

What Catholics believe, on one page

A token that fits the other half.

In short. A creed is a summary of the principal truths of the faith and a sign of recognition and communion between believers.¹ Its three parts follow Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.^{2,3}

Key points

- Creeds take their name from their first word in Latin, credo, “I believe”.⁴
- Very early, the Church gathered the essentials of the faith into summaries, especially for candidates for Baptism.⁵
- The Creed has three parts: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.³
- The Apostles’ Creed is the ancient baptismal symbol of Rome, and the Nicene Creed is common to East and West.^{6,7}

Try this, this week

1. **Read the Apostles’ Creed aloud.** Mark the line you most want explained.
2. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:3–8.** Paul hands on what he himself received.
3. **Listen for the Creed at a Sunday Mass.** It comes after the homily.
4. **Ask a Catholic which line means most to them.**

“For I delivered unto you first of all, which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures: And that he was buried: and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures:”

1 Corinthians 15:3–4, Douay–Rheims

Watch out: what this does not mean

- A creed is a summary, the first and fundamental point of reference for catechesis, not the whole of the faith spelled out.¹
- The articles of the Creed are distinct although connected with one another, like the joints in our bodily members.⁹

Common questions

Why are there two creeds?

The Apostles’ Creed is a faithful summary of the apostles’ faith and the ancient baptismal symbol of the Church of Rome.⁶ The Nicene Creed stems from the first two ecumenical Councils, in 325 and 381, and remains common to all the great Churches of both East and West.⁷

Do I have to believe all of it?

Whoever says “I believe” says “I pledge myself to what we believe.”⁸ Communion in faith needs a common language of faith, normative for all and uniting all in the same confession of faith.⁸

Remember: Three parts, one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Sources

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| 1. CCC 188 | 6. CCC 194 |
| 2. CCC 189 | 7. CCC 195 |
| 3. CCC 190 | 8. CCC 185 |
| 4. CCC 187 | 9. CCC 191 |
| 5. CCC 186 | |

Quotation above: 1 Corinthians 15:3–4, Douay–Rheims. Catechism: official text on vatican.va.

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