

Study 2-Affirmation of Faith

Introduction:

Affirmation of faith is the collective expression of the church's most basic and deeply held beliefs. The whole church body usually reads, recites, or sings historical statements of basic Christian truths that believers in all times and places can profess. These might include the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, or the Athanasian Creed.

The affirmation can occur in different parts of the service, such as after the call to worship, after scripture readings, or after the sermon. It can instruct children and newcomers on the most basic and fundamental beliefs of the church, while also enabling the church body to center and calibrate itself to the core tenants of the church. Irish liturgy introduced an Affirmation of Faith after the opening hymn to provide an appropriate transition from praise to confession and instruction.

Part 1: What does it mean?

What is a creed?

Scripture:

Read Deuteronomy 6: 4-5:

⁴“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.^[a] ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deut. 6:4-5, ESV)

Deuteronomy 6 contains the first profession of faith in the Bible. It contains a basic fundamental truth affirmed in the Old Testament and carried over into Christianity.

What does the passage affirm about the faith of the Israelites? What does it instruct the Israelites to do?

Read the 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*

What are some fundamental Christian truths being affirmed in the Apostles Creed?

What does the creed teach us about our faith?

Part 2: Why do we practice it?

Through the affirmation of faith the contemporary church expresses its connection to the ancient churches and its solidarity with believers around the world.

What are some other purposes of the affirmation of faith?

When you profess the affirmation of faith with the congregation and recognize that Christians all over the world are also professing the same affirmation, how do you think that could help connect Christians around the world through our faith? Do you feel this could be a powerful act of faith?

Part 3: How do we practice it?

We've discussed various creeds integrated into the service as a way of affirming our faith. What are some other ways to affirm our faith during worship?

During worship, we often stand and say the affirmation in unison with the pastor and the rest of the congregation. Sometimes the congregation also sings an affirmation in unison.

How could we integrate affirmation of faith into our daily lives?

Conclusion:

The affirmation of faith is a corporate recitation or song laying out core Christian beliefs. It serves the purpose of connecting the contemporary church with the ancient church, it can instruct children and newcomers on the core beliefs of the church, and it can renew our commitment to the core tenants of the faith. The affirmation is often professed in unison through reciting a creed or singing a song. Key parts of Scripture, Confessions of faith, and the Westminster Catechism also serve as useful affirmations of faith.