6th-8th Small Group Time

**November 11th, 2020 @7:15-8 pm**

**Creed Overview**

**Instructions**

*Be sure to start on a positive note. Welcome each learner by name. Let them know you're glad they're here! If anyone is absent, mention you'll be praying for that person together. Small Group Time is for give-and-take discussion. Your main job is to draw learners out and get them talking about the theme. Ask open-ended questions that will provoke responses. Once the conversation begins, intervene only to bring it back on track or to stimulate more talk.*

Bible Text: Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:28-34

Lesson Focus: The Apostles’ Creed states our shared beliefs as a community of faith.

Big Question: What do I believe?

Key Words: CREED, BELIEF, CHURCH, MONOTHEISM, TRINITY

Discussion Time

1. Help youth dive into the Key Words by asking for definitions and/or providing these definitions:

-CREED: a statement of belief.

-BELIEF: an affirmed or accepted truth.

-CHURCH: the community of faith, known in the Apostles’ Creed as the “communion of saints.”

-MONOTHEISM: the belief in one God.

-TRINITY: God as three persons in one being.

2. What, in the Apostles’ Creed, do you find most helpful to your own faith?

3. What part of the Triune God do you connect with most strongly?

4. Do you think that the Apostles’ Creed should be updated or changed? Why or why not?

5. What common ground do you have with other Christians around the world?

*Even though the students in your group may not be global travelers, you can emphasize that the Christian church throughout the world uses many of the same worship practices, prayers, and creeds.*

6. How do you think the creeds can work together with the Bible to help guide the church and believers?

7. The people of the ancient world believed in many gods. Some people today say that the monotheism (belief in one God) of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is out of step with the modern world, where people believe in many different truths. How can the creeds help the church address this issue?

8. Why do you think creeds are important for the church?

**Open the Bible**

1. Invite students to open their Bibles to Deuteronomy 6:4. Ask a volunteer to read the verse aloud. Explain that throughout the Bible there are verses that *distill*, or state in a compressed and simple form, the essentials of the faith. Deuteronomy 6:4 is such a verse. Write the word *distill* on a piece of paper or whiteboard.

2. Ask students to turn to Mark 12:28-34, and ask another volunteer to read the verses aloud. Asked which commandment is greatest, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4. Explain to students that the people of Israel were the only people in the time of Moses, and later, the time of Jesus, who believed in the concept of *monotheism*: that there is one God, not many. Other people, who believed in many gods, thought that either the God of Israel was not one of the gods, or that the God Israel worshipped was another god like theirs. The belief in only one God was radical and caused Israel a lot of problems. But without that belief, they would no longer have been Israel. If you have time at this point, you may want to have the students consider if this idea of there being only one God continues to be a radical one today. Write the word *monotheism* on a piece of paper or whiteboard.

3. Invite students to turn to 1 Corinthians 8:4-6, and ask a volunteer to read the verses aloud. Explain to students that with these biblically based words the apostle Paul focuses on some of the essentials of the Christian faith. Write the words *biblically based* on a piece of paper or whiteboard. *Point out that this letter shows us that followers of Jesus have always faced challenges in getting along with each other and that faith communities have experienced many divisive forces. Statements of belief—like the Apostles’ Creed—are one way that the church remains united.*

**Open the Catechism**

1. Have students open the Small Catechism to the Apostles’ Creed (p. 12) and read it, each person reading one line. This creed, or statement of faith, is probably most familiar to students. But there are others, such as the Nicene Creed, that use slightly different language to express a particular group of believers’ understandings.

-If possible, provide hymnals or other resources that have the Nicene Creed. Compare it with the Apostles’ Creed. Discuss some of the differences. Does the Apostles’ Creed seem easier to understand? Why or why not? Remind students that Christians around the world and through the centuries have memorized it and repeated it together Sunday after Sunday.