

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Session 1: Baptismal Covenant	6
Session 2: Teaching and Fellowship, Bread and Prayers	14
Session 3: Resist, Repent, and Return	19
Session 4: Word and Example	25
Session 5: Seek and Serve	31
Session 6: Into the World in Witness	36
Glossary	43
Appendix 1: Map of Israel at the Time of Jesus	47
Appendix 2: The Bible and the Prayer Book	48
Appendix 3: The Gospel of Matthew (Year A)	51
Appendix 4: The Gospel of Mark (Year B)	54
Appendix 5: The Gospel of Luke (Year C).....	57
Bibliography	60



Session 1: *I Believe*

PLAN THE SESSION

Celebrant: Do you believe in God the Father?

*People: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

*Celebrant: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son
of God?*

*People: I believe in Jesus Christ, his holy Son,
our Lord.*

*He was conceived by the power of
the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was
buried.*

*He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand
of the Father.*

*He will come again to judge the
living and the dead.*



Celebrant: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

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

*Celebrant: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and
fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?*

People: I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant: Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you
fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?*

People: I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant: Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News
of God in Christ?*

People: I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving
your neighbor as yourself?*

People: I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people,
and respect the dignity of every human being?*

People: I will, with God's help.

To Bring

- 2 Bibles
- 2 copies of The Book of Common Prayer

Matters of Time and Place

How much time you spend on each session can be flexible, depending on what you and the confirmand you will be mentoring have available, but aim for between 45 minutes and an hour and a half. Choose a meeting place that will be comfortable for both of you: a quiet room at church, the student's home, your home, a coffee shop or even somewhere outside if weather permits.

The Session at a Glance

- Welcome the student you will be mentoring.
- Get better acquainted.
- Pray the Baptismal Covenant responsively and offer background on the Creed.
- Share questions and conversation.
- Close with prayer.

Before the Session

- Select a meeting place.
- Extend a personal invitation to the confirmand you will be mentoring, either in person or by telephone.
- Have two copies of *The Book of Common Prayer* and two Bibles in hand.
- Read through the background information on the Apostles' Creed (p. 12), the suggested scripture passages, and the questions for conversation. Note your own responses to the questions.

THE SESSION

Gather

Welcome the student you are accompanying as mentor on his or her journey of faith. If you do not know each other well, consider spending time getting acquainted by sharing such things as background and interests, talents and passions.

To initiate the Session, turn to page 304 in *The Book of Common Prayer* and pray the whole Baptismal Covenant, with the student as *Celebrant* and you as *People*.

This would be a good place to share some (or all) of the background information about the Apostles' Creed, on which the opening three questions of the Baptismal Covenant are based.

For each of the following "Focus" segments, read the selected scripture passages and consider the questions for conversation.

Focus: Communion of Saints and the Communal Nature of the Creeds

Discuss:

- What does it mean to be connected to those who lived before and after us and universally?
- The Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor (p. 71) says "When I say, 'We believe...' I count on that to cover what I cannot believe on my own right now. When my faith limps, I lean on the faith of the church, letting 'our' faith suffice until mine returns. Later, when I am able to say, 'We believe...' with



renewed confidence, I know that I am filling in for others who are indisposed for the time being, as they filled in for me. My decision to say the creed at all is a decision to trust those who have gone before me, embracing the faith they have commended to me.”

- “We” vs. “I” believe; can you name an occasion when you’ve stood as an individual in companionship/unity with others? Do you feel most comfortable speaking as an individual in a group or in the unity of one collective group? See *The Book of Common Prayer (BCP)*, pages 326-8 where there is an option of using the plural vs. individual form of the Nicene Creed.
- What does *God, One in Three, Three in One*, encompass for you?

Focus: “Creed” as One’s Deepest Belief

Discuss:

- Is there anything you believe in so much you would be willing to shout it in front of a crowded room?
- In the Gospel of Luke, there are statements of conviction that have been incorporated into our liturgies of Morning and Evening Prayer, called Canticles.

Read and discuss the following. Which passages do you like and why?

- Song of Mary/The Magnificat—Luke 1:46-55—BCP pages 91 (Canticle 15) and 119
- Zechariah’s Prophecy—Luke 1:67-79—BCP page 92 (Canticle 16)
- Angel’s Announcement/Gloria—Luke 2:14—BCP page 94 (Canticle 20)

- Simeon's Proclamation—Luke 2:29-32—BCP page 93 (Canticle 17)
- John the Baptist—Luke 3:4-6
- Jesus' Mission—Luke 4:16-19
- Declaration of Peter—Luke 9:18-20

Closing

Close your time together by praying the Lord's Prayer and/or the following selected stanzas from St. Patrick's Breastplate (*The Hymnal* 1982, #370):

*I bind unto myself today
The strong name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same,
The Three in One and One in Three.
Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.*

BACKGROUND ON THE APOSTLES' CREED

The first three questions of the Baptismal Covenant comprise the Apostle's Creed, which, as our oldest creed, has stood the test of time. Legend has it that this creed was written by the apostles of Jesus before they left Jerusalem to go spread the Good News to all corners of the earth. The truth is that the source remains unknown, but it does in fact predate all other Christian creeds, including the Nicene Creed, which was drafted during the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. and completed at the next council (at Constantinople in 381 A.D.); the Nicene Creed was designed to set the boundaries of orthodox doctrine, standardizing the Christian set of beliefs (Young pp. 2-4). Each generation continues to examine their beliefs in the context of the creeds as an intricate part of both tradition and liturgy of the Church.

Creeds are declarations and summaries of the faith. In the early Church, creeds were used to teach the faith and to baptize new believers. At Baptism, a priest would ask the first question, the candidates for Baptism would answer it, and the priest would then baptize them in the name of God the Father. The priest proceeded to ask a second question, which the candidates again answered, after which they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. After the third question and answer, the priest then baptized them in the name of the Holy Spirit. Their answers provided a statement of faith, an understanding of the Trinity (Young, pp. 6-9). Past and present, around the world, down through all the ages, Christians are baptized with this Trinitarian formula: *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

Since most first century folks did not read or write, the oral question and answer format became the established method of catechizing or “teaching” the summaries of the faith and gospels. We have records dating back to Hippolytus c.200 A.D. that attest to a question and answer process in the liturgy of Baptism. This format continued throughout the centuries as the primary process for catechism, or instruction in the Faith (see “An Outline of the Faith: commonly called the Catechism” in *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 843-62).

Jesus often asked questions as a means of entering into a teachable moment. “Who do you say that I am?” Take a moment to look up Peter’s response to this question in Luke 9:18-20. Another time, Jesus asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” “I believe, Lord,” was the response of the healed beggar in John 9:35, 38. Thus, “I believe” continues to be the proclamation of personal belief.

God’s love created the world; God’s love became incarnate in Christ Jesus so love could dwell among us and be our example and God’s love continues in the Holy Spirit to guide us today. The Apostles’ Creed is the backbone of the Baptismal Covenant; the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* restored the Creed to the question and answer format in both our Baptism and Confirmation liturgies.