

In the **HOUSE** *of the* **LORD**

LESSON #1 – HOMEWORK

THE INVOCATION FOR THE DIVINE SERVICE:

Minister: In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

THE INVOCATION FOR THE SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT:

Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

Background on the Invocation

In the Invocation we call upon the Triune God to be present with us in our worship. We are reminded that the true God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is to be worshiped now and for eternity. The invocation also warmly calls to mind the words through which Christians have been baptized into Christ and made members of His Christian Church.

The worship service does not begin with the lighting of candles, the ringing of bells, the pastor's announcement or, even, the opening hymn. The service really begins with the Invocation. The gathered worshipers have assembled and now hear and recall the name of Him who promises to be with us always (Matthew 28:20).

At the Invocation, the pastor makes the sign of the cross as he speaks the name of the Triune God. Worshipers may also cross themselves, recalling the sign that was made on their head and heart at their baptism, marking them as redeemed children of God. Sadly, many worshipers do not feel comfortable crossing themselves because they consider this too "Roman Catholic." Yet, in his Small Catechism, Martin Luther suggested that Christians make the sign of the cross a daily practice when he advised the head of the household to teach the family the Morning and Evening Prayers in this way: "In the morning, when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say: "In the name of † the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

After the Invocation, the congregation responds with the word, "Amen." The word "amen" means "So shall it be." When the faithful respond with the Amen in prayer it means they agree with what the pastor, God's representative, has just said. The "amen" at the beginning of worship following the invocation means, "Yes, God is here to bless. Yes, we have arrived to worship Him. Yes, it is good to be here."

For as long as believers have gathered together, they have invoked the name of God upon their worship. In the same way that Jesus teaches believers to address their prayers to "Our Father who is in heaven," in the Lord's Prayer, so we are taught in Lutheran liturgy to address our prayers, praise and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Digging Deeper

Let's examine where the doctrine/teaching of the Trinity is professed by our Triune God in His holy Word contained in our Bibles.

Read Genesis 1. God is triune – three distinct and separate persons, but united as one God. How do you see the Triune God involved in creation in Genesis 1:1, 1:2 and 1:26?

Read Isaiah 61:1. The Son of God is speaking. What work does He say that the Lord (the Father) and the Holy Spirit has given Him?

Read Luke 1:35. How does the angel Gabriel mention all three persons when he announces the coming birth of Mary's son?

Read Matthew 3:13-17. How did each of the three persons of the Trinity -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit -- reveal themselves at Jesus' baptism?

Read Matthew 28:18-20. These are the same words we use at the beginning of worship, when the forgiveness of sins is mentioned, when the congregation sings the "Glory be to the Father," and when we pray Martin Luther's Morning and Evening Prayers. In whose name does Jesus send His disciples out to do mission work?

Read 2 Corinthians 13:14. These are the same words that we use in the Invocation for the Service of Word and Sacrament. In whose name do we receive blessing?

Read 1 Peter 1:1-2. How does Peter briefly describe the work of each person of the Trinity?

These are just a few examples in the Old and New Testaments of the Trinity being mentioned. God doesn't try to explain the mystery of the Trinity. He simply proclaims these truths about Himself. We set aside our logic and reason in trying to understand this mystery and simply trust what God says about Himself.

Because "faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17), you are encouraged to build your faith through Christ's message in His Bible.

Daily Bible Reading: Matthew 1-7

Memorize the following passage: 2 Corinthians 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Digging Even Deeper

Almost from the beginning of the Christian Church, believers have stated their faith in the Triune God in brief statements known as creeds. The word “creed” comes from the Latin “credo” – “I believe.” The three best known and most widely used creeds are the Apostles’, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. All three creeds are testaments to the truths of Scripture concerning the doctrine/teaching of the Trinity.

THE APOSTLES’ CREED

We don’t know the author (or authors) of this creed, nor do we know the exact date when it was first used. The text as we have it comes from 8th century Gaul (southern France), although it is much like the so-called old Roman Creed which was used in the Western Church already in the 3rd century. Roots of this creed can be traced back to creed-like statements in the New Testament (i.e. 1 Timothy 3:16: “Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.”) (The tradition that each of the apostles wrote a line of the creed is not verifiable, but while the apostles did not produce it, the creed’s roots and teachers are certainly apostolic.

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

I believe 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. 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 Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE NICENE CREED

We know more about the history of this creed. The first general church council of the church met in Nicea (Greece) in 325 AD to deal with the teachings of Arius, who denied the deity and the eternity of Jesus. The council stated its position by adapting a creed currently in use. This statement was further modified and finalized by later councils at Constantinople (381 AD) and Chalcedon (451 AD). In the 9th century the phrase, “and the Son,” was added to the words, “who proceeds from the Father,” in the statement of the Holy Spirit. This addition produced discord between the Eastern and Western Churches and was a major factor in the separation of the two a few centuries later.

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

We 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, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

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

THE ATHANASIAN CREED

It is quite certain that Athanasius, an early church leader from Egypt, did not write the Athanasian Creed. This work is not a creed in the usual sense, but rather a liturgical statement of faith, changed regularly in the worship services. The creed is a strong defense of the doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity-humanity of Jesus. The Athanasian Creed seems to have originated in the West around the fifth century. The creed is usually read annually on Trinity Sunday.

Whoever wishes to be saved, must above all else, hold to the true Christian faith. Whoever does not keep this faith pure in all points will certainly perish forever.

Now this is the true Christian faith: We worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God, without mixing the persons or dividing the divine being. For each person – the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit is distinct. But the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory and coeternal in majesty. What the Father is, so is the Son, and so is the Holy Spirit.

The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated; The Father infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite; The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal; And yet there are not three who are eternal, but there is one who is eternal, Just as they are not three who are uncreated, nor three who are infinite, but there is one who is uncreated and one who is infinite.

In the same way the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, the Holy Spirit is almighty; Yet they are not three who are almighty, but there is one who is almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord. Yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.

For just as Christian truth compels us to confess each person individually to be God and Lord, So the true Christian faith forbids us to speak of three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is neither made nor created nor begotten of anyone. The Son is neither made nor created, but is begotten of the Father alone. The Holy Spirit is neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeds from the Father and the Son. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

And within this Trinity none comes before or after; none is greater or inferior, But all three persons are coequal and coeternal, so that in every way, as stated before, all three persons are to be worshiped as one God and one God worshiped as three persons.

Whoever wishes to be saved must have this conviction of the Trinity.

It is furthermore necessary for eternal salvation truly to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ also took on human flesh. Now this is the true Christian faith: We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and man.

He is God, eternally begotten from the nature of the Father, And he is man, born in time from the nature of his mother, Fully God, fully man, with rational soul and human flesh, equal to the Father as to his deity, less than the Father as to his humanity; And though he is both God and man, Christ is not two persons but one, one not by changing the deity into flesh, but by taking the humanity into God; One, indeed, not by mixture of the natures, but by unity in one person; For just as the rational soul and flesh are one human being, so God and man are one Christ.

He suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty, and from there will come to judge the living and the dead. At his coming all people will rise with their own bodies to answer for their personal deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, But those who have done evil will go into eternal fire.

This is the true Christian faith. Whoever does not faithfully and firmly believe this cannot be saved.