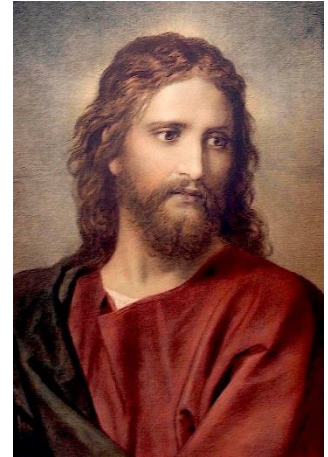


FIFTH GRADE: *Apostles' Creed*

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.

God's love for us

Praying and focusing on this one prayer throughout the entire year will allow the children 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 incorporating one simple aspect with praying the *Apostles' Creed* each week.



Why do we want to pray the Apostles' Creed every day?

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.

Why pray the Apostles' Creed each day?

- 1) We will learn the foundational truths of our Faith so as to develop and deepen our friendship with the Person of Jesus.
- 2) We will grow in awareness of all that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have done for us.
- 3) We will 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

- **I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth** We affirm our faith in God the Father, Creator of Heaven and earth because He has told us who He is. He is the first Person of the Blessed Trinity. There is only one God. In God there are three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God the Father is almighty because He can do all things. He made all things from nothing. God is eternal: He always was and always will be, and always remains the same. God is all-knowing: He knows all things, past, present and future, even our most secret thoughts, words, actions. God is all-present: He is everywhere. God sees us and watches over us with loving care. God

made us to show forth His goodness and love and to share with us His everlasting happiness in Heaven. (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 199-421)

- **And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord** Jesus is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. He is God and is the Savior of all of us. After Adam and Eve committed the first sin, God promised to send a Savior into the world to free us from sins so that we could be reunited with Him; and to reopen to us the gates of Heaven. (CCC 422-455)
- **He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the Virgin Mary** This article teaches us that Jesus is God and He became man for us. Mary was betrothed to Joseph which was a Jewish marriage. In the Jewish tradition of betrothal, husband and wife did not live together for one year. God chose to send the Savior through the free cooperation of a human person. He prepared Mary with special gifts for this role. The Angel Gabriel was sent to Mary and greeted her with the words, “Hail, full of grace.” The Angel used these words of greeting to reveal that Mary was the woman of God’s promise of Genesis 3:15. God enriched Mary with the unique gift of being conceived “full of grace” so that with her free cooperation with God’s grace, she could be the sinless Mother of the Savior. This is the Immaculate Conception. The essence of the angel’s message to Mary was that she will conceive in her womb through the power of the Holy Spirit. She will “bear a son, and He is to be named Jesus...The child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” Mary gave her *fiat*, meaning “let it be done” - her yes to the Angel Gabriel to be the Mother of the Savior. This event is called the Incarnation which is God taking on human flesh. Only Jesus, because He is God, could reunite us with God in a relationship of love. (CCC 456-457) Jesus was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Christmas Day in Bethlehem in a stable, and was laid in a manger as there was no room in the inn.
- **Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried** Jesus suffered and died for our sins. Jesus redeemed us by offering His sufferings and death to God in satisfaction for the sins of every person. From these horrible sufferings and death of Christ on the Cross, we learn God’s love for us and the evil of sin. (CCC 571-630) Jesus defeated Satan, sin and death for our sake.
- **He descended into Hell on the third day He rose again** Jesus rose from the dead, glorious and immortal, on Easter Sunday, the third day after His death. Christ’s descent into Hell means that after He died, His soul visited the souls of the just who had died up to that time, awaiting the actual opening of the gates of Heaven by the Risen Christ. His death on the Cross had indeed redeemed the world, including the invisible world of the dead. Except for Jesus’ death on the Cross, no one living before or after Jesus would be able to enter Heaven. (CCC 631-658) We are now offered Heaven through the mercy and love of God.
- **He ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father** This 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 Christ ascended, body and soul, into Heaven, forty days after His Resurrection. Christ sits at the right hand of God because, as God, He is equal to the Father, and as man He has the highest place in Heaven, next to the Father. (CCC 659-667)

- **From thence He will come again to judge the living and the dead**

On the last day Our Lord 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, those who keep returning to Him when they sin, asking for His forgiveness and cooperating with His grace to do better. They will be separated from those who have rejected Christ and who will not return to seek forgiveness. The former will have Eternal Life and joy in Heaven and the latter will be in eternal misery in Hell. (CCC 668-682)

We need not fear this judgment. We must prepare for it by deepening our friendship with Jesus through daily prayer, 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!



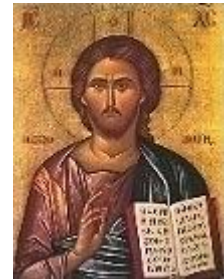
- **I believe in the Holy Spirit** The Father and Son sent the Person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person. He is pure Spirit and so He does not have a body. There are Biblical signs so that we know He is present, such as wind, flames of fire, a dove. The Holy Spirit *prepares* us to 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. (CCC 683 – 747)
- **I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints** Jesus Christ founded the Church to bring all of us to eternal salvation because He loves us. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to strengthen the Apostles – the first bishops of the Church – on Pentecost to go forth and teach, sanctify, serve and baptize, as well as celebrate the other six Sacraments, building up the Church throughout the world. The Holy Spirit continues to guide and instruct the Catholic Church. The Communion of Saints includes those of us in the Church living on earth, those in purgatory, and all those in Heaven. (paragraphs 748 - 975)
- **I believe in the forgiveness of sins** God has given to the Church, through Jesus Christ, the power to forgive sins. Likewise, when God forgives us of our sins in the Church's Sacrament of Penance, also referred to as Reconciliation and Confession, we may better merit the “resurrection of the body” in which we will be raised up to Heaven, with our glorified bodies united with our souls, at the Last Judgment. (CCC 976 - 987)
- **I believe in the resurrection of the body** At the end of the world our bodies will rise from the earth and be united again to their souls, nevermore to be separated. By the special favor of her Assumption, the glorified body of the Blessed Virgin Mary was taken into Heaven, because she was sinless. (CCC 988 - 1019)
- **I believe in life everlasting** 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! This wonderful hope

for an eternity of love with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit makes a fitting end to the Apostles' Creed. (CCC 1020 - 1065)

- **"Amen"** The Creed's final word 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

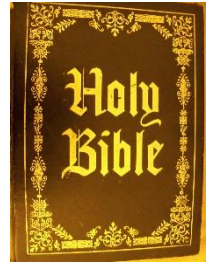
- Prayer is a vital necessity. Prayer and Christian life are inseparable. In other words, if we know the Person of Christ through prayer, we will be faithful to Him by the way that we live. (CCC 2744-2745)
- The word *creed* means what we believe. The most important truths that we believe are summarized in the prayer, 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 beyond 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, and the Passion and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
- There are three main parts to the *Apostles' Creed*:
 1. I believe in God the Father
 2. I believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God
 3. 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)
- 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, that He is a Divine Person; and His humanity, that He took on a human nature.



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

- Pray the *Apostles' Creed* every day and at every session.
- Echo prayer– have children repeat each phrase after you.
- Teach the young people 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* 2700, 2704)
- Explain one phrase at a time for better understanding; then memorize the phrase.
- Have the children write out the prayer of the *Apostles' Creed*.
- Make flash cards with a phrase of the prayer on each card.
- Reading Bible stories about God creating Heaven and earth (Genesis 1) the

announcement to Mary by the Angel Gabriel that she would conceive the Son of God (Luke 1:28-35, 38) the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:6-12) the Death of Jesus (John 19:25-30) the Resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 28:1-8) the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven (Act 1:8-11) the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-6, 38-41) will help the *Apostles' Creed* “come alive” for your child.



- 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 young people 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 children 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 children may journal regarding their thoughts, feelings, desires, problems, intentions etc.
- Take the children 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 cleans and purify us and to make us holy – a greater ability to love)’”

(CCC 185-187, 189-190).

Spiritual Comprehension – Do they understand?

- Ask questions to ensure that children understand the meaning of the words, how to pronounce the words and they are developing a relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Allow the children the opportunity to discuss the effects in their lives of praying this prayer.
- **This one prayer is the prayer the young people should know by heart and with good understanding as this prayer contains the foundations of all that Catholics believe. 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: diolc.org/catechesis/religion-curriculum.

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

- Pray the *Apostles' Creed* aloud and have children 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 young people 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 they 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*)

