church)?

### **KNOWING VS. BELIEVING**

Since Creed means belief, we should take a brief moment to talk about the difference between knowing something and believing something. You can know all about Christianity. You can memorize the creeds, the catechism, the Bible, and you can know everything. But that doesn't mean you believe anything. Peter wrote that even the demons "believe" in God, that is they know he is real and they know all about him. But this knowledge does not save them. Nope, they tremble at the knowledge because they know they will not be saved.

So what does belief mean? It is something beyond knowing and, at the most basic level, is in the realm of trust and faith. Do you simply *know* that Christ died for you because you are a sinner, or do you *believe* or trust him alone to rescue you? Have you ever done a trust fall? It's like that. It's one thing to say "I know you can catch me." It's another thing to free fall backwards into their arms. Confessing the Apostles' Creed is an opportunity to express our faith in who God is and what He has done for us, it is an opportunity to remind ourselves of who HE is and what HE has done for us, and it is an opportunity to remind ourselves of that God's work through Christ is the central message of Scripture.

6. In your own words, what is the difference between "knowing" and "believing"?

7. What must we be on guard against happening in our hearts and minds when we confess the Creed?

**STUDENT & PARENT QUESTION** for the student and a parent to discuss and answer together

1. Read the Apostles' Creed together. Name at least one of the words or phrases in the Creed that you aren't quite sure what it means, and that you are excited to learn about as we study the Apostles' Creed this semester?
2. Why is it important to confess the Apostle's Creed?

**STUDENT & PARENT SIGNATURE:**

*By signing below, we affirm (1) this lesson is complete and that (2) we completed the “Student & Parent Questions” section together.*

*Parent Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Student Signature:*