

- Objective: The confirmands learn:
- The origin of early church creeds.
 - The significance of the early church creeds for the New Apostolic Creed.
 - The contents of the New Apostolic Creed

- Contents: The confirmands will get to know about
- Early Church Creeds
 - The New Apostolic Creed
CNAC-QA 29-50

1. Lead-In

Ask **What is a creed?**

Elaborate on answers
Through further questions

Explain A creed is a statement of faith of the shared beliefs of a religious community. It is a summary of core beliefs of a doctrine of faith.

All those who profess their belief in this creed, are saying that together they believe the same things and, so form a religious denomination. A Religious denomination defines itself by its creed, and thereby distinguishes its doctrine from that of others.

Ask **When were the first statements of faith made?**

Explain In the time of the Bible

2. Early Church creeds

Explain As Christianity spread through the Roman Empire, many who became Christians in part remained caught up in their previous religious views. The fusion of these views with Christian doctrine caused uncertainty among the believers. When disputes flared up over the trinity of God and the doctrine of the nature of Jesus Christ, creeds were formulated. These were intended to be binding for the faith of the congregation and thus also for the individual believer.

Conformity to the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles served as the standard when it came to deciding whether a statement about God's being and activity should find its way into the creeds.

Various creeds were formulated: the Apostles' Creed (*Apostolicum*), the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople, and the Athanasian Creed.

Let us briefly take a look at each one of these creeds

3. The Apostles' Creed (*Apostolicum*),

This creeds originated in the early post-apostolic period. It has the following wording:

A student

reads aloud

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only 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. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal [catholic] church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

4. The Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople

In the year 325 Emperor Constantine called the Council of Nicaea which was attended by approximately 300 Bishops. Constantine regarded the Christian faith as a force capable of supporting the state. Since the unity of Christendom was threatened by a controversy concerning the essence of Christ ("the Arian controversy"), he was very interested in having the Bishops formulate a unanimous doctrine. The most important result of this council was the Nicene Creed.

It was further refined in later councils right up until the eighth century—among them the significant Council of Constantinople (AD 381)—and is designated as the "Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople". In particular, this creed goes beyond the scope of the *Apostolicum* to enshrine the profession of the Trinity of God and emphasise the distinguishing features of the church.

Following is the wording of the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople:

A student

reads aloud

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the virgin

Mary, and was made man; He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; from thence He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. In one holy universal [catholic] and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

4. The New Apostolic Church Creed

Ask **Who do you think would be responsible for compiling a creed for the New Apostolic Church?**

Elaborate on answers through further questions

Explain It is the task of the apostolate to interpret Holy Scripture and the early church creeds in a manner that is authoritative for our faith. An important result of this is the New Apostolic Creed. In it the faith and doctrine of the New Apostolic Church come to binding expression.

A student reads aloud The wording of the first three Articles of Faith is as follows:

The First Article

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

The Second Article

I believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, entered the realm of the dead, rose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from where He will return.

The Third Article

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the one, holy, universal, and apostolic church, the community of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting.

Explain The New Apostolic Creed is closely related to the early church creeds. The first three Articles of Faith largely correspond to the *Apostolicum*. They thereby emphasise the significance of this early church confession.

Explain The 4th and 5th Articles of Faith represent an interpretation and further development of the early Church creeds as they apply to the ministries.

A student reads aloud

The Fourth Article

I believe that the Lord Jesus rules His church and thereto sent His Apostles, and until His return still sends them with the commission to teach, to forgive sins in His name, and to baptise with water and Holy Spirit.

The Fifth Article

I believe that those designated by God for a ministry are ordained only by apostles, and that authority, blessing, and sanctification for their ministrations come forth out of the Apostle ministry.

Explain The 6th, 7th and 8th Articles of Faith deal with the three Sacraments of the Church.

A student

reads aloud **The Sixth Article**

I believe that the Holy Baptism with water is the first step to a renewal of a human being in the Holy Spirit, and that the person baptised is adopted into the fellowship of those who believe in Jesus Christ and profess Him as their Lord.

The Seventh Article

I believe that Holy Communion was instituted by the Lord Himself in memory of the once brought, fully valid sacrifice, and bitter suffering and death of Christ. The worthy partaking of Holy Communion establishes our fellowship with Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is celebrated with unleavened bread and wine; both must be consecrated and dispensed by a minister authorised by an Apostle.

The Eight Article

I believe that those baptised with water must, through an Apostle, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to attain the childhood in God and thereby the prerequisite for becoming a firstling.

Explain In the 9th Article of Faith the belief in Jesus Christ's return and what will take place thereafter is declared.

A student

reads aloud **The Ninth Article**

I believe that the Lord Jesus will return as surely as He ascended into heaven and that He will take to Himself the firstfruits of the dead and living who have hoped for and were prepared for His coming; that after the marriage in heaven He will return to earth with them to establish His kingdom of peace, and that they will reign with Him as a royal priesthood. After the conclusion of the kingdom of peace, He will hold the Last Judgement. Then God will create a new heaven and a new earth and dwell with His people.

Explain The 10th Article of Faith explains the relationship the Church believes should exist between the individual and society.

A student reads aloud

The Tenth Article

I believe that I am obliged to obey the worldly authorities provided no godly laws are thereby transgressed.

5. Conclusion

Since its inception, the New Apostolic Creed has been revised on several occasions. This was done in order to reflect the proper and timely development of the New Apostolic doctrine of faith.

The Creed propagates belief in the triune God, in Jesus Christ as the incarnate God, in His sacrificial death, in His resurrection, in His return, in the church as the authority that imparts salvation, in the sending of the Apostles, and in the sacraments as expressions of God's saving love and care.

New Apostolic Christians are to profess the Articles of Faith and the creed is to define their attitude of faith. It also serves to familiarise others with the essential content of the New Apostolic faith in concise form.

The main points

I also want to **profess the Creed of the New Apostolic Church!**

Homework The confirmands write down the Ten Articles of the Creed in their work books.