

# Diving Deeper into the Basics of our Faith

**THE SIGN OF THE CROSS** (Action and Prayer) The sign of the cross is a very ancient practice and prayer. We don't have any indication of it in Scripture, but St. Basil in the fourth century said that we learned the sign from the time of the apostles and that it was administered in baptisms. Some scholars interpret St. Paul's saying that he bears the marks of Christ on his body, in Galatians 6:17, as his referring to the sign of the cross.

## **THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IS:**

**a confession of faith;** When you make the sign, you are professing a mini version of the creed — you are professing your belief in the Father, and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit. When you say the words and pray in someone's name you are declaring their presence and coming into their presence — that's how a name is used in Scripture.



**a renewal of baptism;** The Sign of the Cross is a sacramental, it's a renewal of the sacrament of baptism; when you make it you say again, in effect, "I died with Christ and rose to new life." The sign of the cross in baptism is like a Christian circumcision, which united Gentile converts to the Jewish nation. The sign links you to the body of Christ, and when you make it you remember your joining to the body with Christ as the head.

**a mark of discipleship;** The sign of the cross is a mark of discipleship. Jesus says in Luke 9:23, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." The word that the Fathers of the Church used for the sign of the cross is a Greek word that is the same as what a slave owner put on a slave, a shepherd put on a sheep and a general put on a soldier — it's a declaration that I belong to Christ.

**Self-denial** is not just giving up little things; to be a disciple you are under Christ's leadership and you don't belong to yourself. By doing the sign of the cross, you're saying to the Lord, "I want to obey you; I belong to you. You direct all my decisions. I will always be obedient to God's law, Christ's teachings and the Church."

**an acceptance of suffering;** When suffering comes, the sign of the cross is a sign of acceptance. It's remembering that Jesus became a man and suffered for us and that we participate in Christ's suffering. The sign of the cross says, "I am willing to embrace suffering to share in Christ's suffering." When you're suffering, when you're feeling like God is not there, the sign of the cross brings him there and declares his presence whether you feel it. It is a way of acknowledging him at that time of trial.

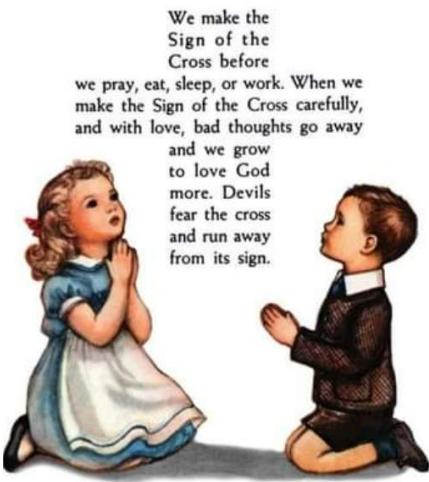
**a defense against the devil** One of the main teachings of the early Church Fathers is that the sign of the cross is a declaration of defense against the devil. When you sign yourself, you are declaring to the devil, "Hands off. I belong to Christ; he is my protection."

**SIGN OF THE CROSS** It's both an **offensive** and **defensive tool**.

The Sign of the Cross: Prayer

## THINK about each time we make the Sign of the Cross.

- Before and After prayer
- every time you pass a church or an ambulance drives by
- When we are faced with temptation or trial, hardship, trouble, confusion etc.
- Before Confession, both priest and penitent call down the BLESSED/HOLY TRINITY by MAKING the sign of the cross.
- When a Catholic hears the name of Jesus especially when mentioned in vain, they make the sign of the cross to honor the name Christ.
- During mass, the priest makes the sign of the cross multiple times (so does the congregation): When the mass starts, when the gospel is about to be read etc.
- Every time we bless ourselves with Holy Water
- Baseball, hockey (yes, even football players) make the sign arrowed up in **Thanksgiving**



**QUESTION:** **DOES** the Sign of the Cross mean anything to me? My family? My students?

**IF** not, getting to KNOW God may make all the difference.

**WHY 5 FINGERS:** With five fingers extended, as we do today, in honor of the five wounds of Christ.

### **Gospel - What Does the Sign of the Cross Mean?**

It sums up the teaching of Christ, and especially brings out to us the fact that there are three Persons in One God (Blessed Trinity), and the fact that Christ died on the cross for us.

## **KNOWING GOD**

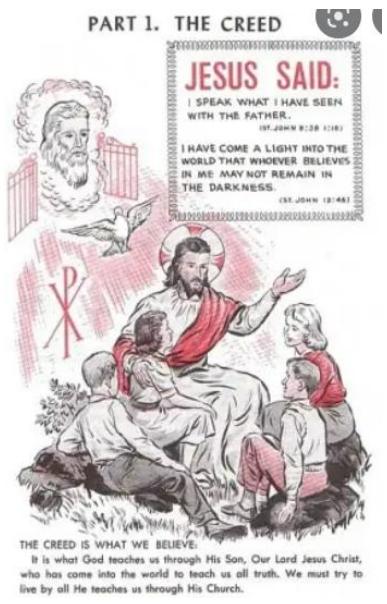
first and true bible) important to us?

### **CATECHIST NOTES: WHO IS GOD**

The **more we know** someone, the **more that we can love** them, and this is even more true for God. The **more that we know God**, the **more that we love Him**. And by loving Him, we can better serve Him who made us.

1. We are **created to be Holy** we are to be Saints-set apart for God alone.
2. We are **created to know** God.
3. We are **created to love** God.
4. We are **created to serve** God. (*What are ways we can serve God INSTEAD of serving OURSELVES, Think about it.. in today's world PEOPLE see it more as HOWN God should be serving Us*)

Our destiny is to go to heaven, to be in heaven, eternally with God.



**QUESTION:** How can we understand Heaven if we do not understand who God is.

Who is God to each student?

**GOD:** ATTRIBUTES OF GOD OR THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD

**GOD IS OMNIPOTENCE** (Omnipotent having unlimited power; able to do anything. Other words: Almighty or All powerful describe God. Since God is **infinite** and since He possesses almighty power, He possesses **infinite power**. Infinite means He has NO Time.

Why is almighty/omnipotence alone mentioned in the Creed?

**GOD IS OMNISCIENT:** All knowing, all understanding, all aware.



God's map of the universe

**ALL AWARE** – Examples when we go to Kings Dominion we try and scope all the rides out

#### **BREAKING IT DOWN:**

**OMNIPOTENCE:** God our Creator, we believe God created EVERYTHING we see and do NOT See, His power and will is unlimited, He can do ANYTHING, He can "WILL" anything. ***He is greater than all of the Avengers or Superman and even Batman put together.*** READ GENESIS.

**OMNISCIENT:** God is ALL KNOWING or UNLIMITED KNOWLEDGE (The longest winning Jeopardy player can't compete with God). God's knowledge and knowing of everything at once.

**IMAGINE** – Being aware of everything and everyone **at ONCE**

**OMNIPRESENCE:** This theological term means "**always present.**" Since God is infinite, His being knows **no boundaries**. So, clearly, He is everywhere. This truth is taught throughout scripture as the phrase "I am with you always" is repeated 22 times in both the Old and New Testaments. BUT when life gets tough or we don't get what we want, some question – Is God There. THIS is where **knowing** about God and WHO He is, is vital in growing in our faith.