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Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed was developed in response to the various heresies that grew up in the early church, especially the Arian heresy. As such, it clearly defines the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and gives a strong defense for the doctrine of the Trinity.

The final form accepted by the church today developed over the course of 3 ecumenical councils. The original creed was written at the Council of Nicea (325 AD), and received further refinement until its final form was read at the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD).

The Council of Nicea was the first ecumenical council of the Christian church since the Jerusalem council recorded in Acts 15. It was called to examine and debate the teachings of Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria. Arius denied the divinity of Christ, asserting that He was merely a created being. The heretical notions of Arianism began to infiltrate the entire church and gain popularity. A key opponent of Arianism was another Alexandrian bishop, Athanasius, whose book *On the Incarnation* defended the biblical doctrine of the person and work of Christ.

The creed developed by the Nicene council critically contains the Greek word *homoousios*, meaning the Son is “of the same substance” with the Father, a central tenet of Biblical Christology. The form of the Nicene Creed included here in the resource pack is from the western church’s tradition, including the phrase “*filioque*” to express that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*. The eastern church omits this phrase.

It is helpful to note that the “catholic church” referred to in the final paragraph refers to the universal church, not the Roman Catholic church.

Fun fact: tradition places St. Nicholas (the original source for the modern Santa Claus legend) at the council of Nicea as a staunch opponent of Arianism and a defender of orthodoxy. Some even claim he slapped Arius for daring to deny the divinity of Christ!

Nicene Creed (English)

I 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; God of God, 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 Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;

He 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; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, 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 spoke by the prophets.

And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen