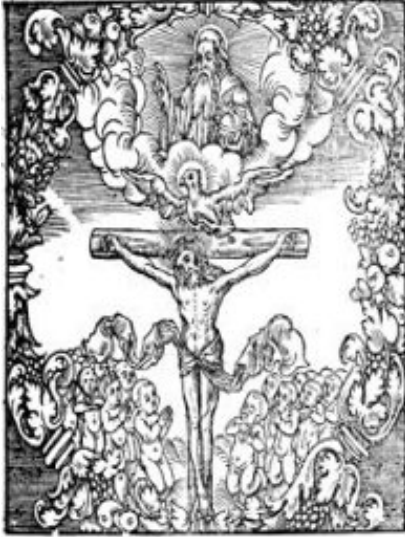


## **What Does This Mean? The Continuing Importance of Luther's Small Catechism**



### **Lesson 3. The Apostles' Creed**

#### **What Does the Catechism Mean for Christian Beliefs Today?**

#### **Prayer and Introduction,**

Almost every Sunday we confess the Apostles' Creed together. Although it is an ecumenical creed that almost all Christian churches confess, is it only an outdated confession or is it still important?

Luther did not change the Apostles' Creed but he did divide it into three articles instead of 12, as it was done in his day. Why do you think he did that?

Luther begins the discussion of the Creed with these words, "The Ten Commandments are set so high that all human ability is far too feeble and weak to keep them" (LC 2, 2). There is a reason why he placed the Creed after the Commandments.

**1. In what ways is God our Father?**

**2. Besides being almighty what else do we know about God?**

### 3. My Personal Confession (First Article):

I believe God has given me...

Suggestions: Consider listing your important possessions, family members, and specific ways God has guarded and protected you.

4. We confess that God guards and protects us from “all evil.” Give three reasons that help explain why we believe that in spite of the difficulties, pain, and hardships even we as Christians experience?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

5 Luther wrote, “This {First Article] ought to humble and terrify us all, if we believe it” (LC 2,22) List two things that **humble** you when you confess, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.”

- 1.
- 2

List two things that **terrify** you when you confess the same words.

- 1.
- 2.

**6. My Personal Confession (Second Article):**

**I believe Jesus has given me my...**

Suggestions: In your own words identify what Jesus has done for you. You may have a specific incident that has brought his blessings more clearly into focus, a loved one or fellow Christian that helped you appreciate what Jesus has done.

**7. List four things that demonstrate that Jesus is the mirror of God's fatherly heart.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**8. My Personal Confession (Third Article):**

**I believe the Holy Spirit has given me my...**

Suggestions: Consider how you came to faith or how you were kept in faith. How has the church helped you? Which church, pastor, or Christian friend has helped?

**9. Explain why the Creed begins with the words "I believe" but the meaning to the Third Article begins with the words, "I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe."**

**10. Luther wrote in the Large Catechism, “These articles of the Creed, therefore, divide and separate us Christians from all other people on earth.” (LC 2, 66.) Below identify one thing you confess in each of the Articles and explain how that belief separates you from others.**

**First Article, “I believe in God the Father...”**

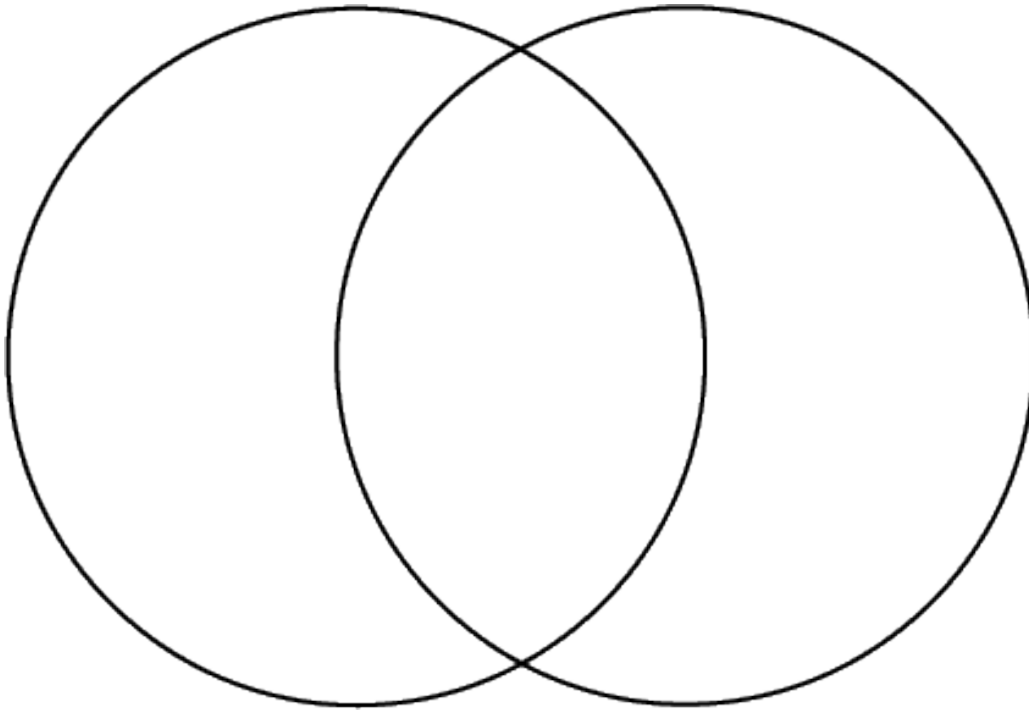
**Second Article, “ I believe in Jesus Christ...”**

**Third Article, “I believe in the Holy Spirit...”**

**11. Compare and Contrast: On the diagram below list what is unique to the Ten Commandments in the circle marked Commandments. List what is unique to the Creed in the other circle. Then list what both the Creed and Commandments have in common in the portion of the diagram where the circles overlap.**

Commandments

Creed



**12. Taking it Home: Read the three articles of the Creed and Luther's explanation. Identify things, events, or words that illustrate the depths of God's fatherly heart for you personally. Use the "My Personal Confession" exercise as a start.**

**Something to think about:**

"Here {in this creed} we have everything in richest measure. For here in all three articles God has revealed himself and opened the deepest depths of his fatherly heart and his pure, inexpressible love" (LC 2:64).

"The entire gospel that we preach is based on this point, that we properly understand this article (The Second Article) as that upon which our salvation and all happiness rests. It is so rich and complete that we can never learn it fully" (LC 2.33).