

Unit Two

What Do We Believe? What Do I Believe?

Lesson 13

Amen!

heart to Heart

A Psalm of Praise: Psalm 63:2-3

I have seen you...

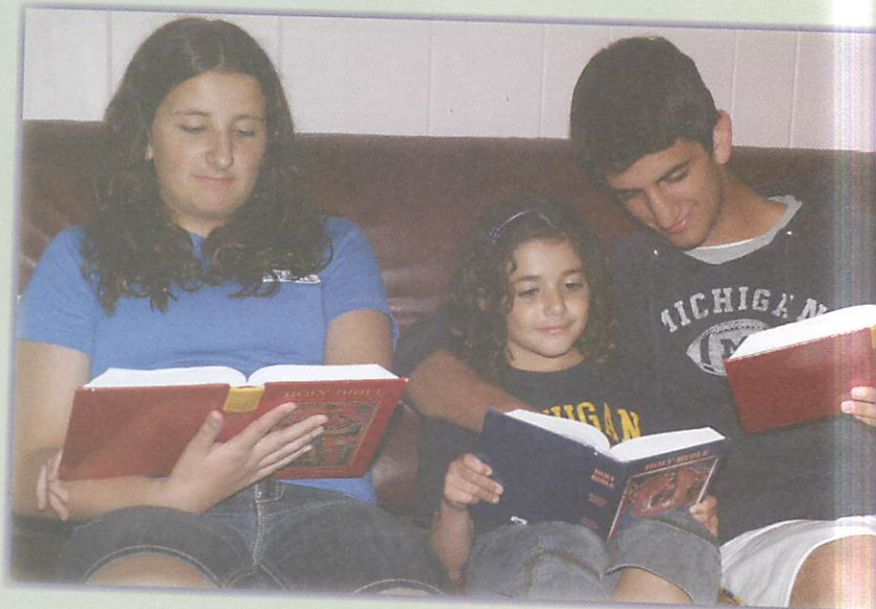
Here I Am, Lord, p. 2



Here's What We Don't Believe

Congratulations! You've explored the meaning of the Nicene Creed in considerable detail and have done a great job improving your mastery of simply reciting the words. Words are important. It was with simple yet powerful words that God created the world. (*Let there be light!*). It was God the Son, the *Word* of God, who entered human history as the human Jesus, saving us from empty self-absorbed lives into a redeemed life centered in him and in love.

After the last word of the last Creed statement, there is a strongly worded instruction from the deacon. This is known as "the anathema."



Write the definition of "anathema" here:

And here it is:

The Deacon: As for those who say there was a time when the Son was not, or there was a time when the Holy Spirit was not or that they came into being out of nothing; or who say that the Son of God or the Holy Spirit

are of a different substance and that they are changeable or alterable, such does the catholic and apostolic holy Church anathematize.

The Priest: As for us, we shall glorify him who was before the ages, worshipping the Holy Trinity and the one godhead, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Why do you think this is included, and uniquely in the Armenian Church? Some history:

If you recall from a previous lesson, the First Ecumenical Council – a gathering of leaders from every church - was held in Nicaea in 325 A.D. at the Emperor Constantine's request to resolve issues that were disrupting the unity of the church. Most importantly, they dealt with the priest Arius who was widely teaching that God the Son was a lesser being who had been "created" and does not exist eternally as one substance with the Father. This approach, called Arianism, was finally branded as heretical (against proper and truthful teaching). It was considered essential that the Nicene Creed speak to this ancient dispute. The anathema was meant to draw a defined line between those who were Christian (believe that Jesus is both human and divine and consubstantial with God) and those who believed otherwise.

The Armenian Church has retained this ancient formula in its original form and place.

The Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.) continued to debate the nature of God, particularly the "one substance" of the Trinity: God (the Creator and Father), the Son, (Jesus the Christ, divine and human) and the Holy Spirit.

