

LESSON 6: I Believe What We Believe

CONTENTS OF LESSON:

1. God has revealed his truths and himself to us. He invites us to communion with him. Our response is faith. [CCC 142]
2. Faith means to say a personal 'yes' to God and to his truths. It has to be free. Faith is necessary for us to please God and to be saved. [CCC150, 161]
3. We have received our faith from others and must hand it on to others. Thus each of us is a link in a great chain of believers. [CCC166]
4. The Creeds are summaries of our faith, as a seed contains the whole plant in essence. The Apostles Creed is a summary of the faith of the apostles and the Nicene Creed is also very old and considered important for all Catholics to know and profess. [CCC186,194-5]
- 😊 5. *When we say the Creed with faith, we are united with God and the whole Church.* [CCC197]

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts.

N.B. This lesson is a recapitulation of the basic truths already learnt this year, which are specific to the Creeds.

I. STARTER:

- We are going to begin with a short act that could perhaps happen to you.
[Someone enters the class and walks up to a student addressing him/her by name.]

STRANGER: Hello, you must be Clinton! You don't know me, but I am your grandfather's brother. I've just travelled from the UK to meet all my family members. How are you?

[He holds out his hand. Clinton looks at him but doesn't respond. Another student comes forward.]

COUSIN: Clinton, it's true! I've seen pictures of him in your house. Your dad has often talked about him. Can't you see that he looks like grandpa?

[Clinton then smiles and shakes hands with the man.]

- The reason why we started the lesson in this way is because it tells us something about our very last topic, which is faith, or believing. Does this act tell you anything about faith?
[Bring out, using the responses of the students:]
 - Faith is a personal response. God is like the grand-uncle in the act. He reveals himself to us and invites us to a relationship with him. Faith is responding to God, accepting who he is and what he has revealed.
 - Faith is free. It is up to us to respond or not. (Clinton had to decide for himself whether to shake his grand-uncle's hand or not.)
 - Faith is necessary in order to have a relationship with God. It is necessary for our salvation. We cannot please God unless we respond to him with faith. (Until Clinton accepted the man and shook his hand, he could not have a relationship with him.)
 - Though God does speak to us personally, we have received our faith from others. Our faith has come to us through a 'chain of believers' and each of us is like a link in that chain. (Just as Clinton's cousin helped him accept the man's words.) We too need to share the faith with others. (Like the cousin who helped Clinton accept the uncle.)
 -

II. DEVELOPMENT:

- Let's now examine our faith, which is the faith of the Church, and check if we have understood it fully and if we can personally profess it. Where will we find a summary of our faith?
[In the Creed: the 'I Believe' as we call it.]
- A creed is a summary of our faith. St. Cyril compares it to a mustard seed which is tiny, but contains the whole tree with its branches.
- There are many creeds, but the most important for us are the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. All Catholics should know, understand and profess them. The Apostles' Creed is the most ancient, and was actually the faith of the Apostles in a nutshell. The Nicene Creed is also very old. It is a little more detailed.
- This year we have studied most of the Creed in detail. Let's see if you can remember what you have studied.

[Give out the handouts. Read the two Creeds aloud. Students form groups of 3 and attempt to answer the questions given. Students also attempt to memorize the creeds.]

Go over the answers together in a quiz format: Ask questions to one group at a time, and give them marks if the answer is right. All the students correct the answers in their sheets.

Bonus points are given to the groups whose members can recite the creeds. They could do it in parts: One student beginning, the next continuing.]

1. Who created the world? The Father, Son or Holy Spirit? *All three. Creation is the joint work of the Holy Trinity.*
2. What was the main reason for God's creation? *Love.*
3. How many Gods are there? *One God, but 3 persons.*
4. In what ways are human beings different from the rest of creation? *We are made in the image of God; we are able to know and love God; we have a soul.*
5. In what ways is God our Father? *He has given us life; he cares for us as a loving parent; in Jesus we have become children of God through Baptism.*
6. What does 'JESUS' mean? *God saves.*
7. What does 'CHRIST' mean? *Anointed one.*
8. 'LORD' was used to replace the holy name given by God. What was that name? *Yahweh or YHWH.*
9. Give one word for 'God becoming flesh'. *Incarnation.*
10. Is it more correct to say that Jesus is God or man? Explain. *Jesus is fully God and fully man.*
11. In reply to Mary's question, the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."
12. Who is guilty of Jesus' death? *Everyone, since all have sinned.*
13. Did God purposely send Jesus to die? *Yes. God loved us so much that he sent his Son to die for us.*
14. Did Jesus accept the cross freely? *Yes. He said it clearly many times: that no one was taking his life, but he was laying it down freely.*
15. What is the use of Jesus' suffering and death? *Jesus took our punishment and redeemed us. He reunited us to God.*
16. What does 'HELL' refer to in the Creed? Why did Jesus go there? *The place where the dead go. Jesus went there to free the just who had died before.*
17. What was the first sign that Jesus had risen? What other reason do we have to believe in his resurrection? *The empty tomb was the first sign. After that Jesus appeared to many people.*
18. Did Jesus have a body like ours when he rose? Explain. *Yes and no. He had a body which could be touched, but at the same time it was different. It would never die again.*
19. How did the resurrection make a difference? *Death lost its power. We too will rise after death. Even on earth we can conquer sin with the power of Jesus.*

20. As Jesus ascended, what took him out of their sight? What was it a sign of? *A cloud. It was a sign of the Holy Spirit.*
21. Who told the disciples that Jesus would come again? *Two angels.*
22. What will happen when the world ends? *At first there will be a time of trouble when our faith will be tested. Then Jesus will come as king and judge, and set everything right.*
23. From where did we get the name 'Holy Spirit'? *Jesus himself.*
24. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete. Give at least 2 other words used instead of Paraclete. *Helper, comforter, advocate, companion.*
25. When did Jesus himself say that he was 'sent' by the Spirit on his mission? *In the synagogue, when he read from the scripture.*
26. Whom did the Spirit use to prepare the people for Jesus? *The prophets, finally John the Baptist.*
27. What does 'Church' mean? *An assembly or gathering of God's people.*
28. When was the Holy Spirit poured out on the disciples? What signs accompanied his coming? *On Pentecost. Tongues of fire, the sound of a mighty wind.*
29. How many people were baptized that day? *About 3000.* What did the newly formed Church begin to do? (5 actions) *Listened to God's word; prayed; celebrated the Eucharist; shared their belongings; witnessed.*
30. What do we mean 'the resurrection of the body'? *On the last day we will receive new bodies, like Jesus and our body and soul will be united again.*

III. INTERIORISATION/PRAAYER:

- You have done well in understanding and remembering the Creeds. But faith goes beyond the head. It must come from the heart. Let us now make our faith personal, by writing our own Creed: a prayer of faith. Tell God what you believe and how you want to respond to him. Read one part at a time, and write what you believe in your own words, as a prayer.

Eg. In the first part (I believe in God the Father Almighty) you might write:

Heavenly Father, I believe that you are really my Father and you provide for me.

Thank you for creating me as I am.

ASSIGNMENT: Learn the Creeds.