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How We Look at Creeds and Scripture

Student handout

St. Luke's Episcopal Church • Walk in Love, Chapters 13–15

1. Why Creeds Matter

- A creed is a shared statement of faith, not an exhaustive explanation of every mystery.
- The creeds locate our faith within the story of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- In worship, "we believe" expresses the faith of the Church, including when an individual has questions or doubts.

2. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed

- Apostles' Creed: an ancient baptismal profession of faith, used in the Baptismal Covenant and Daily Office (BCP pp. 96, 120, 304).
- Nicene Creed: the Church's fuller communal confession, especially at the Eucharist on Sundays and major feasts (BCP pp. 358–359).
- Both affirm the Trinity, Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection, the Church, forgiveness, and resurrection life.
- The Nicene Creed emphasizes that Jesus Christ is fully divine, "of one Being with the Father," and affirms the Holy Spirit as Lord and giver of life.

3. How Episcopalians Read the Bible

- Scripture is inspired and authoritative for Christian faith; it tells the story of God's creation, covenant, reconciliation, and new life.
- We read Scripture prayerfully and in community, attending to literary form, historical context, tradition, and reason.
- We interpret individual passages in light of the wider biblical witness, especially the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.
- In the liturgy, we hear readings from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, and Gospel; the lectionary helps us encounter Scripture over time.
- The Bible is a library of different kinds of writing—not every passage is meant to be read in exactly the same way.

4. Four Important Words of Faith

Sin: Our turning away from God and neighbor, in actions and in the broken patterns of our lives; it damages relationships.

Grace: God's free and undeserved love and help, offered before we earn or deserve it.

Redemption: God's liberating and restoring work, freeing us from the power of sin and drawing us into new life.

Salvation: God's healing and reconciliation of creation and humanity through Jesus Christ; both a present life of transformation and a future hope.

5. Connecting Creed, Scripture, and Christian Life

- The creeds summarize the central story to which Scripture bears witness.
- Scripture forms our imagination and discipleship; the creeds give us common language for worship and belief.
- Grace is God's initiative; redemption and salvation are God's gifts, calling us into repentance, faith, and love.

For Reflection

1. Which phrase in either creed is especially meaningful—or difficult—for you?
2. How might reading Scripture in community change how we hear a challenging passage?
3. Where have you experienced grace as a gift rather than a reward?

Suggested passages: Luke 15:11–32; Ephesians 2:4–10; 2 Corinthians 5:17–20; Luke 4:16–21.