

New WB Grade 7 7.3 The Creed: Our Statement of Faith

be known. The New Testament readings also praise a woman, Phoebe, and mention the idea of suffering for the sake of Christ—as Hripsimeh also did.

For Group Two: Sts. Sahag and Mesrob

The Old Testament and Apocrypha readings point out the glory that the translators brought to Christianity by their work.

The New Testament readings talk about varieties of gifts (Sahag and Mesrob used theirs well) and being ready to meet the Lord, which the translators facilitated by helping people to understand God's word and to know what he wanted of them.

Sts. Joachim and Anna—the reading from Wisdom points out how mysterious God's ways are to us. The reading from Judith exalts another woman who did extraordinary things, as Mary did after she was born to Joachim and Anna.

Ephesians talks about God's age-old plan for the world. Joachim, Anna and their daughter were part of this plan. Finally, Matthew tells those who love God not to be afraid. Joachim and Anna had to have courage to give their daughter into God's hands for the unusual and difficult role she was to play.

For Group Three

The reading for St. John Chrysostom's feast, from Isaiah, talks about one who preaches and calls people back to God just as Chrysostom, the "golden-mouthed," did.

Acts shows St. John as one who did the same things St. Paul did. The other New Testament readings show St. John as a "sower," and one who suffered for his preaching of the Word of God.

The reading from Genesis for the *Holy Archangels* is an early encounter of man with these glorious creatures. The Job reading reminds us of how exalted they are—they were close enough to the Creator to see his work.

The Isaiah reading we've talked about before. In Ezekiel, Hebrews, and Matthew we have direct references to angels and their relationship with mankind. (25 min.)

3. When the groups have reported, point out how carefully and thoroughly the Church uses the Bible as part of her worship. Tell the class that the Gospel Book (*Avedaran*) is always on the altar—a sign of Christ living among us through the words that tell of his life.

Talk about the Armenian name for the Bible, *Asdvadzashoonch*, which means "breath of God." Nothing is closer to someone than his or her very breathing. So the name *Asdvadzashoonch* means that God has shared his very life, his breath, with us. He has done this in the coming of his Son and in the words his Spirit inspired men to write. (Put the two Armenian words, "Avedaran" and "Asdvadzashoonch," on the board.)

At each Sunday liturgy, we hear the words of the

Bible. Then the priest helps us apply them to our lives by giving a sermon. The sermon should be given with the Bible readings; unfortunately, in many of our churches it's given near the end of the service to accommodate latecomers.

Tell the class that giving sermons is an important part of a priest's training. St John Chrysostom, whose feast we talked about today, was a great preacher and wrote about how to give sermons. This is one of the great responsibilities priests have—to "comment" on the Word of God! (5 min.)

4. Ask the class to work on the second part of their exercise in the student text, "My Badarak Book." Since it involves writing a brief sermon, they can finish it as homework. (Be prepared to help them find Bible passages to write about.) (20 min.)

Close with a prayer.

Session 3—The Creed: Our Statement of Faith

Key Concept

Part of our privilege and responsibility as Christians is to say and understand the Nicene Creed—our statement of what we believe.

Objectives

Students will

1. Relate the basic ideas found in the Creed.
2. Recognize that most privileges also are accompanied with responsibilities.

Background for Teacher

This lesson introduces the Creed as something we are privileged to say and understand. With this privilege goes the responsibility of really understanding and trying to live by the Creed. The lesson relates this fact to other areas of students' lives in which responsibility usually goes along with privilege.

You are asked in this lesson to go over the meaning of the Creed with your students. Be sure you are able to do this. If you have questions about it, talk to your pastor or a knowledgeable person in the parish. You may also want to refer back to the first lesson in Unit I of this book, which gives some information about the Creed's meaning.

Materials Needed

- Divine Liturgy books and Set-of-Six Puzzles (8th Grade) for each student
- Graph paper
- Bibles
- Pens
- Paper

Procedure

1. Open with a prayer. Talk together about the "sermons" students wrote last time. (10 min.)
2. Tell the class that this week you are going to look at the Creed, a very important part of the Divine Liturgy. Using the liturgy books, go over the text of the Creed to make sure students understand what it means. Note: For this study, look only at the articles of faith, not the anathema that follows. (7 min.)
3. Tell the class that next week you're going to talk a little about the history of the Creed and how the Church developed it. Because this is the statement of our faith, of what we believe, it is a great privilege to say it. Only those who are in the Church have the privilege to say the Creed.

But like most privileges, it also brings responsibilities. We are responsible for trying to live by it.

With this introduction, have the class do the "Privileges and Responsibilities" exercise in the student text on pages 90 and 91. After they finish, talk about the Biblical passages. The first, from Matthew, speaks of the "talents" or opportunities to serve God that we've each been given. This is the privilege; the responsibility is to use them.

In Romans, our privilege is to receive God's grace. Paul then outlines our responsibility to use this grace in the best ways.

The reading from Timothy says that those who are privileged to be rich are responsible for using their money in generous ways.

In Hebrews we read that we're privileged to know God more closely than all the people of the Old Testament. So we are responsible, seeing all the wonderful things they did for God, to be his good servants too.

The reading from John's first letter says that we're privileged to be called God's children, and must therefore do what is right. (18 min.)

4. Now that the students have studied the Creed, let them make crossword puzzles about it. (They can use the Set-of-Six for an example.) Each student should try for about ten words, going up and down, which they can then "chart" on their graph paper by drawing heavy lines around the squares which the words will go in.

The students can use words directly from the Creed, such as "God the Father is the maker of heaven and _____ (earth)."

Or they can use descriptive statements like "The Creed tells what we _____ (believe)."

Next week during class, the students will try to do each other's puzzles. Collect them so you can make copies of each one for all class members. (15 min.)

5. Have students continue with Part Three of "My Badarak Book" in the student text.

6. Assign the "Numbers Puzzle" on page 92 for homework. Check answers next week:

One—baptism

Two—heaven & earth or visible and invisible things

Three—body, soul, mind

Four—suffered, was crucified, was buried, rose

Five—spoke in the Law

spoke in the Prophets

spoke in the Gospels

came down on the Jordan

preached in the Apostles

(10 min.)

7. Close with a prayer.

Session 4—The Creed: How It Came to Be

Key Concept

The Church formulated the Nicene Creed to express what all her members believe.

Objective

Students will

State some basic facts about the Council of Nicaea at which the Creed was written.

Background for Teacher

It's important for our students to realize that the Church is an historical reality. One way to help them see this is by talking about the Ecumenical Councils, in which the Church met together and formulated the beliefs that God has revealed to us.

This formulation, being done by human beings, was not without strife and disagreement. Yet the Holy Spirit was present, as God promised, and therefore people of good will were able to agree on what should be said.

However, there was at least one person present whose will was to convert the whole Church to his way of thinking—the learned and articulate Arius, who claimed that Christ was not co-eternal with his Father, but created by him. Arius was condemned by the council. The principle is that if a person cannot believe what the Church knows to be revealed by God, then that person cannot be part of the Church.

All these issues will be part of this lesson. (For a better understanding of all this, read further in Nersoyan's *History*.)

Materials Needed

- Copies of student crossword puzzles from last time for each class member
- Pens and paper
- Bibles
- Copies of Nersoyan's *History* for each student
- Divine Liturgy books

The Creed: Our Statement of Faith



PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Do you think it's true that most privileges we get also give us responsibilities? Look at these situations, and see what you come up with.

1. After months of begging, Jack has just gotten permission to use the family car on Friday night. What will be Jack's responsibilities if:

- while driving he hears an ambulance siren behind him?
- there seems to be something wrong with the motor?
- he and his friends stop at a drive-in?

2. Donna's parents have decided she's old enough to babysit the neighbors' little boy, and the neighbors have asked her to. What will Donna's responsibilities be?

3. Alice has been asked to introduce the speaker at her school Photography Club meeting. What will Alice's responsibilities be?

4. What would be your responsibilities if:

- your parents let you get a dog?
- you got first crack at the new stereo set your parents had bought for the family?
- you were given the chance to interview the mayor for your school newspaper?

Look at these Bible passages. What privilege and what responsibility are talked about in each one?

MATTHEW 25:14-30

What's the privilege?

What's the responsibility?

ROMANS 12:3-8

What's the privilege?

What's the responsibility?

I TIMOTHY 6:17-19

What's the privilege?

What's the responsibility?

HEBREWS 11:32 — 12:2

What's the privilege?

What's the responsibility?

I JOHN 2:1-10

What's the privilege?

What's the responsibility?