

THE APOSTLES' CREED 1

Session Target:
To understand the importance of creeds.

LEADER'S NOTES

The Nature of Creeds

Focus Scriptures:

1 Timothy 3:16; Philippians 2:5-11

Connecting to Life

Option 1:

Begin by sharing the following definition of the word “creed”: *A formal statement of religious belief; a confession of faith.*¹ Allow time for group members to silently reflect on this definition.

Ask,

- **What might be considered a statement faith?**
- **Why is it important for Christians to have statements of faith like a creed?**
- **In light of the fact that we have the Bible, why would it be necessary to have creeds?**
- **How would you respond to someone who believes that there is no reason for creeds?**

Option 2:

Give each person a pen/pencil and slip of paper. Invite each person to think of one thing they believe, or a statement of faith, and have them write it down on the slip of paper. (If you need to provide an example to help group members focus, use the statement “Jesus is the Son of God.”) After sufficient time, gather the slips of paper and place them in a container. Then, pull out each slip and read the statement out loud until all statements have been read.

Follow up by sharing with your group the fact that creeds are statements of faith. The word creed comes from the Latin word “credo” which means to believe.

Transition: Today we are going to look at the importance of creeds to the Christian faith.

¹ <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/creed>> Accessed January 23, 2013.

Option 1:

Share with the group that creeds were written not to be additions to the Bible, but to create statements of faith to refute heresy and articulate beliefs. They are not baseless or made up, but reflect the truth found in Scripture. They are helpful in articulating our Christian beliefs.

The Bible contains biblical creeds, or statements of faith. Today we will look at two specific examples.

Invite someone to read 1 Timothy 3:16.

- **What is the message of this passage?**
- **How is this passage a statement of faith?**
- **Could this be considered a biblical creed? Why or why not?**

Invite someone to read Philippians 2:5-11.

- **What is the message of this passage?**
- **How is this passage a statement of faith?**
- **Could this be considered a biblical creed? Why or why not?**

There are just a few biblical creeds found in Scripture, can you think of any others?

Option 2:

Some people believe creeds are unnecessary and that we should only recite our statements of faith from Scripture. However, creeds are statements of faith based on the truth found in Scripture. In fact, the Bible has many statements of faith that could be considered biblical creeds.

Divide your group in half. Assign one group to read 1 Timothy 3:16 and the other group to read Philippians 2:5-11. Invite each group to read their passage and discuss the statement of faith, or biblical creed, contained within their passage.

Then, have each group share their discussion. Follow up by asking, **Why are these statements of faith important to our Christian beliefs?**

Transition: Creeds articulate our beliefs. They help us understand and express what we believe.

Connecting to Our World

Say, **Creeds help us define the boundaries of our faith. Many creeds define the basic beliefs of Christianity. The foundation of Christianity is faith. Creeds are not equal to Scripture nor considered authoritative; however, they help us express our faith in written and spoken form.**

During this study we are going to focus in on *The Apostles' Creed*. Early in Christianity's history, this creed was most likely used as a summary of Christian doctrine for baptismal candidates in the churches of Rome. This creed was possibly created to refute heresy or to teach new converts the heart of our beliefs and faith.

Before your group meets, make a photocopy of *The Apostles' Creed* located on page 29. Close by giving each person a copy of the creed and reciting it together.

Encourage group members to take the creed home and look over it several times throughout the week. As they do, urge them to reflect on the meaning of each statement contained within the creed.

Further Reading

Mcknight, Scot. *The Jesus Creed*

REMEMBER: A PowerPoint presentation of this lesson can be downloaded at sundayteacher.com.