

## CHAPTER 1

## I Believe

"Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong."

1 Corinthians 16:13

What is faith? Many of the stories we enjoyed when we were younger talk about the importance of "faith," or "believing." "If more children would believe in fairies, then Tinkerbell would come back to life," says Peter Pan. Remember *The Little Engine That Could?* The little engine was able to pull an enormous train when the bigger engines failed. He repeated over and over to himself, "I think I can." By believing that he could pull the train over the mountain, the little engine made his wish come true.

But that is not the kind of faith we are talking about here. Fairy tale heroes make things come true by having "faith" in them. But truths about God, about ourselves, and about God's Church are real and true whether we believe them or not. **Faith** is a gift that God gives us. This gift helps us to believe God's **revelation** to us about himself and the world he made. We receive the gift of faith at Baptism. Because most of us have had the gift of faith since we were babies, we often take it for granted. We find it easy to believe what we are taught in religion class. We don't realize that it is only because of God's help that we can believe

so easily. But if you think about it, because they are **mysteries**, many of the truths we believe cannot be known by the human mind alone. We cannot possibly understand completely how God can be three Persons but only one God. We cannot "prove" by scientific experiment that Jesus Christ is both God and man. We need faith in order to believe these things. And since God has shown us his wisdom and love so many times in human history, we know we can trust him to tell us the truth, even if at times it is hard to understand.

Now that you are older, you will begin to notice that much of the world around you is without faith. Many people have never been baptized and have not received the gift of faith. Many others have chosen to turn away from the faith they once had. Just because you were given faith when you were baptized does not mean that you will always have it. You must ask God each day to keep your own faith strong; as you grow older you will probably find many people, books, and TV shows that will try to convince you that the life of faith is not real or mature. If you ask God, he will help you to keep following him instead of an unbelieving crowd.

## The Apostles' Creed

We also use the word *faith* in another way. Besides giving us the power to believe, it also refers to *what* we believe. When we speak of "the Catholic Faith," we mean "all that we Catholics believe."

If someone who is not a Catholic asked you, "Can you tell me everything you believe?" you might not know where to start. But the Church has given us a quick, orderly way of saying what we believe. This is the **Apostles' Creed**. The Apostles' Creed contains the most important truths of our Faith. It starts right at the beginning with our belief that there is a God, and that he is the almighty Creator of heaven and earth. It goes on to tell about God's Son, who came to earth to save us from our sins. The last part of the Creed tells how God the Holy Spirit continues to work in the world through the Catholic Church. When we say the Creed we are making a "profession" of our Faith. That is, we are standing up for what we believe.

In this book we will examine the Creed to see what we can discover about our Faith. You have learned quite a lot about the Faith

in earlier grades. But in this book we will take a deeper, more careful look at what we believe, so that when you say the Creed you can do so more intelligently, understanding what you are saying and meaning what you are saying.

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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



**Words to Know:**

faith    Revelation  
mystery    Apostles' Creed

Faith is the beginning of the  
Christian man.

—Saint Ambrose

**Q. 1**    *How is the Sign of the Cross made?*

The Sign of the Cross is made by placing the right hand at the forehead, saying: "In the name of the Father;" then the hand is placed at the breast, saying: "and of the Son;" then the hand touches the left and right shoulders, saying: "and of the Holy Spirit;" and it ends with the word "Amen" (CCC 2157).

**Q. 2**    *How are the two chief mysteries of the Faith expressed by the Sign of the Cross?*

By the Sign of the Cross we express the unity of the Blessed Trinity by the words; and we express the Passion, death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ by tracing the Cross (CCC 1235, 2157).

**Q. 3**    *What are the truths revealed by God?*

The truths revealed by God are chiefly those summarized in the Apostles' Creed. They are called truths of Faith because we must believe them with full faith as taught by God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived (CCC 185–87).

**Q. 4**    *What is the Apostles' Creed?*

The Apostles' Creed is a profession of faith in the chief mysteries and other truths revealed by God through Jesus Christ and his Apostles and taught by the Church (CCC 194).

**Q. 5** *What is a mystery?*

A mystery is a truth revealed by God, which is beyond our reason but not contrary to it (CCC 237).

**Q. 6** *What are the chief mysteries of the Faith that we profess in the Creed?*

There are two chief mysteries of the Faith professed in the Creed: the unity of the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation, Passion, death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (CCC 189–90, 512).

**Q. 7** *Are these two chief mysteries of the Faith professed and expressed also in another way?*

Yes, we profess and express these two chief mysteries of the Faith when we make the Sign of the Cross, which is also the sign of a Christian (CCC 2157).