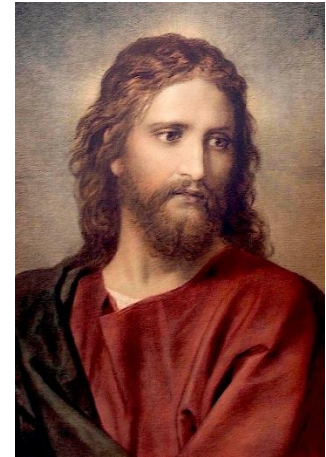


FIFTH GRADE: *Apostles' Creed*

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; 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 thence He shall 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.

Praying and focusing on this one prayer throughout the entire year will allow the students to develop a deeper friendship with Jesus and come to realize more and more how much He loves them. The following resources are meant to foster this process. Please consider implementing one simple aspect with praying the Apostles' Creed each session.



God's love for you

The prayer of the *Apostles' Creed* helps us to realize how much God loves us by giving us a summary of everything He has done for each one of us.

- God the Father created us for a friendship with Himself. He knows each of us by name.
- Our friendship is broken through sin
- Jesus restores our friendship by giving His life for us through His Death and Resurrection
- We respond to Christ by speaking with Him in prayer each day and inviting Him to be at the center of our lives
- We can trust Jesus. He only wants what is best for us. We want to follow Him.

What are the goals of praying the *Apostles' Creed* each day?

- 1) Learn the foundational truths of our Faith so as to develop / deepen a friendship with the Person of Jesus.
- 2) Grow in awareness of all that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have done for us.
- 3) Become more aware of how much Jesus loves us.
- 4) With these Truths in our hearts and coming to know Jesus better personally, we will become more disposed to trust Jesus in everyday life.

Meaning of the Words

- **Article 1:** I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth (explained in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 199-421)
We affirm our faith in God the Father, Creator of Heaven and earth. He is the first Person of the Blessed Trinity. God is One in three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit:
- **Article 2:** And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord (paragraphs 422-455) (see below)
- **Article 3:** He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the Virgin Mary (paragraphs 456-570)

- **Article 4:** Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried (paragraphs 571-630)
 - **Article 5:** He descended into Hell on the third day He rose again (paragraphs 631-658)
 - **Article 6:** He ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father (paragraphs 659-667)
 - **Article 7:** From thence He will come again to judge the living and the dead (668-682)
- Jesus is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Jesus is our Savior who suffered, died on the Cross and rose from the dead to defeat Satan, sin and death for our sake. He ascended into Heaven and sent the promised Holy Spirit. Most of the *Apostles' Creed* is a summary of Christ's life because in the first few centuries some people sought to refute Christ's divinity (He is a Divine Person) or humanity (He took on a human nature).

Article 6 highlights our Lord's role as the bridge between God and Man. In Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to each person as a gift of God's grace and mercy. Through Jesus we can call God our Father.

In article 7, note that Christ will return and will judge all of us, living and dead, in the Last Judgment (Matt. 25:32-33), separating those who have chosen to follow Christ and keep returning to Him when they sin, asking for His forgiveness and cooperating with His grace to do better; and those who have rejected Christ and who will not return to seek forgiveness.

The former will have eternal Life and joy in Heaven (touching on Article 12 here) and the latter will be in eternal misery in Hell.

We need not fear this judgment. We must prepare for it by living lives of faith in God, receiving His love and seeking to love Him with all of our hearts and being obedient to God. Having a strong prayer life can be a great help in this regard!

- **Article 8:** I believe in the Holy Spirit (paragraphs 683 – 747)
- The Person of the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person. He is pure Spirit and so He does not have a body. There are Biblical signs so that we know He is present, such as wind, flames of fire, a dove. The Holy Spirit *prepares* us to receive His grace in the Sacraments so that we are united with Christ. He *manifests* Christ to us, helping us to understand all that He has done for us through His Death and Resurrection, and guiding us to come to know Jesus and to receive His love. The Holy Spirit *makes present* Christ's Death and Resurrection in the Sacraments, most especially in the Holy Eucharist in order to forgive our sins and bring us back into communion with God, that we will bear much fruit in the world. (See CCC 737) The Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray and gives us a desire to pray. We need to ask Him for His help. The Holy Spirit strengthens us to live a good Christian life, by loving others as God loves us.
- **Article 9:** I believe in the Holy Catholic Church (paragraphs 748 - 975)
- Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to strengthen the Apostles on Pentecost to go forth and teach, preach and baptize – building up the Church throughout the world. The Holy Spirit continues to guide and instruct the Catholic Church, from which comes the Communion of

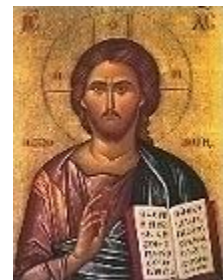


Saints (Articles 9). This includes those of us in the Church living on earth, those in purgatory, and all those in Heaven.

- **Article 10:** I believe in the forgiveness of sins (paragraphs 976 - 987)
Likewise, when God forgives us of our sins (Article 10) in the Church's Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation/Confession we may better merit the “resurrection of the body” (Article 11) in which we will be raised up to Heaven, with our glorified bodies united with our souls, at the Last Judgment.
- **Article 11:** I believe in the resurrection of the body (paragraphs 988 - 1019)
- **Article 12:** I believe in life everlasting (paragraphs 1020 - 1065)
Let us all pray to live our lives, with God's help and grace, in such a manner that at our death, He might summon us so that with His saints we may praise Him forever in the never-ending peace and joy of life everlasting in Heaven (article 12)! This wonderful hope for an Eternity of Love with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit makes a fitting end to the Apostles' Creed.
- The Creed's final "Amen" repeats and confirms its first words: "I believe." To believe is to say "Amen" to God's words, promises and commandments; to entrust oneself completely to Him who is the "Amen" of infinite love and perfect faithfulness. Rejoice in your faith each day and believe everything you say you believe. (CCC 1064)

Learning the Principles

- Prayer is a vital necessity. Prayer and Christian life are inseparable. (CCC 2744-2745)
In other words, if we know the Person of Christ through prayer, we will be faithful to Him by the way that we live.
- The word *creed* means what we believe. The most important truths that we believe are summarized in a prayer called the *Apostles' Creed*. They are called truths of faith because we must believe them, with full faith, as taught by God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.
- The *Apostles' Creed* is a profession of faith in the chief mysteries revealed by God through Jesus Christ and His Apostles, and taught by the Church.
- A mystery is a truth entirely above our reason, but not contrary to reason, which we believe because God has revealed it. We can understand a mystery, but not fully understand it, because we are not God.
- The chief mysteries professed in the Creed are two: the Unity and Trinity of God; and the Incarnation (God becoming man), Passion, and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
- There are three main parts to the *Apostles' Creed*:
I believe in God the Father
I believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God
I believe in the Holy Spirit
- The Apostles' Creed is considered to be a faithful summary of the faith of the Apostles. (*Catechism Glossary*, p. 867)



Activities for Learning the Words of the *Apostles' Creed*

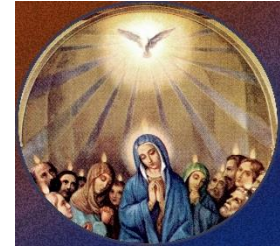
- Pray the Apostles' Creed at every session and at every appropriate opportunity
- Echo prayer— have students repeat each phrase after you



- Teach the students how to pray with their heart; not just rattling words. “Prayer is internalized to the extent that we become aware of Him ‘to whom we speak.’ In the case of the *Apostles’ Creed*, we are professing belief in the Persons of God the Father, Jesus, the Son of God and the Holy Spirit. (*Catechism* paragraphs 2700, 2704)
- Explain one phrase at a time for better understanding; then memorize the phrase.
- Have the students write out the prayer of the *Apostles’ Creed*
- Make flash cards with a phrase of the prayer on each card
- Encourage parents to pray with their children at home, praying the *Apostles’ Creed* at bedtime, helping their child to memorize the prayer.
- Make a puzzle using the words of the *Apostles’ Creed*
- Have the prayer printed out on poster board. Cut out in sections and have the students match the strips into the right order to make the prayer.
- Fill in the blanks of key words of the *Apostles’ Creed* prayer
- Make a booklet of the *Apostles’ Creed* prayer, one page for each phrase and allow students to draw a picture of each article of the Creed.
- While studying an Article of the Creed, look up the Scripture verse(s) as provided on page 5 and further footnoted in each paragraph of the *Catechism*. See page 2.
- Teach the *Apostles’ Creed* with a Sacred Art picture to portray each phrase. Google the picture that you want and then click on Images.
- Give students a “prayer commitment” as found on the website that they can hang on their doorknob – helping them to develop a habit of daily prayer. Place a page containing the *Apostles’ Creed* in a plastic sleeve and put yarn through the top hole (so it won’t be misplaced). Prayer commitments at the beginning of the academic year, and during Advent and Lent are especially welcomed. A gift, such as a medal and chain or a small statue could be given for incentive to be faithful each day during a period such as Advent. This incentive helps children to develop a daily habit of prayer.
- After praying the *Apostles’ Creed*, allow time for silence so that students may journal regarding their thoughts, feelings, desires, problems, intentions etc.
- Take the students to Church to pray the *Apostles’ Creed* and then allow time for silence so that they can speak with Jesus and listen to Him, becoming more and more aware of His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament reposed in the Tabernacle.
- “Whoever says ‘I believe’ says ‘I pledge myself to what we believe.’ Communion in faith needs a common language of faith, normative for all and uniting all in the same confession of faith. From the beginning, the Apostolic Church expressed and handed on Her faith in brief formulae for all. This synthesis of faith was not made to accord with human opinions, but rather what was of the greatest importance was gathered from all the Scriptures, to present the one teaching of the faith in its entirety. 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 called ‘symbols of faith.’
The first ‘profession of faith’ is made during Baptism. The symbol of faith is first and foremost the *baptismal* creed. Since Baptism is given ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,’ the truths of faith professed during Baptism are articulated in terms of their reference to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.



And so the Creed is divided into three parts: ‘the first part speaks of the first Divine Person and the wonderful work of creation; the next speaks of the second Divine Person and the mystery of His redemption of men; the final part speaks of the third Divine Person, the origin and source of our sanctification (to purify and make holy).’” (CCC 185-187, 189-190)



Spiritual Comprehension – Do they understand?

- Ask questions to ensure that students understand the meaning of the words.
- **This one prayer is the prayer the students should know by heart and with good understanding before they advance to the next grade level. Therefore it should be prayed at every opportunity.** Please continue to teach the other prayers as listed in the Diocesan Religion Curriculum for Fifth Grade that are to be introduced at this age level. See website / Catechesis.

Encountering God Our Heavenly Father, Jesus the Son of God and the Holy Spirit in Prayer

- Pray the *Apostles’ Creed* aloud and have students listen, with their eyes closed. Have them take notice of a word or phrase that stood out for them and why the word or phrase stood out for them. Allowing student’s quiet time to reflect on the phrases of the *Apostles’ Creed*, after they have received explanation of each phrase, takes it to the next level of a deep personal encounter. As a further progression, provide silence so that students may have a “heart-to-heart” conversation with God Our Heavenly Father, Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

Scriptural Foundation

- I believe in God, the Father almighty, (*Matthew 5 :45; Isaiah 44:6; Isaiah 45:5*)
 Creator of heaven and earth, (*Gen 1:1; John 1:3; Acts 14:15; Rom 1:20*)
 And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, (*Lk 2:11; Mt 3:17; John 3:16; Jn 20:28; Phil 2:12*)
 Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, (*Lk 1:35*)
 born of the Virgin Mary, (*Lk 2:7*)
 suffered under Pontius Pilate, (*John 19:16; Luke 23:24*)
 was crucified, died, and was buried. (*John 19:20 – 42; Acts 4:10; 1Corinthians 15:3-4*)
 He descended into hell; (*1 Pet 3:19 – 20*)
 on the third day He rose again from the dead, (*Mt 28:1-10; John 20:11-18; 1Cor.15:4*)
 He ascended in Heaven, (*Lk 24:51; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:11*)
 and sits at the right hand of God, (*Mark 16:19; Hebrews 1:3*) the Father almighty; (*Mk 14:36*)
 from thence He shall come again (*Mt 16: 27; Acts 10:39;*)
 to judge the living and the dead. (*John 5:22; 1 Corinthians 15: 51; 2Timothy 4:1*)
 I believe in the Holy Spirit, (*Jn 14:15 – 20; John 15:26; John 16:7-8; John 16:13; Acts 1:7 – 8*)
 the Holy Catholic Church, (*Mt 16:18 – 19; Ephesians 5:26-27; Col 1:24*)
 the communion of Saints, (*Mt 28:19 – 20; 2 Corinthians 11:13; 1 Corinthians 15: 33*)
 the forgiveness of sins, (*John 20:22 – 23; Luke 7:48*)
 the resurrection of the body, (*1Cor 15:51 – 54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 18*)
 and life everlasting. (*John 10:28; John 17:2; 1 John 5:20*)