

The Creed as Key

In Greek the word for key is *symbol*, which came to be used by Christians for the Creed. *Creed* comes from the Latin, *credo*, which means *I believe*.

A creed is like a key:

- (1) it has a shape and must keep its shape to work
- (2) it has a distinctive shape (it fits the lock)
- (3) its complex shape has a simple function (it opens the door)

The Apostles' Creed Symbolum Apostolorum (c. 215 CE)

¹I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

²I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, ³who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, ⁴suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; ⁵he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; ⁶he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, ⁷and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

⁸I believe in the Holy Spirit, ⁹the holy catholic Church, ¹⁰the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, ¹¹the resurrection of the body, ¹²and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed Symbolum Niceanorum-Constantinopolitorium (381 CE)

The Father

¹We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

The Son

²We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, ³was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. ⁴For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. ⁵On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; ⁶he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. ⁷He will come again to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

The Spirit

⁸We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. ⁹We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. ¹⁰We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. ¹¹We look for the resurrection of the dead, ¹²and the life of the world to come.