

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD

Creeds



PURPOSE

To help Cadets understand how creeds strengthen the faith of a believer, and to give them a basic introduction to important creeds and confessions of the Reformed faith.

LEARNING

1. Explain the meaning of the following terms.

- *Creed*—Coming from the Latin word *credo*, meaning “I believe,” a creed is a system of Christian or other religious beliefs.
- *Confession* — A confession is a statement setting out essential religious doctrine.
- *Catechism* — a catechism is a summary of the principles of Christian religion in the form of questions and answers.

2. List three uses for creeds.

- Summarize Biblical teaching
- Instruction and training
- Defend against heresy

3. The Apostles' Creed was one of the very first creeds of the Christian church. Read each of the following verses and write the article of the creed for which the verse is a reference.

- Matthew 28:5–6 • *The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.”*
the resurrection of the body
- Philippians 2:10–11 • *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
He ascended to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
- 1 Corinthians 1:2 • *together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ— their Lord and ours:*
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints

- Isaiah 53:5 • *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

He suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died, and was buried;

- Matthew 16:27 • *For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.*

from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

- Matthew 27:46 • *About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”— which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*

he descended to hell

- 1 Corinthians 15:42–43 • *So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;*

the resurrection of the body

- Psalm 103:12 • *as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

the forgiveness of sins

- Genesis 1:1 • *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

I believe in God the Father, almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

- Isaiah 7:14 • *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary

- Philippians 2:4–5 • *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:*

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate,

- Acts 1:9 • *After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.*

He ascended to heaven

- John 17:3 • *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*
and the life everlasting.
- John 3:36 • *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.*
and the life everlasting. Amen.
- John 19:33–34 • *But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.*
was crucified, died, and was buried
- Luke 24:5b–7 • *"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'"*

The third day he rose again from the dead.

DOING

1. Listen to the Cadet recite the Apostles' Creed.
2. Listen to the Cadet recite the five memorized verses.
3. Memorize the first question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism. Recite it to your counselor and tell why you think it is a favorite passage for so many Christians.
4. Choose one creed, one confession, and one catechism from the following lists. For each one that you choose, write a brief report. Include who wrote it, when, why, and how it is organized (how many articles or how many questions and answers).

Creeds: Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed

Confessions: Canons of Dordt, Belgic Confession, Westminster Confession

Catechisms: Heidelberg Catechism, Westminster Catechism, Geneva Catechism

CREEDS				
DOCUMENT	WRITER(S)	WHEN	WHY	ORGANIZATION
Apostles' Creed	Unknown. Some say it was the original twelve apostles.	Unknown. Earliest concrete reference is in a letter dated 390 AD.	To refute Gnosticism, to identify believers, to instruct new converts, and to provide a unifying confession of faith for worship and liturgy.	Three sections, corresponding to the three Persons of the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Nicene Creed	The Catholic Church at the Council of Nicea and the Council of Constantinople.	Council of Nicea — 325 AD; Council of Constantinople — 381 AD.	To refute heresies, especially Arianism, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity and of the person of Christ.	Three sections, corresponding to the three Persons of the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Athanasian Creed	Unknown, but probably not Athanasius. It was likely written in Gaul.	Thought to be about 500 AD.	To refute Arianism and clearly vocalize the equality of the Persons of the Trinity.	Two sections. The first explaining the doctrine of the Trinity and the second dealing with the incarnation and the two-natures doctrine of Christ.

CONFESSIONS				
DOCUMENT	WRITER(S)	WHEN	WHY	ORGANIZATION
Canons of Dordt	Synod of the international Reformed churches in the Netherlands.	1618–1619	To refute the five main points at which Jacob Arminius and his followers disagreed with Calvin and the Reformed teachings.	Structured to correspond to the five articles of the 1610 Remonstrance, the statement of Arminius's followers: TULIP
Belgic Confession	Guido de Brès, a preacher in the Reformed Church of the Netherlands and a former student of John Calvin.	1561	Written to show the Roman Catholic authorities that the adherents of the Reformed faith were not rebels. Also to demonstrate that the Reformed faith was distinct from that of the "Anabaptists."	37 articles, somewhat distributed according to the three articles of the Apostles' Creed. Westminster Confession
The Westminster Assembly,	largely of the Church of England.	1646	To provide advice on worship, doctrine, government, and discipline of the Church of England.	Consists of 33 chapters dealing with 33 specific topics.

CATECHISMS				
DOCUMENT	WRITER(S)	WHEN	WHY	ORGANIZATION
Heidelberg Catechism	Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus, appointed by Elector Frederick III, the political leader of the Palinate.	1563	To provide instruction in both the churches and schools of the territory of which Heidelberg, Germany was the capital.	129 questions and answers are separated into 52 sections called "Lord's Days." The intent is to preach a sermon on one Lord's Day each Sunday, thus completing the entire catechism in one year and beginning over. There are three overarching sections in the catechism, commonly known as sin, salvation, and service (or guilt, grace, and gratitude).
Westminster Catechism	The Long Parliament of England	1640s	To educate lay persons in matters of doctrine and belief. The Westminster Shorter Catechism was intended to be easy and short for beginners. The Westminster Larger Catechism was to be more exact and comprehensive.	Larger Catechism: 196 questions and answers. Shorter Catechism: 107 questions and answers. The questions are categorized: God as creator, original sin and the fallen state of man's nature, Christ the Redeemer, the ten commandments, the sacraments, and the Lord's prayer.
Geneva Catechism	John Calvin and/or Wilhelm Farel	1536, with revisions in 1542 and 1545	A summary of Reformed doctrines, it was intended primarily to teach the youth.	55 sections with 373 questions and answers