

**What Is The Apostles' Creed?**  
**A Teaching Guide for the Booklet by G.L.Reed**  
**Abingdon Press 0-687-49317-X**

**Before the class arrives:**

- Decide if you will cover this material in one or two sessions.
- Place a large sheet of paper on the wall (poster size for a small class – bulletin board size for a large class). Write across the top of the paper in large letters “I Believe In...”

**Arrival Activity: (5 minutes)**

- Call each student by name and check in with them. How are things going? (This is the most important part of your lesson).
- Have the students add to a Graffiti Wall by writing or drawing something on the large sheet of paper you have placed on the wall.

**What is a Creed? (5 minutes)**

- Gather the students together. Pass out the booklets and read the Apostles' Creed together on page 4. Substitute if your congregation uses a different version.
- As a group, work the puzzle on page 7 to define a creed.
- Ask the students to figure out which statement is untrue on page 8

**I believe in God (5 minutes)**

- Ask the students how many names they can come up with for God. It is OK if all they can say is “God”, “Father” and “Creator”. Most adults only come up with those three.
- Draw lines on page 9 to discover what the Apostles' Creed calls God.
- Show the class Poster 1 (following pages). Put the poster away and have them recite the first phrase from memory.

**I believe in Jesus Christ (5 minutes)**

- Work the puzzles on pages 12-16 to find out what the Apostles' Creed says about Jesus. If you have a large group, divide the class into teams and assign each team a different puzzle. Then have the teams share their answers.
- Show the class Poster 2 (following pages). Put the poster away and have them recite the second page from memory. Then challenge them to say the first two phrases together.

**Brain Break (5 minutes)**

- Have the students stand up. Make a fist and circle it in front of them. Make four circles as they say “God, Father, Almighty, Maker”. Make a fist with the other hand and circle it four times in front of them as they say “Jesus Christ, Son, Lord”. Then challenge them to do the same thing while reversing their circles (If they circled inward the first time, ask them to circle outward as they repeat the exercise. See if they can repeat the exercise while circling inward with one hand and outward with the other. Make up your own variations. Research has shown that the brain is stimulated when you do circles with a fist and then reverse your circles.

### **What Do You Believe? (10 minutes)**

- So far, we have heard what the early church said it believed about God and Jesus. Refer to your graffiti wall. What do the students believe? Add words to the wall as they respond to the following questions:
- When you hear the word “God” what images come to your mind? What makes Jesus different from other teachers in history? (List teachers that your students would recognize, such as John Wesley, John Calvin, Martin Luther, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Theresa, or other historical figures that have shaped us.)

*If you are dividing this study into two sessions, this would be a good place to stop. See closing worship for ideas on how to close this session.*

*At the beginning of your second session, repeat the instructions for the arrival activity. Add to the graffiti sheet as a way of reviewing the previous session.*

### **Learning About Jesus (5 minutes)**

- Work the puzzles on pages 18 and 19 to find out what the Creed tells us about Jesus’ death and resurrection. Ask the question on the bottom of page 18 and discuss. Share with the children how you feel Christ’s presence in your own life.
- Use a dictionary to look up any unfamiliar words, like “ascended” or “thence”. Ask the students to paraphrase this section to make sure they understand.

### **Finishing the Creed (5 minutes)**

- Work the puzzles on pages 21-23 to find the words to the rest of the creed.
- Explain that the word “catholic” means “universal”. Until the time of the Reformation, the Roman Catholic church was the only Christian church in western Europe and so, was “universal” in a time when travel was not as easy as it is now. Now “Catholic” (note the capital letter) refers to the Roman Catholic church, and catholic (with a lower case “c”) is a seldom-used word that means “universal”.
- Show the students the posters (following pages). Have them study the words for 30 seconds.
- Put the posters away and have the students recite the creed from memory.

### **Wrapping Up (5 minutes)**

- Use the Trivia Test pages as a game by asking the questions and awarding points for correct answers.
- Tell the students that although the Apostles’ Creed is a very important creed, it is not the only one.
- Read the Modern Affirmation on page 28, or use your church’s hymnal to look up other creeds.
- Compare them to the Apostles’ Creed. What is the same? What is different?

### **Writing Your Own Creed (5 minutes to a lifetime)**

- Have the students use the outline on page 29 to write their own creed. They may choose to use language from the Apostles’ Creed or one of the other creeds you have found. Allow the students to work in silence on their creeds.

**Closing Worship (10 minutes)**

- Light a candle as a sign that Christ is present in your classroom.
- Ask the students to look at the candle and try to feel Christ's presence with them.
- Have the students who wish to share the creeds they have written with the rest of the group.
- Make a list of prayer concerns.
- Have a silent prayer time for each of these concerns.
- Close with reciting The Apostles' Creed.
- Encourage the students to work the other puzzles in their book at home.

**For more information see the following resources:**

*The Life We Claim*, by James C. Howell. Uses the Apostles' Creed as primary text for a thirteen-week study. Intended as a resource for pastors. Abingdon Press. 0687493536. \$12.60

*God, My Creator: The Apostle's Creed*, an Arch Book. 16 pages of colorful illustrations and creative text help children understand the meaning of this important creed. Arch Books. 075865013. \$11.94

*The Apostle's Creed*, by William Barclay. This pocket guide offers insights into William Barclay's theology. Affordable and beautifully illustrated. Westminster/John Knox Press. 0664223451. \$5.95

**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**

**Suffered under  
Pontius Pilate**

**Was crucified,  
dead, and buried;**

**The third day he  
rose from the dead;  
he ascended into  
heaven,**

**and sitteth at the  
right hand of God  
the Father Almighty;  
from thence he  
shall come to  
judge the quick  
and the dead.**

**I believe in the  
Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic  
church,  
the communion  
of the saints,  
the forgiveness  
of sins,  
the resurrection  
of the body,  
and the life  
everlasting. Amen.**