



December 2025-February 2026

"Who Do You Say That I Am?"

In Matthew 16, Jesus asks His disciples who they say that He is. Peter responds with the statement, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Peter's confession demonstrated his faith in God—and that Jesus is on par with God. It is Peter's "creed."

A creed is a statement of beliefs. The Creeds we are discussing in this supplement safeguard the faith from corruption while defining the boundaries of authentic Christian faith.

Where the Creeds Come From

As the early church grew it discovered teachers, claiming to be Christian, who seemed to be saying things that ran contrary to what Jesus and the apostles taught. To refute heresies and to instruct new believers, brief summaries of those teachings were created.



The Apostles' Creed

The earliest form of this Creed appeared by A.D. 150. It was not written by the apostles but is based on apostolic teaching. The Apostles' Creed took the baptism formula found in Matthew 28:19 and expanded it: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, and in Christ Jesus his Son, our Lord, and in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church, and the resurrection of the flesh." Through the years phrases were added to it so that by the eighth century, it had the form we know today.

This illumination from a 13th-century manuscript shows the apostles writing the Creed, receiving inspiration from the Holy Spirit.

IN THIS EDITION

this quarter explores

The Creeds

Coming up on the **Church Calendar**

Passing the Torch— **Family Edition:**

Discover and Celebrate the Creeds as a Family

> **Lighting the Lamp: Anglican Activities**

for Toddlers and **Preschoolers**

Lighting the Lamp:

Anglican Activities for Elementary Students

Lighting the Lamp:

Anglican Activities for Youth

Introducing the Creeds to Your Sunday School

> Apostles' Creed and **Nicene Creed**



Oldest extant manuscript of the Nicene Creed, dated to the 5th Century.

The Nicene Creed

The main purpose of this Creed was to insist that Jesus is fully God. At the time of the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, there were people teaching that Jesus was only the highest creation of God, and not fully divine.

The Athanasian Creed

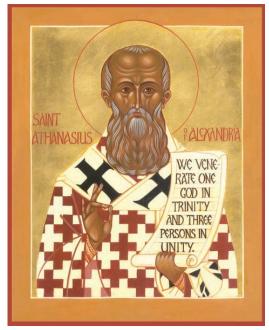
Dating from the mid-fifth century, this Creed stresses the unity of the Trinity.

The Creeds Today

The Creeds challenge much in our modern secular worldview. By thinking through what the Creeds say each time we recite or hear one,

we can start to understand our faith. We can see how the Father Almighty brings authority and love together. We can know that Jesus, God's only Son, is the Savior of the world and that the Spirit is holy, divine, and equal with the Father and the Son.

Anglicans use the Creeds nearly every Sunday in worship. By saying "Amen" at the end, we are offering the Creed to God as a kind of prayer. It is an act of praise as we declare with heart and mind: "This is my faith, this is what I really believe."



Athanasius of Alexandria was traditionally thought to be the author of the Athanasian Creed, and gives his name to its common title.

AS YOU TEACH THIS QUARTER

- ☐ Look over the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds (see page 13). Look for phrases or words that are difficult to understand. Rephrase them as if you were explaining them to a student.
- For an in-depth study this quarter, use an exhaustive concordance to find Bible references that support each of the statements in the Creeds.

Coming Up on the Church Calendar

Throughout history, Christians have followed the Church Calendar to remember the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the beginnings of the Church. Consult the Book of Common Prayer for more information. Here are a few events that occur this quarter:

Advent begins on November 30. In anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ, we remember the Old Testament prophecies that foretold His coming. The traditional color used in church is purple for royalty.

Christmas (December 25, use on December 21) marks the occasion of God coming as a human when Jesus was born. In the Creeds, we state that Jesus is both fully human and fully God. The traditional color used in church is white or gold for celebration.

The Confession of St. Peter (January 18)
Matthew 16:16 records Peter's confession to
Jesus "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living
God." Such statements are forerunners of our
Creeds. Traditional color used in church is white
for purity.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 18. Lent lasts for 40 days plus Sundays. Christians observe the 40 days to remember Jesus' time in the desert when Satan tempted Him to abandon the Father's plan for our salvation. Jesus resisted evil. Lent is a solemn time when we contemplate Jesus' time in the desert and pray "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (from Matthew 6:13). Traditional color used in churches is purple for repentance.



Passing the Torch Family Edition

Family Discoveries – Creeds

Advent and Christmas! What a wonderful time of the year to share our faith with our families! During Advent and Christmas, we often find ourselves surrounded by family traditions—both old and new. One tradition my family has is to wrap up the baby Jesus from our manger scene in a special gift bag. That gift bag is the first present opened at Christmas time. We spend time as a family talking about what it means that God sent His Son, Jesus.

As you go through Advent and Christmas, think about your family traditions. How can you use those traditions as faith-sharing times in your family?

Sharing our faith—telling others what we believe—is a key part of Christian life. In church, we say the Creeds each Sunday to share our faith. Take time this quarter to talk about what the Creeds mean and then build a new family tradition by creating a book that shows what one of the Creeds means for your family.

If you have younger children in your family, you might want to look at the Apostles' Creed. Older children will be able to understand the Nicene Creed. Some resources are given to help you get started.

RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED

WEBSITES

www.gty.org —do a search for "creeds." Provides information on the Creeds and confessional statements throughout Christian history.

justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/ Gives electronic versions of *The Book* of *Common Prayer* (1979) and other resources.

A BOOK TO READ TOGETHER

Check on <u>Amazon.com</u> or at your local Christian bookstore for books such as *I Believe: The Nicene Creed,* illustrated by Pauline Baynes, Eerdmans, 2003. This book, for preschoolers and up, will help children visualize the Creed as more than something to say in church.

Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Toddlers

In Your Toddler/2 Classroom

With Toddler/2s, only work through what attention levels allow, and don't worry about "finishing" a project. It's the process that counts for toddlers.



December Activities

- Advent and Christmas (All month) Set up a non-breakable nativity set as a center. Each week add different figures. Talk about how each character was getting ready for Jesus' coming. For December 21, add the figure of Jesus. Talk about how God sent His Son, Jesus.
- **The Creeds** (All month) Make a Creation block set by taping onto blocks pictures of things God created (or buy a "Days of Creation" blocks set). Put the blocks in the blocks area. Talk each week about how God the Father created the different things shown on the blocks.

January Activities

■ **The Creeds** Print and send home page 13. Use the Toddler activity from "Introducing Creeds to Your Sunday School" (page 12) on **January 4.**

Continue talking about the Creeds by focusing on Jesus, God's Son (all month). Leave out the manger and Jesus from the nativity set. Add a simple wooden cross. As children discover these objects, talk about how in church we say the Apostles' Creed. The Creed says that Jesus is God's Son. The manger and cross can help us remember that Jesus died for our sins and became alive again.

February Activities

Finish your emphasis on the Creeds throughout the month of February. Set up an area with a large picture of a dove and make smaller copies for the children. While children color or glue pieces of paper on the dove, talk about how the picture of the dove can help remember the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit came to be with Jesus' followers and to help them be like Jesus.



As you teach this quarter, break down the Creeds into three parts: God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Concentrate on one part each month. You might want to consider having the following book (available from Amazon.com) in a book corner of your classroom: I Believe: The Nicene Creed. Illustrated by Pauline Baynes. Eerdmans, 2003.



Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Elementary-Aged Students In Your Preschool Classroom



December Activities

- Advent and Christmas (All month) Set up an Advent wreath with evergreens and four flameless or paper candles to use during Worship Time. Each week, light another candle. Talk about how the wreath helps us remember that prophets in the Bible told God's people to get ready for Jesus' coming. Jesus came as a baby. Someday, He will come back as our King.
- **The Creeds** (All month) Create a table center that can be used either as a Welcome Time activity or another Step 3 activity. Cover the table with newsprint. Set out different magazine pictures showing parts of creation. Let children create a mural collage of things God the Father created. Talk each week about how God the Father made us and loves us.



January Activities

The Creeds Print and send home page 13. Use the Preschool activity from "Introducing Creeds to Your Sunday School" (page 12) on January 4.

Continue all month talking about the Creeds by focusing on Jesus, God's Son. Set out the manger and Jesus from the nativity set as well as a simple wooden cross. As children discover these objects, talk about how in church we say the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed says that Jesus is God's Son. The manger and cross can help us remember that Jesus died for our sins and became alive again.

Teaching about the Creeds to Preschoolers

As you teach this quarter, break down the Creeds into three parts: God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Concentrate on one part each month. You might want to consider having the following book (available from Amazon.com) in a book corner of your classroom: *I Believe: The Nicene Creed.* Illustrated by Pauline Baynes. Eerdmans, 2003.

February Activities

- Continue your emphasis on the Creeds throughout the month of February. Set up an additional Step 3 center with a large picture of a dove, and make smaller copies for the children. While children color their doves, talk about how the picture of the dove can help them remember the Holy Spirit.
- Teach this fingerplay and do it with the children each week.
 - "God is Three in One!" Hold up 3 fingers and then 1 finger and point up.
 - "God is Father." Raise arms up.
 - "God is Son." Touch index fingers to opposite palms.
 - "God is Spirit." Wave hands like dove's wings.
 - "God is Three in One!" Hold up 3 fingers and then 1 finger and point up.

Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Elementary-Aged Students

In Your Early Elementary Classroom



December Activities

- Advent and Christmas (All month) Set up an Advent wreath with evergreens and four flameless or paper candles to use as part of Prayer Time. Light another candle each week and share the following: Advent is a waiting time. Long before Jesus was born, God told prophets to tell people to get ready. The King was coming. In Advent, we wait and get ready to celebrate Jesus' birthday. We also remember that Jesus will come back.
- The Creeds (All month) Create a table center that can be used either as an Early Bird Activity or another Step 3 activity. Cover the table with newsprint. Set out different magazine pictures showing parts of creation. Let children create a mural collage of things God the Father created. Talk each week about how God the Father made us and loves us. Memorize the first section of the Apostles' Creed.

January Activities

Creeds Print and send home the Creeds on page 13.

Use the Early Elementary activity from "Introducing Creeds to Your Sunday School" (page 12) on **January 4.**

Continue talking about the Creeds by memorizing the section of the Apostles' Creed that covers Jesus, God's Son (all month). For each sentence, bring in an object that represents that statement. Some ideas to get you started are a manger from a nativity set, a nail, a cross, the number "3," and a crown. As the class learns each line, talk about how the object represents the idea they are learning.

February Activities

■ **Creeds** Finish your emphasis on the Creeds throughout the month of February by memorizing the rest of the Apostles' Creed.

Choose one Sunday to make wordless books as an alternate Step 3 activity. Have children make books with five sheets of construction paper. As they make the books, discuss what the colors mean and how they relate to the Apostles' Creed.

Black: For sin in our lives.

Red: For Jesus' blood on the cross.

White: How God sees us when our sins are forgiven.

Green: How we grow in love and knowledge of the Lord.

Gold: For Heaven. Someday we will be with God and His forever family.

Teaching about the Creeds to Elementary-Age Children

As you teach this quarter, take some time each week to work on a Creed with your class. The Apostles' Creed will work better with younger elementary age children. Begin with the first line of the Creed. Say the line to your class, then have them say it back. You could try putting the words to a tune or creating a rhythm to play while reciting the Creed. Break the Creed down into meaningful segments. Explain difficult words before they are memorized. For older children, create a bulletin board with the three headings "God the Father," "God the Son," and "God the Holy Spirit." Write each phrase of the Creed on a piece of paper. Let students put the phrases in the right place and order on the board. Try removing some of the phrases later in the quarter but still recite the entire Creed.

Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Elementary-Aged Students In Your Elementary Classroom



December Activities

- Advent and Christmas (All month) Set up an Advent wreath with evergreens and four flameless or paper candles to use as part of a worship time. Light another candle each week and share the following: Advent is a time to prepare for Jesus! In the Old Testament, God's prophets encouraged people to get ready for the coming of Jesus! Read a prophecy each week and talk about what it says about Jesus: Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; Luke 1:31–33. For December 21, change the candles to white and read Luke 2:1–7 as a class.
- **Creeds** (All month) Create a table center that can be used either as an Early Bird Activity or another Step 3 activity. Cover the table with newsprint. Write out James 1:17 on the paper and trace your hand several times on the paper. Have children read the verse and write answers inside the hands to this question: "What kind of Father is God?"

January Activities

Creeds Print and send home the Creeds on page 13.

Use the Elementary activity on "Introducing Creeds to Your Sunday School" (page 12) on **January 4.**

Continue talking about the Creeds by memorizing the section of the Apostles' Creed that covers Jesus, God's Son (all month). For each sentence, bring in an object to represents that statement. Some ideas to get you started are a manger from a nativity set, a nail, a cross, the number "3," and a crown. As the class learns each line, talk about how Jesus takes away our sins.

February Activities

■ **Creeds** Finish your emphasis on the Creeds throughout the month of February by setting out a large section of newsprint. Write out Luke 3:21–22 on the paper. Encourage children to fill up the paper with how the Holy Spirit helps them.

Choose one Sunday to make wordless books as an alternate Step 3 activity. Have children make books with five sheets of construction paper. As they make the books, discuss what the colors mean and how they relate to the Apostles' Creed.

Black: For sin in our lives.

Red: For Jesus' blood on the cross.

White: How God sees us when our sins are forgiven.

Green: How we grow in love and knowledge of the Lord.

Gold: For Heaven. Someday we will be with God and His forever family.

HERO FOR CHRIST

(use on January 11)



Pocahontas, also known as Lady Rebecca

WHEN SHE LIVED: about 1595–1617 WHAT SHE DID:

As a child, about 11 years old, she saved Captain John Smith from execution by her father, Chief Powahatan. Later in Jamestown, she came to know about Jesus and was baptized. She took a new name, after Rebekah in the Bible. She was one of the first Native Americans to understand that Jesus died for her, not just for white people.

HERO FOR CHRIST: ACTIVITY

Display a book about Christian names. Let children look up their names to discover what their names mean. How do their lives reflect the meaning of their names?

Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Elementary-Aged Students In Your Upper Elementary Classroom



December Activities

■ **Advent** (All month) Set up a cozy place for talking. Decorate the area with blue and purple. Each week give students time to share how they are preparing for the arrival of the King. Encourage them to look at different Old Testament prophecies such as Isaiah 9:6, 40:3, and Micah 5:2. Challenge them to find more prophecies about Jesus.

January Activities

■ Creeds Print and send home the Creeds found on page 13.

Use the Upper Elementary activity from "Introducing Creeds to Your Sunday School" (page 12) on **January 4.**

Set up an extra Early Bird Option or Step 3 activity throughout the month to work on Creeds. You will need to create simple books for your class. The first page should say "God the Father," the second page "God the Son," and the last page "God the Holy Spirit." Provide markers, stickers, paper to create covers, and the following paragraph copied on paper:

Creeds are statements of faith—we tell others what we believe. Each week in church, we either say the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed was written by A.D. 150 for people about to be baptized. The Nicene Creed was written around A.D. 380 by church leaders who were concerned about false teachers who said that Jesus was not really God. Today, we still say the Creeds to tell the truth to ourselves and to the world about the Lord Jesus.

February Activities

■ Throughout **February**, allow students to finish the Creed books they started in January.

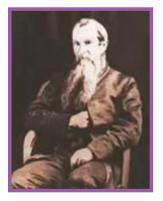
Give students time to create covers for their books and then complete the books by putting in their own words what the Creed says about each page.

Use some Memory Verse Practice time each week to memorize the Nicene Creed as a class.



HERO FOR CHRIST

(use on December 7)



Channing Moore Williams

WHEN HE LIVED: 1829-1910 **WHAT HE DID:** Grew up in Virginia, USA. Went to China in 1856. Lived in Japan from 1859-1908. He was the first Episcopal Bishop of Japan. He cared about bringing the Gospel to Japan. He persisted in learning Japanese well enough to teach and write. He established the Episcopal Church of Japan, a hospital, and a university. He also translated parts of the *Book* of Common Prayer into Japanese.

Hero for Christ: Activity

Williams's tombstone bears this inscription: "During his fifty years in Japan, he taught Christ's ways and not his own." How do you reflect Christ's ways in your daily life?

Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Youth

In Your Middle School Classroom



December Activities

Advent (Nov. 30; Dec. 7, 14, 21) Set up an additional Before Class Option at a table with Bibles, note cards, and markers. Give these instructions: In anticipation of the birth of Jesus, we remember the prophets of the Old Testament. The Nicene Creed reminds us that the Holy Spirit "has spoken through the Prophets." Look up Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, 40:3; Micah 5:2; and Hosea 11:1. Encourage youth to create symbols of how each Old Testament prophecy relates to the coming of Jesus. For Christmas (Dec. 25, use on Dec. 21), have them create a symbol for Jesus' birth.

January Activities

■ Take the month to explore the sections of the **Nicene Creed** that deal with God the Father and God the Son, as an alternate Step 3 activity. Provide copies of the Creed (page 13 of this supplement) as well as markers and mural paper. Using their copies of the Creeds, ask students to work together to create a mural about the Nicene Creed. Challenge them to be able to explain all parts of the mural and how it is a statement of their faith today.

February Activities

On February 8, set up a Step 3 table activity with Bibles. You may want to copy the Back in Time article at the right to place in the area.

Take the month to explore the **Apostles' Creed** as an alternate Step 3 activity. Have copies of the Creed (page 13 of this supplement.) as well as markers and mural paper. Take the month to finish the mural on the Nicene Creed that was started in January. Have your class share the mural with a confirmation class. Ask middle schoolers to work together to create a mural about the Apostles' Creed. Challenge them to be able to explain all parts of the mural and how it is a statement of their faith today.

BACK IN TIME

(use on February 1)



Martyrs of Japan

Roman Catholic missionaries were first sent to Japan around 1549. Christianity flourished for many years until, for a variety of reasons, the Japanese rulers began to feel threatened by the Christians. A period of persecution began with the mutilation and crucifixion of six friars and 20 lay Christians on February 5, 1597.

By 1630, Japanese Christianity was driven underground, where it remained until the first Protestant missionary, Channing Moore Williams, arrived in 1859.

Explore the Word:

One martyrs, a Japanese
Christian named Paul Miki
said right before he died, "And
so I tell you plainly: there is no
route to salvation except the one
that the Christians teach. My
religion teaches me to pardon my
enemies and all who offended
me. I do gladly pardon the
emperor and all who brought
about my death, and I beg them
to seek Christian baptism."
Read through 1 Corinthians 13.
How did Paul Miki try to live up
to this passage in the Bible?

Anglican Activities for Reaching Out with Jesus' Love to Youth

In Your High School Classroom



December Activities

■ Advent (Nov. 30; Dec. 7, 14, 21) Set up an additional Before Class Option at a table with Bibles, note cards, and markers. Say: In anticipation of the birth of Jesus, we remember the prophets of the Old Testament. The Nicene Creed reminds us that the Holy Spirit "has spoken through the prophets." Look up Isaiah 7:14; 9:6, 40: 3; Micah 5:2, and Hosea 11:1. Encourage youth to create symbols of how each Old Testament prophecy relates to the coming of Jesus. How can you share your faith using your symbol in the coming week? For Christmas (Dec. 25, use on Dec. 21), have them create a symbol for Jesus' birth.

January Activities

■ Nicene Creed Take the month to explore the sections of the Nicene Creed that deal with God the Father and God the Son, as an alternate Step 3 activity. Provide copies of the Creed (page 13 of this supplement) as well as markers and mural paper. Using their copies of the Creeds, ask high schoolers to work together to create a mural about the Nicene Creed. Challenge them to be able to explain all parts of the mural and how it is a statement of their faith today.

Use the High School activity on "Introducing Creeds to Your Sunday School" (page 12) on **January 4.**

February Activities

On February 15, set up a Step 3 table activity with Bibles. You may want to make copies of the Back in Time article (right column) to place in the area.

Take the month to finish the mural on the **Nicene Creed** that was started in January. Have your class share the mural with a confirmation class.

BACK IN TIME

(use on February 22)



Bridgeman Art Lil

Anne Askew

A young and zealous Protestant woman, Anne Askew, lived at the beginning of the English Reformation. Anne was a noble woman during the reign of Henry VIII. She loved the Scriptures—studying them diligently and memorizing them.

In the 1540s, England was divided between leaders who envisioned the nation embracing Protestantism and those who thought the country should remain Catholic. Anne ignored the societal constraints on women by publicly reading and teaching Scripture as a "gospeler." Anne's public espousing of her beliefs were perceived as threats among certain leaders, especially as she moved in influential circles. She was condemned to death. After being tortured on the rack for her political connections in court, Anne was burned at the stake on July 16, 1546.

Explore the Word:

In Anne's final prayer, she asked the Lord to fight for her and forgive her persecutors. Even though her world seemed against her, Anne clung to her faith. Read John 16:1–3, 2–22, and 32–33. How are Anne's life and these verses connected? Why have her actions inspired generations of believers?

Introducing CREEDS to Your Sunday School



In the region of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16: 15–16). Affirmations of faith like Peter's led to the formation of Creeds. Use the age-appropriate activity below as an alternate Step 3 activity to tie into your quarterly teaching on Creeds.

TODDLER/2 and PRESCHOOL



Teacher Prep: Cut out fish shapes and punch a hole in the mouth end. You will need three fish for each child, crayons, and a foot-long piece of yarn.

Talk Time: Show a fish. **Peter was a fisherman. One day, Jesus asked Peter, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter said, "You are the Son of God." In the Creed we say that Jesus is God's Son. We can use fish to help us remember who Jesus is.**

Explore: Let the children color crosses on the fish. Write "Jesus is God's Son" on each child's fish. Give each child three fish to color. Tie the fish together with a piece of yarn. For older preschoolers, write "God the Father," "God the Son," and "God the Spirit" on the fish and have children color a world, a cross, and a dove. (Color doesn't matter.)

EARLY ELEMENTARY, ELEMENTARY, and UPPER ELEMENTARY



Teacher prep: You will need Bibles for Elementary and Upper Elementary students; a large copy of the Shield of St. Peter (shown above), drawing paper, and markers for each student.

Talk Time: Have students find and read Matthew 16:13–19 in Bibles. For younger students, show them the verses in a Bible and read them aloud. **Peter confesses his faith in Jesus. Look at the shield. The keys are the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" that Jesus talked about in verse 19. The upside-down cross is there because history tells us that Peter was crucified for his faith, but upside down because he felt he wasn't worthy to die the same way as his Lord.**

Explore: Give each child a piece of paper. Say: **A shield can be a visual picture of a creed. Have each child draw a shield that shows what he or she believes about Jesus.**

MIDDLE SCHOOL and HIGH SCHOOL



Teacher Prep: You will need Bibles, copies of the Creeds (page 13 of this supplement), pens, and note cards.

Talk Time: Have students read Matthew 16:13–19; Acts 4:8–13, and 1 Peter 5:1–4. Ask: **Peter's confession led to the formation of the Creeds. How do these passages relate to each other?**

Say: Partly because of Peter's profession in the fishing business, early Christians used the symbol of the fish to show they believed. The word for fish in Greek is IXQYS. The first letter I was the beginning letter for Jesus. X began the word for Christ. Q began the word for God. Y began the word for Son (of God). And S began the word for Savior.

Explore: Challenge teens to create an acrostic with the letters of the word Jesus to show what they believe.

