

# The Apostles' Creed Leader Leaflet



*Exploring Luther's Small Catechism*

This course is recommended for Grades 3-4.

## INTRODUCTION

This Lutheran Enrichment course is designed to help third and fourth graders understand who God is and appreciate the many ways God loves and guides us as God's people. They will begin to feel connected to the Christians from the past and present who have used the words of the Apostles' Creed to profess their faith in God.

## Your learners

Third and fourth graders are beginning to grapple with more abstract realities such as the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and the universal church. They will study the meanings of the articles of the Creed. They will see how the truths of the Creed apply to their own daily lives and how they help them grow in loving and serving God.

## The learning setting

These learning activities are designed to be creative, active, and fun. At times, children are asked to work in pairs or small groups in order to assure that everyone is actively involved in the learning process. Move to new spaces for learning activities whenever you can. Sit on a rug to read and talk, stand at tables for art work, go outside or to a larger unrestricted play area for games or drama, and find a special corner for worship.

## The session format

Each session includes four basic parts:

- Learning Focus—the main teaching point for the session;
- Background Information—insight and direction about the session's content, the learners' developmental readiness to learn, and room setup;
- Heart of the Learning—the learning core, including stories, games, puzzles, and projects, catechism connection, prayer time;

- Response Activities—designed to help learners apply the session content to their daily lives and respond.

## SESSION 1

# I BELIEVE IT!

## LEARNING FOCUS

The Apostles' Creed helps us understand and tell others what we believe about God and God's love for us.

## BACKGROUND

In this session, learners will be introduced to the Apostles' Creed. They will begin to consider the importance of knowing and believing the truth about God and being part of the believing community that shares this statement of faith.

In this session the learners will study the doctrine of the Trinity. Although third and fourth graders usually think concretely, they can begin to understand abstract realities. Make your classroom colorful and inviting. Display bright posters or pictures that will help children think about God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Provide comfortable seating and an easy-to-see chalkboard or chart paper easel. Most of all, wear a warm smile and welcome each child to this new adventure!

## HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

## Believe it or not

**Preparation:** Have the Learner Resources (LR) and pencils ready to distribute.

- Welcome the learners. This session begins with a daily life game. Distribute the learner resources (LR) and pencils. Ask a volunteer to read the instructions and then play the game.
- Read about and identify the two things in the “What Do You See?” illustration: (*a chalice and two profiles*). Discuss the children’s experiences with being fooled by appearances. Emphasize that “believing” is the same as “trusting.”

## Some important data

- Have a volunteer read aloud the activity (LR, page 4) to help the learners understand what the Apostles’ Creed is and how it came to be. Emphasize that everything in it comes from the Bible and is reliable. Say that this creed is spoken at baptisms as a clear statement of what Christians believe about God.

## Truth treasures

- Read the directions to the class (LR, page 5). Form pairs to do the puzzle. (*The words in the puzzle are: I believe, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, God, Creator, died, rose, church, forgiveness, life. The circled letters spell: very glad.*)

## One God, three persons

**Preparation:** Provide colored markers.

- Distribute the markers and do this activity together (LR, page 6). Discuss everyday symbols: (*product logos, flags, badges, and the like*). Discuss why the two symbols on the page are good symbols for the Trinity: (*They each have three parts, all equal and connected. All three parts are needed to make the whole.*) Discuss other possible symbols: (*any three-part fruit with skin, flesh, and seeds or plant with root, stem, and flower/seed.*)

## Prayer time

- Refer to the directions (LR, page 6). Explain that you will begin the prayer time with a short prayer that gives each person a chance to offer personal thanks. Then say: *Thank you, God, for the Apostles’*

*Creed that helps us say what we believe about you. Thank you for. . . .” Invite each child to name what he or she drew or wrote. End with “Amen.”*

## RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

## A fantastic family!

**Preparation:** Have pencils, markers, and chalkboard or newsprint available.

- Invite learners to read the directions (LR, page 7). Discuss things that make families good. Say that families don’t need to be perfect to have some good qualities about them. (*Ideas may include: playing games or taking trips together, celebrating birthdays, sledding or hiking, visiting relatives, sharing work.*)
- Explain that a church is a family of people who love God and care about one another. The church family wants to share God’s love, help people, and do enjoyable things together. Help learners think about some of the good things that their church family does together. (*These might include: praying, singing, classes, special services, fellowship dinners.*)
- Invite them to draw a picture of a favorite church family activity (LR, page 7) and tell the group about it.

## Trinity triptych

**Preparation:** Provide 9” x 12” sheets of bright and dark construction paper, sheets of light-colored tissue paper or cellophane, scissors, pencils or fine-point markers, glue, rulers, 1” x 3” strips of white paper—three per learner. Also make or locate a small cutout sample of each of these symbols: HAND, CROSS, and FLAME. Make an triptych.

- Ask the learners to name the three ways in which we express our belief in “one God in three persons” in the Apostles’ Creed. Say, “We will make a triptych (*trip-tick*)—a set of three connected picture panels. In each panel we will put a symbol of God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These panels will remind us of the three parts of the creed and of what we believe about God.”



Figure A

- Show your sample. *See Figure A.* Say, “The HAND is for God the Father who created all things and who gives us what we need; the CROSS is for Jesus the Son who died for our sins; the FLAME is for the Holy Spirit and the power we have to share God’s love.”
- Distribute sheets of construction paper, rulers, pencils, and scissors. Help each learner fold a sheet of paper evenly into thirds and cut off the top corners to make arched edges. Have the learners draw a line about one inch from the outside edges of the folded paper as shown. Cut along that line to make windows in the center of the panels. *See Figure B.*

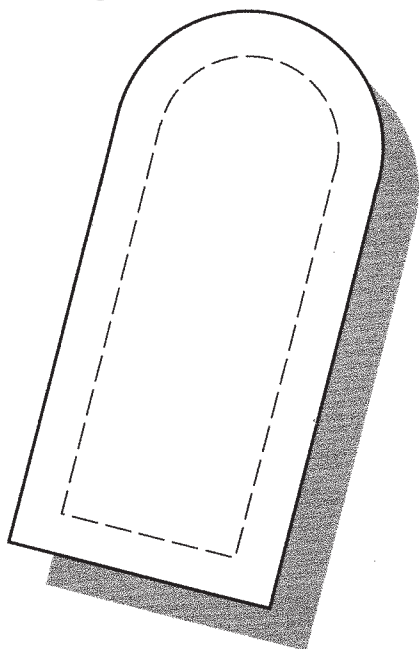


Figure B

- Trace symbol shapes onto brightly colored construction paper and cut them out. Glue a sheet of cellophane or tissue paper across the back of the triptych to cover all openings. Glue one symbol in each panel window you have made. Print “GOD THE FATHER,” “GOD THE SON,” and “GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT” on each of the three white strips. Glue each one under the corresponding window.



## SESSION 2

# GOD CREATES AND CARES FOR US

## LEARNING FOCUS

God lovingly created us, provides for our needs, and protects us from evil and harm. We respond by thanking and serving God.

## BACKGROUND

This session is based on Luther’s explanation of the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed. Luther makes this short statement a very personal one by emphasizing that God created each of us and by listing the many ways God provides for and protects us. A number of these are emphasized in this session’s learning activities.

This session is rather active. Be sure learners have places to spread out and do the activities in “God’s Greatest Wonder” in the learner resource (LR, page 9). Also locate an open space for the “Air Ball” game (LR, page 13).

## HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

## God made it all

**Preparation:** Have learner resources (LR) and pencils ready to distribute.

- Greet the children warmly. This activity will help learners begin to focus on the vastness of creation and on how great God is to form it all.
- Have volunteers read the section to the class. (*The features that can be seen on earth are:*



*clouds, oceans, large mountains, large rivers, large lakes, people, animals, forests, and land masses.)*

## God's greatest wonder

- Tell the class a little about Martin Luther at this time and show them a translation of Luther's *Small Catechism*. This activity will help learners discover what the Apostles' Creed and Luther's explanation of it teach us about the Creator God.
- Read the section (LR, page 9). Invite learners to try the activities. Discuss how God made humans able to do many things because of unique qualities God gave them. (*Humans' opposable thumbs, ability to stand erect, and gift of language are a few examples of God's loving care for people.*)

## A maze of ways God provides and protects

- Read the directions (LR, page 10). Have the learners follow the maze with their fingers. When they come to a marked space, ask them to tell you about how God provides for them in that specific way. Ask for suggestions to fill the empty spaces on the maze.
- Talk about the questions at the bottom of the page. Continue to emphasize God's love for them in providing for their needs and protecting them—from sin or evil as well as from danger.

## Prayer time

- Plan to do "Thanks Lord!" (LR, page 12) in a space where learners have room to do the motions.
- Read the opening paragraph and practice motions for the psalm response.
- Have learners fill in the sentence prayer blanks.
- Pray the sentence prayers, following each with the psalm verse and motions.

## RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

### Air ball

**Preparation:** Provide an inflated balloon, some extra balloons in case of breakage, masking or colored tape for the floor or ground.

- Tell the learners this game is a good way to combine fun and reflection.
- Ask volunteers to read the directions (LR, page 13).
- Go to the playing area and choose teams. Divide the class into two groups yourself to minimize the chance of children feeling undesirable because they were not chosen first.
- Put the balloon into play and let the game begin! If the balloon falls to the ground without touching anyone, the nearest person must name a way to obey God. Encourage learners to avoid stereotyped or vague answers such as: "Obey your parents" or "Visit a nursing home."
- Allow some time at the end of the game to have the class sit down in the area and try to remember some of the things that were mentioned. Discuss why some of the ideas are especially good ways to serve and obey God.
- If you must play indoors, play sitting down.

## Creation postcards

**Preparation:** Gather 4" x 6" index cards—one per learner; two yards of clear adhesive paper; a variety of leaves, small flowers, and twigs; markers; scissors.

- Say that this activity will help learners reflect on and celebrate some of the other wonders of God's creation.
- Distribute the index cards and ask learners to cut a piece of adhesive paper the same size.
- Invite learners to choose leaves, petals, and twigs and place them on the card in a nice design. Make sure they leave some areas uncovered so the adhesive paper will have places to stick to the card.
- Help learners peel off the backing on the adhesive paper and place it carefully over the card so the edges are even with the card's edges. Help them press out wrinkles by moving fingers across the surface.
- Distribute markers. Have learners turn over the cards and draw a line down the center to make two halves—one for a message and one for an address. Invite learners to write a message about creation such as: "God gives us a beautiful world" or "Enjoy God's great creation."
- Talk about people with whom they might like to share the good news that God has made a beautiful world for us to use and enjoy. Urge them to send or give the card to that person or take care of that for them.



## SESSION 3

# JESUS: SAVIOR AND FRIEND

## LEARNING FOCUS

God loves us so much that God sent Jesus to die for our sins and give us new life with God.

## BACKGROUND

This session is based on the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed. This article focuses on the core message of the gospel: our sin, God's loving response in Christ, and the gift of eternal life which begins now. For some, this message is familiar ground, but it cannot be repeated too often.

We do not want to overemphasize sin so that children are oppressed by it. But we do want the children to grasp the serious nature of sin. We want them to see that God took incredible measures to save us from the consequences of our sin. The main emphasis should be on our salvation and new life through Jesus Christ, and on the great joy that brings.

Children who are eight to ten may raise questions about fairness versus mercy. Clear-cut rules and predictable, fair punishments are important to them. A strong sense of justice prevails. Point out that although rules and consequences are important in guiding our lives, we must be grateful that God does not treat us as we deserve to be treated. Out of thankfulness for God's loving kindness, we are to treat others as mercifully as God treats us.

## HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

### Ralph the robot

**Preparation:** Provide the learner resources (LR) and space for role plays.

- Welcome learners to the session and distribute the learner resources (LR). Read Ralph's story to the class (LR, page 14). This activity will help the learners think about the problem of sin and its destructive nature. Encourage everyone to take a turn acting out at least one of the roles.

## What would God do?

**Preparation:** Provide pencils.

- Have a volunteer read this activity (LR, page 15). Distribute pencils and invite learners to do the puzzle. (*Answer: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16*)
- Discuss the questions. (*Answers: 1. God loved us; 2. God sent God's Son to give us eternal life instead of eternal death.*)

## Jesus died so we could live

**Preparation:** Provide colored markers and a piece of colored construction paper following this code:

- black for paragraph 1;
- red for paragraph 2;
- dark blue for paragraph 3—up to "saved from death," then orange;
- yellow for paragraph four.

- Read this activity (LR, page 16) to the class. As you read, ask the learners to focus on the colored paper you hold in front of them. When you are done reading, ask learners to tell you how the colors they saw affected their reactions. Have the learners color the illustration.

## Wiped away

**Preparation:** Provide white and brightly colored construction paper, scissors, and glue.

- Ask a volunteer to read the directions to the class (LR, page 17). Distribute the paper, scissors, and glue. Do the activity together.

## Prayer time

- Join hands around the table and pray the prayer together (LR, page 17).

## RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

- Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

## Smile if you're glad!

**Preparation:** Set up a circle of chairs or have the learners sit on the floor.



- Read this activity together (LR, page 18) and review the rules for the game. Continue playing until everyone is giggling. Say that this is the kind of joy we feel when we think of our new life with Jesus.

## New life butterfly

**Preparation:** Provide 8½" x 11" copier paper, 9" x 12" colored construction paper, pencils, scissors, black crayons, glue, white corn syrup, food coloring, watercolor brushes, margarine tubs, water.

- Demonstrate how to make a butterfly by folding a sheet of copier paper in half and drawing one half of the body and one wing next to the fold. Cut through both layers, then open the paper to reveal the symmetrical shape.
- Discuss the fact that butterflies have identical patterns on each wing. Use black crayons to make such patterns on the wings. Press hard enough to leave a solid, waxy black line.
- Glue the butterfly to a sheet of construction paper.
- Pour white corn syrup into several margarine tubs and mix a little food coloring into each one to create bright "stained-glass" colors.

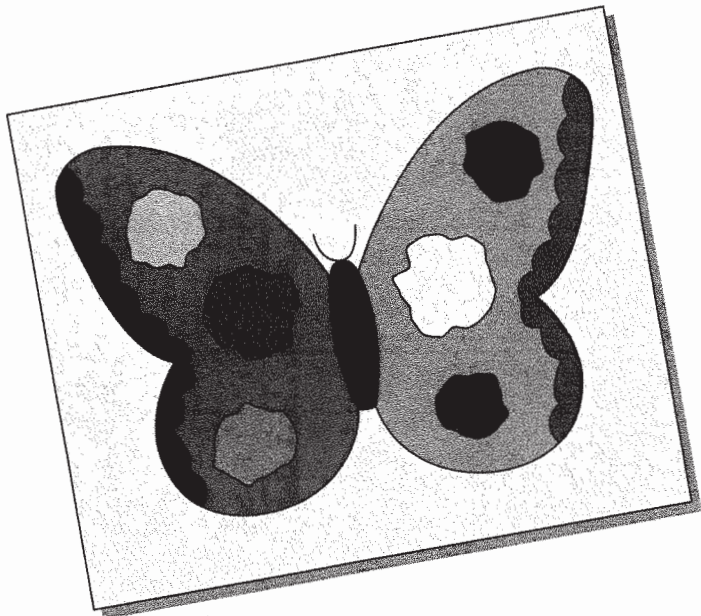


Figure C

- Using watercolor brushes and the syrup mixture, paint the spaces that have been outlined in black crayon, being careful to stay within the outlines. Let the paintings dry. The colors will remain bright and glossy after drying, resembling stained glass.
- Thoroughly wash the watercolor brushes.

## New life mobile

**Preparation:** Provide sheets of silver mylar, or sheets of lightweight cardboard (such as poster board) and aluminum foil; masking tape, pencils; scissors; hole punch; string or heavy thread; and symbol patterns for 3" high shapes. (Symbol suggestions: cross, sunburst, crown, or heart.) Make a sample mobile. See "Figure D" below.

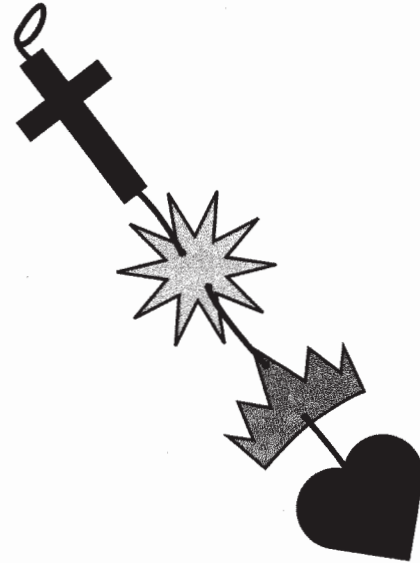


Figure D

- Show the learners the mobile you have made and tell them you will all make mobiles to take home to remind them of their New Life in Christ.
- Have learners choose three shapes they want on their mobiles. If they are making the mobiles from mylar, have them lightly tape each pattern to the mylar, cut around it, and then remove the pattern. If they are using foil, have them trace shapes onto the cardboard, cut them out, and wrap them with foil.
- Punch a hole in the top and the bottom of each shape. Tie a looped string to the top of one shape, leaving a long string tail. Connect the remaining shapes with the same string so each shape hangs below the other (like a kite).
- Encourage learners to hang their mobiles in windows. As the mobiles catch the sunlight, they will be reminders of God's love for us. God sent Jesus to bring us warmth and new life, just like sunlight does. This is something to celebrate!



## SESSION 4

# THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US BELIEVE

## LEARNING FOCUS

The Holy Spirit helps us believe in Jesus, forgives all our sin, and will raise us to live with Jesus forever.

## BACKGROUND

In the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, Luther describes the work of the Holy Spirit as being threefold:

- enabling one to believe in Christ;
- calling the church into being and keeping it in the true faith;
- forgiving sin and raising believers to eternal life.

All three are essential in the work of the Holy Spirit.

As always, emphasizing God's love in very personal ways is part of Luther's explanation. This should be central to this session's activities as well. Third and fourth graders increasingly want to be part of a group. Emphasize that the church is worldwide. As Christians, we are one church—all one together in Christ—including them!

Most of the learners' thinking is still focused on concrete things. Their limited ability to grasp abstract concepts may make it difficult for them to imagine who the Holy Spirit is. Help them by saying the Spirit is God's Spirit—or God—present and acting in our lives right now.

## HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

## Not on our own

**Preparation:** Gather supplies for making sandwiches: bread, jelly, peanut butter, knives, spoons, and plates or napkins.

- Begin by giving each learner one item needed for making a sandwich and say, "Make a sandwich." Wait a few minutes. If they don't begin to work together, urge them to do so and make half a sandwich for everyone. As you eat, talk about how we can do some things on our own, but not others.
- Distribute the learner resources (LR) and ask volunteers to read the first section in Session 4. Distribute markers and do the activity. The words are "THE GOSPEL." Help learners grasp that God's own Spirit works in us as we hear God's word to make it possible for us to believe in Jesus and his love for us.

## Gathered together

**Preparation:** Invite two church leaders and two active members to be interviewed during the session. Distribute Learner Resources and pencils.

- Have volunteers read the information on page 21. Have church members—leaders and active members without leadership roles—ready to share ways they are part of the church. Station them around the room or in a nearby area.
- Invite learners to ask each of them to share what they do as part of the church and then get their autographs. Emphasize that everyone's service is important, not just leaders'.

## You can count on it!

**Preparation:** Provide a waste basket and recycled paper to make paper wads.

- Read the directions to the class (LR, page 22) and follow them. Invite learners to throw their paper wads in the basket. Constantly move the basket as they are aiming, so they can never be sure if they can hit it. Then begin again. This time, hold the basket where they can easily reach it.

- Discuss how they felt in each situation. Complete the page. Say that the words of the creed should make them feel glad because they are true.
- Read the rest of page 22 and go on to the next page. (*The answers for the cryptograph are: FORGIVES, LAST, DAY, RAISE, ME, ALL, GIVE, TO, ME, ALL, ETERNAL, LIFE.*)

## Prayer time

Use the sound choir reading and a short prayer to thank God for the truths of the Apostles' Creed.

## RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

## Praise God with a rhythm and sound choir

- Divide the group as evenly as possible. Read the directions (LR, page 24).
- Practice each part individually. Point to each group when it is to come in or drop out.
- Practice speaking louder and softer. (You may want to start softly and end loudly, for example.)
- Practice the reading several times.
- Plan to end the session using it as a prayer.

## Light of God's love candles

**Preparation:** Gather one 8-10 ounce jar or can for each class member; double boiler; stove; wax; wick; construction paper, wallpaper samples or other colorful paper.

- Explain that candles remind us of the light of God's love in our lives. The learners have been discovering more and more about that love as they have studied the Apostles' Creed.
- Melt wax in double boiler on low heat. Fill the containers with melted wax. Dip lengths of wick a bit taller than the containers into the wax. Then hold the wick straight under cold running water until the wax hardens.
- Poke a small hole in the warm wax with a straightened hangar, and insert the wick. Pour hot wax around the wick area to fill in the hole.

- Invite learners to decorate their candle containers with their choice of paper cut to size. Those who choose construction paper may wish to decorate it before gluing it to their containers.

## "I Believe in One God" circle poster

**Preparation:** Provide one 12"-16" cardboard circle for each class member, old magazines, markers, scissors, and glue.

- Give each learner a circle. Explain that we believe God is never ending—like a circle, and so is God's love. Have them print "I BELIEVE" around the circle's top and "IN ONE GOD" around the bottom.
- Invite them to draw or cut from magazines pictures and words that remind them of God and God's loving care that never ends.
- Have them glue the pictures onto the circles.



### The Apostles' Creed Exploring Luther's Small Catechism Leader Leaflet

This Leader Leaflet has a corresponding Learner Resource.

Pamela Honan Peterson, writer  
Mary Nasby Lohre and Katharine E. Fergus, editors  
Jeff Carnehl, illustrator  
RKB Studios, Inc., designer

Scripture acknowledgment: Scripture quotations marked NRSV are from New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission.

Catechism quotations unless otherwise noted are from *A Contemporary Translation of Luther's Small Catechism: Study Edition*, copyright © 1994 Augsburg Fortress.

Material identified as *LBW* is reprinted from *Lutheran Book of Worship*, copyright © 1978.

Copyright © 1995 Augsburg Fortress  
All rights reserved.

Permission is granted for congregations to reproduce this leader leaflet provided copies are for local use only and not for sale.



Printed on 50% recycled paper,  
minimum 10% postconsumer content.

Manufactured in U.S.A.