

Confirmation Creed Worksheet For Confirmands and Sponsors Based on the Apostles' Creed

The purpose of these program worksheets is to provide a format for casual conversation between sponsors and confirmands. They are designed to allow the sharing of faith experiences and seek to build a faith based relationship between a young person who is embarking upon the journey of faith, and a member of the congregation who has some experience in a journey of faith.

It is suggested that you spend time on each of the sections of the worksheet to begin compiling ideas for the confirmand's creed that is to be completed at the end of the class. Work at your own pace and give serious thought and effort into shaping a creed that is the personal beliefs of the confirmand. His or her creed is a statement of personal faith and not just a regurgitation of parent's, sponsor's or pastor's faith. This is something that they should own for themselves.

My God bless your time together and the conversation that comes from these pages.

The Apostle's Creed

(Ecumenical Version)

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Topic 1: What We Believe About God

Read what the Apostle's Creed Says about God.

"I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth."

Discussion

"I believe in God" is one of the most basic statements of faith. We believe that God exists and that there is only one God. Even though we believe in the trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), they are not separate gods, but rather one God being made known in different ways.

Talk to one another about evidence of God's existence, giving examples of different ways God is made known to you. (Examples: nature, prayer, other people, worship)

By calling God "the Father", we are stating that a relationship exists between people and God. God loves and cares about us. As Father (or a loving parent) God has standards for our behavior. God wants us to live a moral and just life

List some of the attributes of the parent/child relationship that you have witnessed in your relationship with God. How is this relationship with God expressed in your everyday life?

The word "Almighty" means all powerful. God is in charge of the world. People can't control God. We can't force or trick God into doing our will. (Examples: conditional prayers to win a game or pass a test.)

Discuss ways to pray to God for help. Talk about times when God's power has helped you do difficult things that you thought you couldn't do, but with God you could.

God is the maker of Heaven and Earth. Our world is God's creation. God is not identified with part of creation (the sun or moon), nor can an image (idol) of God be created by human hands because God is spirit.

Talk to one another about how the idea of God influences you in stewardship of your material possessions, money, God-given talents, and time. How can we use these things to serve God's plan for the world?

Confirmand: Write your ideas about "what I believe in God" (use the back if needed)

Topic 2: What We Believe About Jesus

Read what the Apostle's Creed Says about Jesus.

"I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead."

Discussion

Jesus is the Son of God. He is both human and divine. He is the word incarnate, or "made flesh". Jesus has the characteristics of being human and also the spiritual nature of God. He is not part human and part God, but fully both.

Talk about how your belief in Jesus affects your personal relationship with God.
Discuss how Jesus' life is a model for us to live our own lives.

Jesus is our Lord. By acknowledging Jesus as our Lord, we are saying we are one of his disciples.

Talk about how you have followed in the footsteps of Jesus as a disciple on your everyday life. Talk about how being a disciple is more than a personal belief, but a way of life.

Jesus' life here on earth. Jesus was born, suffered, died and rose so that we may have life.

Witness to one another about how these events in Jesus' life affect your belief in who Jesus is. Is one of these events more important than another?

Jesus will come again.

Discuss the importance about the understanding of future judgment (being held accountable for your life). What is the importance between what we say we believe versus our actions?

Confirmand: Write your ideas about "what I believe in Jesus" (use the back if needed)

Topic 3: What We Believe About Holy Spirit

Read what the Apostle's Creed Says about the Holy Spirit.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit"

Discussion

The Holy Spirit is God's present activity in our midst. When we sense God's leading, God's challenge, or God's support or comfort, we say that it's the Holy Spirit at work.

In Hebrew, the words for Spirit, wind, and breath are nearly the same. The same is true in Greek. In trying to describe God's activity among them, the ancients were saying that it was like God's breath, like a sacred wind. It could not be seen or held: "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes" (John 3:8). But the effect of God's Spirit, like the wind, could be felt and known.

Where do we find the evidence of the Spirit at work?

In the Bible: The Spirit is mentioned often throughout the Bible. In Genesis a "wind from God swept over the face of the waters," as if taking part in the Creation (1:2). Later in the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible), we often read of "the Spirit of the Lord."

With your sponsor find some places in the Bible where the spirit is mentioned. Write them down here and discuss what they mean in that passage. What was the Spirit doing? How did humankind witness the spirit of at all, and what is described.

Today we continue to experience God's breath, God's Spirit. We sense the Spirit in time alone—perhaps in prayer, in our study of the Scriptures, in reflection on a difficult decision, or in the memory of a loved one. The Spirit's touch is intensely personal. Perhaps we're even more aware of the Holy Spirit in the community of believers—the congregation, the church school class or fellowship group, the soup kitchen, the family. Somehow the Spirit speaks through the thoughtful and loving interaction of God's people. The Holy Spirit, who brought the church into being, is still guiding and upholding it, if we will but listen.

Why is it important to listen?

Fruits: Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16). What sort of fruit? Paul asserts that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22).

Gifts: Paul also writes that the Spirit bestows spiritual gifts on believers. In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 he lists nine, which vary from one person to another: the utterance of wisdom, the utterance of knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, the discernment of spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

How does the Holy Spirit affect our lives?

Confirmand: Write your ideas about "what I believe in the Holy Spirit"

Topic 4: What We Believe About the church

Read what the Apostle's Creed Says about the church

"I believe in...the holy catholic church, the communion of saints."

Discussion

The following is the United Methodist doctrine on the church. Take some time with your sponsor and talk about each bullet point.

- **We believe that the church is the body of Christ, an extension of Christ's life and ministry in the world today.**
- **We believe that the mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.**
- **We believe that the church is "the communion of saints," a community made up of all past, present, and future disciples of Christ.**
- **We believe that the church is called to worship God and to support those who participate in its life as they grow in faith**

Do you understand and agree with the UMC?

Where do you see the church working to fulfill these beliefs?

Where do you see the church falling short?

Confirmand: Write your ideas about "what I believe about the Church"

Topic 5: What we Believe About Forgiveness

Read what the Apostle's Creed Says about the forgiveness.

"I believe in...the forgiveness of sins."

Discussion

The Bible has a lot to say about forgiveness. There are times when we get angry, when people hurt us, or when we feel betrayed. We have options at that point. We can hold on to anger forever, letting it build and fester inside of us, or we can let go of our anger and resentment in order to offer forgiveness. Understanding how to forgive others and learning to forgive ourselves comes from seeing God as the ultimate figure in how to forgive.

Can you think about a time when you have faced a situation where forgiveness need to be given or received? Share together.

Explore together the following passages, then share with each other what you believe the Bible is telling us about forgiveness.

Ephesians 2:1-5

Matthew 18:21-22

Romans 6:11-13

Luke 17:4

Find one passage on your own that isn't listed.

Confirmand: Write your ideas about "what I believe about forgiveness."

Topic 6: What we Believe About Life Everlasting & Salvation

Read what the Apostle's Creed Says about the life everlasting.

"I believe in...the resurrection of the body and life everlasting."

Discussion

What does it mean to be saved and to be assured of salvation? It's to know that after feeling lost and alone, we've been found by God. It's to know that after feeling worthless, we've been redeemed. It's to experience a reunion with God, others, the natural world, and our own best selves. It's a healing of all the bad we've experienced. In salvation we become whole. Salvation happens to us both now and for the future. It's "eternal life," that new quality of life in unity with God of which the Gospel of John speak—a life that begins not at death, but in the present.

Salvation cannot be earned. There's no behavior, no matter how holy or righteous, by which we can achieve salvation. Rather, it's the gift of a gracious God.

Share with your sponsor what we have talked about in class about grace and the three different forms of grace that John Wesley taught about. To help a sponsor out those three are listed here with a brief description. Use this time to talk together about your questions about salvation and life eternal. Who goes to heaven? Do we need to do something to get to heaven?

God's **prevenient grace** is with us from birth, preparing us for new life in Christ. "Prevenient" means "comes before." Wesley believed that God places a little spark of divine grace within us that enables us to recognize and accept God's justifying grace.

Today some call God's **justifying grace** "conversion" or being "born again." When we experience God's justifying grace, we come into that new life in Christ. Wesley believed that people are free to accept or reject God's justifying grace.

Wesley believed that, after we have accepted God's grace, we are to move on in God's **sustaining grace** toward perfection. Wesley believed the people could "fall from grace" or "backslide." We cannot claim God's salvation and do nothing. We are to participate in what Wesley called "the means of grace" and to continue to grow in Christian life.

Confirmand: Write your ideas about "what I believe about life everlasting and salvation"