

Preparing for Profession of Faith: Key Truths for Young Believers

Young believers do not need to be experts in theology before they can declare their faith and come to the Lord's Table. The most important thing is that they believe in Jesus as their personal Savior and want to follow Him.

Still, they should have at least some grasp of key Christian truths and be able to state what they believe. Those who want to take part in the Lord's Supper should know what the bread and the cup represent.

To help prepare young believers for profession of faith, I have selected some key words and truths that are especially important, and I have tried to explain them in plain language. Much more will be learned in a lifetime of listening to God's Word and walking with Him. Catechisms and other learning tools can help growing Christians to explore biblical teaching in more depth than this brief summary. My goal here is simply to give young believers (and parents or mentors) a short, clear list of key truths to help prepare for a meaningful profession of faith.

Pastor David Feddes
Family of Faith Church

Creation: God made the world and all things.

Providence: God *plans* everything that happens and *provides* for his people.

Trinity: One God, three Persons. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three divine Persons forever united as one God.

Jesus: God the Son, who has always existed as the second Person of the Trinity, and who became human in order to save us.

Holy Spirit: He has forever been the third Person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit works in us to connect us with Christ and make us children of the Father.

Scriptures. The 66 books of the Bible. God moved men to write these books so that everything in the Bible is perfectly true, without any lies or mistakes. The Scriptures are mainly about God's plan of salvation through Jesus.

Sin: Disobeying God and breaking his law.

Original sin: We are all born sinful because Adam and Eve's sin is passed on to us.

Born again: The Holy Spirit makes our sinful hearts alive so that we can believe in Jesus and be saved. (also called "regeneration")

Atonement: Jesus suffered and died to take the punishment we deserve.

Faith: *Believing* the truths of God's Word, *trusting* that God forgives and accepts me personally because of Jesus, and *treasuring* God and His promises above all else.

Repent: To be sorry for sin, hate it, and want to get rid of it.

What must I do to be saved? I must repent of my sin and put faith in Jesus as my personal Savior.

Justify: When I put my faith in Jesus, God forgives all my sins, counts all Jesus' goodness as mine, and accepts me as right with Him. (Justification is a complete, all-at-once right standing with God that cannot be taken away.)

Sanctify: God makes me more and more holy in heart and actions. (Sanctification is not all at once, but an ongoing day-by-day process of growing more like Jesus.)

Prayer: Talking with God. Praising Him, thanking Him, admitting sins, and asking God to help others and me.

Baptism: sprinkling or dunking in water as a sign of God's promise that salvation comes through being joined to Christ and having sins washed away by his blood. Baptism marks God's claim on you and calls you to be a faithful follower of Christ.

Lord's Supper (also called **communion**): Eating bread and drinking wine together with fellow Christians in order to honor Jesus and feed our faith. The bread stands for Jesus' body sacrificed for us. The wine stands for Jesus' blood poured out for us.

Spiritual gifts: God-given talents or abilities; things that the Holy Spirit makes you especially good at in order to help God's people and do God's work.

Hell: An awful place where unbelieving people and demons (evil angels) are separated from God and suffer for their sins forever.

Heaven: A wonderful place full of God's love and beauty where believers and holy angels enjoy God and his blessings forever. When Jesus comes again, he will bring heaven to earth and make all things new.

Soul (spirit): Your inner self that thinks, feels, and relates to God and others. Your soul belongs with your body, but when your body dies, your soul leaves your body and goes to heaven or hell. Souls of dead people will someday get bodies again when Jesus returns and resurrects their bodies.

Resurrection: Dead bodies are made alive in a way that they can never die again. Jesus' resurrection defeated death so that others will also be resurrected when Jesus comes to earth again.

Memorization for Young Believers

It is good for young believers to memorize the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. The Apostles' Creed is a very ancient summary of central Christian beliefs. The Lord's Prayer is the model prayer Jesus taught as a beginner's guide to a life a prayer. The Ten Commandments summarize God's pattern for showing love to the Lord and to people around us.

Apostles' Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
He descended to hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended to 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 the life everlasting. Amen.

**that is, the true Christian church of all times and all places*

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

(from Matthew 6:9-13)

Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20:1-17)

Public Profession of Faith

If you want to share in the Lord's Supper, you should first be baptized and publicly profess your faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Whether baptized as an infant or about to be baptized as a believer, you profess your faith by answering the following questions in the presence of the congregation:

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God sent to redeem the world, do you love and trust him as the One who saves you from your sin, and do you with repentance and joy embrace him as Lord of your life?
2. Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God revealing Christ and his redemption, and that the confessions of this church faithfully reflect this revelation?
3. Do you accept the gracious promises of God sealed to you in your baptism and do you affirm your union with Christ and his church which your baptism signifies?
4. Do you promise to do all you can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen your love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in the life of the church, honoring and submitting to its authority; and do you join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord everywhere?

Answer: I do, with all my heart.

(If you wish, you are also welcome to add personal words of testimony or a favorite passage of Scripture.)

Interview: Before this public event, you will first be interviewed in a more private setting by some church council members. (When a child is being interviewed, parents are invited to be present.) You will be asked about your relationship with God. You will also be asked about some key truths of the faith. The elders want to see that your faith is real and that you understand some basics of Christian truth.