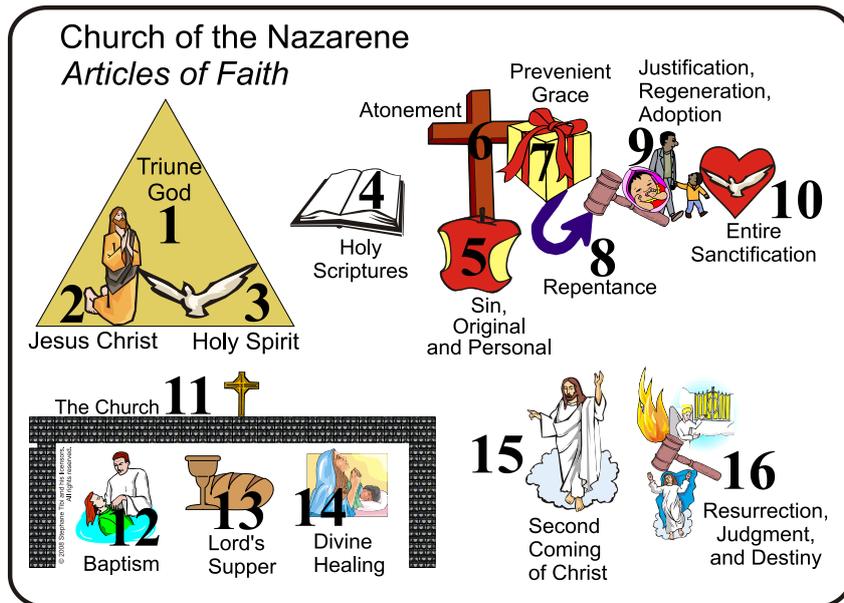


Guide for the StudyMap on the 16 Articles of Faith

Rationale:

The purpose of this guide on the graphic of the *Articles of Faith* is:

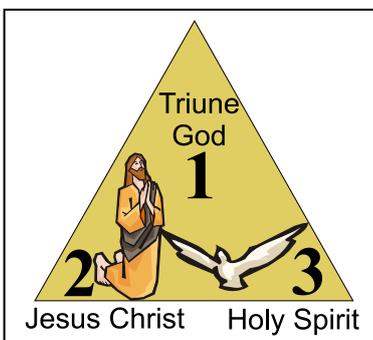
1. To lead to a better understanding of how the articles of faith of the Church of the Nazarene can help us to articulate our Christian faith.
2. To become able to witness with confidence and conviction the foundations of this life-transforming faith.
3. To help teach the meaning of the articles of faith of the Church of the Nazarene and invite others to welcome Jesus as their Lord and Savior.



A Presentation of the Articles of Faith through the Graphic

In this guide, I suggest one possible way of presenting the articles of faith and how to relate them together. Most of what you will find in each article below is taken from the text of the articles of faith in the *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene 2005-2009*. I encourage you strongly to have this text with you as you study and teach the articles; it is the text of reference and cannot be replaced by the short explanations given below. These explanations will attempt to simply show some key aspects of each of these articles.

A. Articles 1-3: God



These three first articles describe the God in whom we believe. The pictures of the triangle (Triune God), of Jesus Christ and of the dove (Holy Spirit) are grouped together in order to manifest their intimate relationships and unity.

1. The Triune God

This article is both the beginning and the end of our faith. We believe in one eternal and infinite God. He created the Universe out of nothing. He was before the world existed, is and will always be. He has three facets¹, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which are illustrated

¹ To speak of the three persons of the Trinity as 'facets' could lead to the heresy of 'modalism,' but at the same time the belief in the Trinity is a result of a deeper understanding of God's revelation in our world that came only after centuries of

through the use of a triangle².

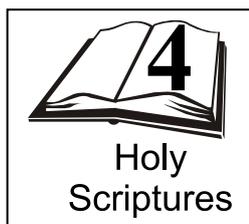
2. Jesus Christ

God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, from heaven to earth. He was eternally with the Father, and became man by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary. He was fully God and fully man. On the picture he is presented as kneeling because he came as a servant, to teach us how much God loves humanity.

3. The Holy Spirit

The picture representing the Holy Spirit is a dove, the image that the authors of the first three Gospels have used to describe His/Her coming on Jesus at His baptism. A dove is white, expressing the purity of the Holy Spirit, a purity and holiness that He/She³ can communicate to those who welcome Her/Him. The Holy Spirit works with and through the Church of Christ, convincing the world of sin, regenerating those who repent and believe, sanctifying believers, and guiding into all truth as it is in Jesus.

As you finish the group of the three first articles of faith, it could be good - if needed - to review them by memory. For instance, you can close your eyes and then tell the name of the first article as you try to remember the picture, and so forth for the second and third. Then you can go backward 3-2-1, or ask someone to read the title of one article and you could then give the right number⁴. You will soon realize that an added advantage of such a graphic tool is that you will rapidly know the list of the articles forward and backward⁵.



B. Article 4: Holy Scriptures

The picture of a book represents the Holy Scriptures as the written Word of God, while Jesus Christ is the living Word of God. In it, we learn how God created the world and has invited all humans to a deep communion with him. With the help of the Holy Spirit, these books of the Old and New Testament teach us the will of God concerning us in all that is necessary to our salvation.

The Holy Scriptures give testimony about who God is (articles 1-3), and the path that leads from sin to salvation (articles 5-10).

Take a little moment to playfully review the 4 first articles with the students, it is still rather easy but will place the foundations for going further. One thing you can also do is to ask someone to describe in simple words what the meaning of one of these articles is (or of all, one after the other). Don't

theological debate. In some contexts, it could be wise to first of all stress the unity of God, and then speak about the Trinity as three different persons only after the '16 articles' have been presented (you will find some of this already in the explanation of article 11).

² The triangle, as any analogy of the Trinity, is limited - it serves us well in our desire to first stress the unicity of God but lacks when we want to express that the Trinity is also three distinct persons. In teaching further on this subject, it could be good to present other analogies so that the persons don't confuse analogy and reality and get a deeper understanding of this important mystery of our faith.

³ In Hebrew, the word for Spirit is 'ruah', which is sometimes masculine and sometimes feminine. This can help us to remember that God is beyond our concepts of male/female. It is true that in Jesus He became man, but from all eternity God is the creator of the genders, and is not trapped in one of them.

⁴ I encourage you not to neglect this kind of exercise, which will reinforce the memory. For the moment, this exercise touches only what is called the 'short-term memory'. Also, don't hesitate to be playful in all this - a good study time should never be boring, this will significantly increase the joy in this process of learning. Here, I am giving you simply possible guidelines, hoping that it will help you to study and find ways to teach these articles of faith.

⁵ This could be described, in mathematical terms, as a 'one-dimensional and bidirectional' memory. Most auditive memories are only unidirectional (you cannot move backward). This simple thing is of key importance when you want to learn to articulate your faith with ease - to be able to link the articles of faith with a freedom which should help to rapidly build a good theological foundation.

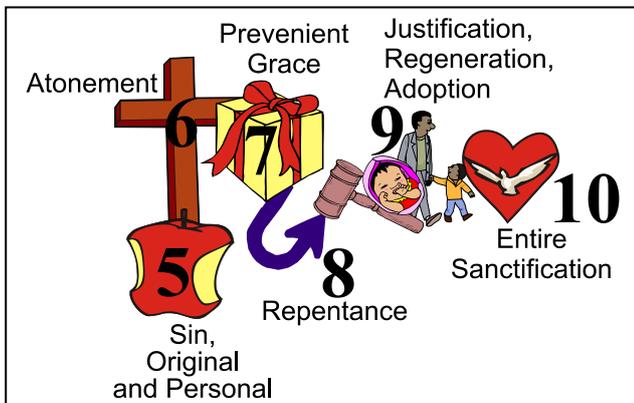
At a theoretical level, we could discuss the fact that pictures have the potential to lead us to reach a 'two-dimensional' memory, and one of the purposes of such a graphic is to move toward that as much as possible.

forget to communicate to your audience, through questions like this one, that what you are looking for as a teacher is more than just having people able to repeat forward and backward the titles of the articles of faith. You want also, if not even more, to train persons who can express their faith simply and confidently with the support of these articles of faith - therefore I encourage you to stress this important point by attentively listening to the answers given and by using approving remarks (and smooth corrections when you perceive the need).

C. Articles 5-10: From Sin to Holiness

Articles 5-10 describe how each human is invited to move from sin to holiness, from separation from God and death to a full communion with Him that promises eternal life. The links between these 6 pictures witness to the fact that it is the path of humanity. Articles 5 and 6 deal with our forefathers, that the apostle Paul called the first Adam and the "new Adam" (Jesus), and the curse that comes from the original sin and the blessing that comes from the atonement through Jesus' blood. Articles 7-10 show us how we can receive, by obedient faith, all the blessings of this atonement in our lives, thanks to prevenient grace and through repentance, justification and entire sanctification.

5. Sin, Original and Personal



The first humans God created, Adam and Eve, sinned by disobeying God. In the same way sin, which is the failure to follow the good and perfect will of God for us, touches not only one human but has been touching all humans at a personal level. It was first the 'original sin' of Adam and Eve, but also became personal as each of us committed sin. The apple eaten on both sides reminds us of this fact, that there is Adam's original sin and our personal sin. By disobeying God, humans rejected the life-giving relationship with God, and death entered the world in consequence of sin.

6. Atonement

The name 'Jesus'⁶ means 'God saves'. When Jesus came on earth, about 2000 years ago, he came to deliver not only his people but all humanity from the most important source of enslavement: sin. If Jesus Christ was fully God, he was also fully human - except that he never disobeyed his heavenly Father. Jesus loved us so much that he gave his life for us, dying on the cross. The fully obedient life of Jesus, and his death on the cross are the ground of our salvation, so that we can be united with God again⁷. The picture of the cross is on the top of the eaten apple representing sin, because it crushed sin and opened the possibility of being delivered from it for a holy life⁸. The cross is empty, without the body of a dying Jesus, because three days after his death on the cross Jesus was resurrected - thus proving his victory over sin and death.

7. Prevenient Grace

Grace means 'gift', and here it is a gift from God. 'Prevenient grace' means "the gift that comes before," that precedes our good intentions. If humans have been enslaved to sin from the days of Adam until now, it means that since Adam's sin we were not able of pure and righteous motives and

⁶ 'Yeshua' in Hebrew.

⁷ The word "atonement" or "at-one-ment" was created by William Tyndale, in the 16th century, to speak about this wonderful work of God's grace, making it possible for us to be **one** with Him.

⁸ Eastern Orthodox icons often show the cross of Jesus as placed just above the skulls of Adam and Eve (perhaps as an extrapolation of the fact the hill was called "Golgotha" - the place of the skull), thus expressing the fact that through his death on the cross and his resurrection, Jesus released humanity of the old curse of the original sin. The picture of the apple could then be associated with the death of Adam and Eve and the need for the atonement through Jesus' cross.

actions. The prevenient grace of God is the gift that comes before us to convince us of sin and enables us to turn from sin to righteousness, from evil to God. The picture represents a gift in a box, ready to be opened. As it is for prevenient grace, we need to open this gift by opening our hearts to the direction God wants for us in order to be delivered from sin and death. The opening of our hearts to such a direction is described in the three next articles 8, 9 and 10.

8. Repentance

Repentance is a sincere change of mind in regard to sin, involving a sense of personal guilt and a voluntary turning away from sin. The picture of a returning arrow shows that repentance involves a real change of attitude, with the humble hope of God's mercy. Repentance is a necessary step toward God's forgiveness.

The picture of the arrow goes from 7 to 9, showing that repentance is possible only because of God's prevenient grace that makes us aware of our sins, and leads us to hope in God's forgiveness and justification.

9. Justification, Regeneration and Adoption

Justification is the gracious act of God by which He fully forgives all committed sins, and accepts as righteous all who believe in Jesus Christ and receive Him as their Lord and Savior. This act of God can be understood as three-fold:

- Justification: the person is accepted as righteous through his/her faith in Jesus. The picture of the judge's gavel⁹ represents the judgment of God that graciously recognizes us as righteous and acquits us (Rom 3:21-26).

- Regeneration or new birth: through this gracious act of God, a new spiritual life is granted to the believer. The picture of the little baby shows that by the grace of God we become a new creation (John 3, 2Cor 5:17).

- Adoption as child of God: the picture of a father welcoming his little child reminds us of this wonderful aspect of God's grace at work here (Rom 8:15-17).

Justification, regeneration and adoption are simultaneous in the experience of the one who seeks God and are obtained upon the condition of faith, preceded by repentance; and the Holy Spirit witnesses to the believer of this work and state of grace.

10. Entire Sanctification

Entire sanctification is the act of God, after regeneration, by which believers are released from original sin. It is preceded by an entire consecration of the believer to follow God wherever He wills, and the Holy Spirit bears witness to this work and state of grace. A sanctified person will be released from the self-centeredness that is still often felt after justification, and will walk faithfully and obediently as a servant of God. If it is possible to enter into this state of grace for all believers, it is also possible to fall from it. The life of holiness is possible only through following Christ with all our heart and strength, a walk of faith that brings to Christlikeness of character and personality.

The picture of the dove within a heart expresses the fact that entire sanctification can be described as the fullness of the Spirit (dove) or as loving God with all our heart, mind and soul and loving our neighbor as ourselves (heart).

As you finish this group 5-10, take a time of playful review, both at the level of the titles and at the level of the meaning of each of the articles 5-10.

Try to show how each relates to the next one: the original sin (5) was like a trap that needed the help of someone outside us to be broken. This is what Jesus did through the atonement (6). In order to benefit from this and be united with God, we humans needed the help of God who, through prevenient grace (7), makes us aware of our wickedness and of our need of God's help. Thanks to this prevenient grace, we realized of our need to repent (8) and to welcome with obedient faith Jesus

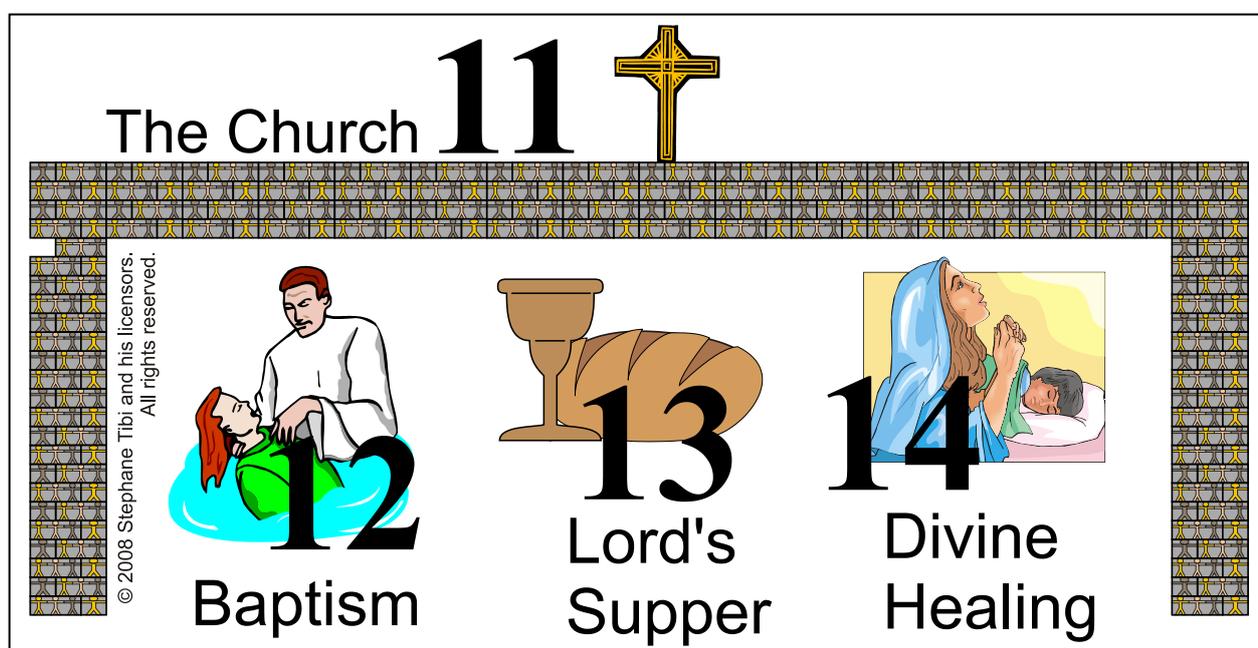
⁹ The gavel is a kind of small hammer that a judge uses in a trial. In this case, our heavenly judge - God - declares us as 'not guilty'.

as our Lord and Savior in order to be reconciled with God as His forgiven children (9). From this blessed adoption, we are led by the Holy Spirit toward the joy of a life of purity fully surrendered to God, filled with the Holy Spirit and thus entirely sanctified (10).

Once you feel that the listeners are able to remember well the titles (forward and backward) of the articles 5-10 and their meaning, you can go back to 1-4 and reinforce the learning on these also. After this, begin to alternate between questions on the group 1-4 and 5-10, so that you help your listeners to strengthen their memory¹⁰. When someone struggle a little about a specific article, you could go back to it and spend some more time on it. If you struggle in explaining one of the articles, it is a good thing - it could be that the Lord is encouraging you to deepen your understanding and/or experience with God in relationship with this article¹¹.

Once the articles 7-10 are understood, this foundation can prove very useful in a personal discussion when you want to know where someone is in his/her faith and to invite this person to go one step further with the Lord. Don't hesitate to share personal examples about how you progressed in your journey of faith. The Lord could use it to encourage the other person(s) to realize where they stand and how to move on with God and welcome Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

D. Articles 11-14: The Church and Its Life



11. The Church

The Church is the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, the covenant people of God made new in Christ, the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. The Lord calls the believers in the Church to worship together and to be a shining witness of His love to

¹⁰ I call this process of revision 'memory weaving,' since the goal here is to slowly help the memory to move from short-term to long-term. I encourage you to work first within a specific group of articles, once this group is mastered review a previous one, and then finally work on two groups of articles together so that this helps to build a strong memory. Once the numbers and names of articles are clear, then move toward the meaning of the articles, to be sure that at least a good basic understanding of each article is in place.

I hope you will perceive how much the exercises are important in the study and teaching of the articles of faith. With kindness, encouragement and playfulness, I believe the Lord can use you to build long-lasting theological foundations in the hearts of new believers or even to bring someone to faith in Christ Jesus - this is my hope and my prayer.

¹¹ In case you would feel bad about not 'mastering' the articles of faith, you could remember that theology is not so much a matter of mastery but rather of servanthood. We will always be students in front of God. An important thing to ask ourselves is: are we still students willing to learn from Him and those he places on our path, or do we try to cheat ourselves and others by pretending a supposed mastery concerning what are ultimately deep mysteries of our faith? Good theology brings you to the desire to be more with God, to know more about Him, and to share His love with others.

the entire world, inviting unbelievers to the joy of being a redeemed child of God and thus part of His family.

The picture shows the exterior walls of a physical church. Although the Church is not at all a building but a living community of believers united to God through Jesus. If you look at each brick, you will notice that it is 'made of persons', to express that we as members of the Church are to be living stones that are connected together and welcome God to reign in our midst and shine through us¹². In the top-left corner of the building, you can notice that there is a brick missing - this is to remind us that the Church is not 'the others', be it is of fundamental importance that we become part of it - thus filling this gap and bringing all our gift to the service of God in the Christian community.

12. Baptism

Our Lord gave us the command to baptize new believers in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. To be baptized, we have to confess our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. We must have the purpose of obediently following God for a life of love, righteousness and holiness. Baptism is the first sacrament¹³ that a believer is invited to experience, thus becoming a member of the Church of our gracious and righteous God.

The picture shows someone being immersed into water by a servant of God, showing a way someone can be baptized.

13. Lord's Supper

Following the commandment of our Lord Jesus, we commemorate Jesus' sacrifice for each of us through the Lord's Supper. Like baptism, the Lord's Supper is a sacrament. It requires faith in Christ and love for the saints.

The picture shows bread and a cup, the two parts of the Lord's Supper. His body was broken for us on the cross (the bread) and His blood was poured out for the forgiveness of our sins (the cup).

14. Divine Healing

We believe that God can heal our bodies in many ways. One of them is through direct divine intervention, another is through doctors and medicine.

The picture shows someone praying God near a sick person, thus stressing the fact that prayer is a key element in asking for divine healing.

As you finish the articles 11-14, review them and make sure you know what is the name of each. Go again backward and forward, and probe to see if you are able to express the key elements of each of these articles. It is always better to use your own words to express yourself instead of a rote memorization of one or two sentences, since it is the best way to check that you really understand what is meant and thus will be able to meditate on it or explain it to others.

The picture of article 11 (the Church) covers the 3 next articles (12-14), thus expressing the fact that these three occur in the context of the Church¹⁴. Try to visualize by memory that the one in the middle is the Lord's Supper, the one on the left is Baptism and on the right Divine Healing. Such simple details can significantly help the memory. With your eyes closed, try to remember the different articles 11-14, use the spatial positioning as a help in order to reinforce your memory of the relative places (for instance ask yourself: what is the article that is over the three others, what is the one on the left, what is at the right of the Lord's Supper, etc.).

¹² See 1 Peter 2:4-6. Jesus, in a certain way, came to replace the temple (read for instance Mat 12:6), so that the Church would become the living temple of the living God. Thus, we are called to become the temple of God - not only as a single person but also as a united and holy community of believers. This is God's call for His Church, and we cannot help but respond humbly with all our heart and all of our strength to this challenging call.

¹³ A sacrament is a 'means of grace' - a way God uses to bring us closer to Him. Each sacrament requires both the faith of the person and the grace of God.

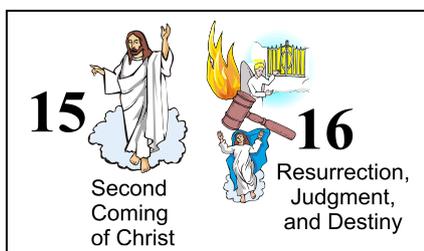
¹⁴ You can say that 12-14 occur '*inside*' the Church, as long as it is clear for the students that the Church is not a building but the redeemed people of God.

You can also notice that, on the graphic the pictures of Jesus and the Church are very close, it manifests the intimate relationship between Jesus and the Church - that the apostle Paul calls the Body of Christ.

In this direction, you can also notice that the spatial closeness between the Church and the articles 1-3 can express that through the first centuries of its existence the Church, led by the Holy Spirit, came to understand more deeply the mystery of God as revealed through Jesus Christ: God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Three in One. The three persons of the Trinity are united by a perfect bond of love; this implies that God did not need to create the world in order to learn what it means to love, but rather that he created the world in order to share with others this love that is at the very heart of God, a love which is expressed through the perfect unity of the Trinity and is to become manifest in this world through the Church.

Once this review and memorization of 11-14 is done, then you can go back to check that the articles 5-10 are well memorized (backward and forward, one at a time...). Review again 11 to 14, and then go back to 1-4 before finishing by saying forward and backward the articles 1 to 14. It is at this point that most persons realize how efficient the combined pictures are for the memory, allowing many to see how one can remember 14 articles almost painlessly ¹⁵.

E. Articles 15-16: The End Times



We reach now the last group of articles, a group showing two key foundations for our faith, which can be a great incentive to welcome Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

The Second coming of Christ and the Resurrection, judgment and destiny, are intimately linked.

15. Second Coming of Christ

As he has promised to His disciples, Jesus will come again. His coming will bring the final judgment of humans (you can read Mat 25:31-46).

The picture is showing Jesus as coming from heaven (clouds under his feet).

16. Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny

At the second coming of Jesus, the dead will resurrect and be judged, those who have done good for a resurrection of life, and those who have done evil for a resurrection of damnation. Therefore, resurrection, judgment and destiny will be intimately linked together.

The first picture shows someone resurrecting, the second one above - the gavel - expresses the judgment and the two last pictures illustrate the two possible destinies: hell (fire) for those condemned for having done evil in their lives, and the angel welcoming at the gates of heaven suggests the blessed destiny of those who have done good.

As you finish this study of the articles of faith, make sure you remember the title of these two articles, particularly the three parts of the title of article 16.

You can notice that 15-16 are located just below 8-10, because when Jesus will come back it will be too late for going through 8-10 (repentance, justification and entire sanctification). Therefore the time for repenting and believing in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior is now since we don't know the day when Jesus will come back; it could be even today.

¹⁵ Some studies on human memory mention that most persons cannot, with their short-term memory, remember more than 7 items. What we do here by using pictures and this back-and-forth 'weaving' or associations is to move purposefully toward a structured (and long-term) memory that will allow a much more efficient retention of the information on the long run. There will always be a need of review, but with such tools it should be much less painful and hopefully much more fruitful - all this by the grace of God.

Then, you can review the articles 11-14, and then weave them with 15 and 16 (that is, for instance, to tell the title and meaning of one article of 11-14 and then one of 15-16). After that, you can review by memory the titles of the articles 5-10 (first in the chronological order and then backward). Then, you can integrate the articles 1-4 in this review. By first keeping the articles by groups, you help to reactivate and strengthen the memory. Once this initial memory is reactivated you can efficiently and playfully go back and forth up to the point when you will feel confident enough to tell the title associated with any of the 16 first numbers, as well as the meaning associated with each.

Once you know well these articles of faith, and teach them to someone else, you could ask what the person thinks will happen at the resurrection, what his/her eternal destiny will be and why. In this way, the Lord could use what they have learned to realize their need to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

This tool could be more than just an initial step in studying the foundations of our faith, it could perhaps - God willing - be a tool that will help many to come to know Christ and to meditate about God's love for us, and then help the person to teach to others these tenets of the Christian faith.

My prayer is that this simple tool will be a holy tool that will encourage you to share your faith with others and help you to go deeper in your walk as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours in the Messiah

Stéphane Tibi

Kampala, June 5, 2008

Annex: Why such a graphic?

a. Basic Observations about the use of Pictures

Many persons recognize that pictures can be an efficient help for teaching. Pictures are considered to be a good tool for teaching illiterate people, whether illiterate adult people or young children.

But images can be used for other purposes as well. For instance, images are able to communicate a lot of information in a small amount of time, something that TV programs, movies, internet websites and advertisers have quickly grasped and put to heavy use. Yet, the use of pictures in western education is at best marginal, if not simply dismissed from 'serious education.'

Could pictures be used to teach efficiently both illiterate and literate people? The rest of this annex will discuss how to use images for structuring and reinforcing the learning process, whatever the level of education of the person taught.

b. Learning with Pictures

First, pictures can be seen as a symbol that represents an object, person or idea. For instance, a dove can represent the Holy Spirit - thus following the description of Jesus' baptism in the Synoptic Gospels. This first basic use of pictures, as symbols carrying a meaning, is less efficient than human languages in some aspects. Through oral or written languages, we are able to express various types of relationships between objects or even abstract concepts, while a single picture is like a lonely word which is not integrated in a sentence. Languages have the ability of relating words through grammatical associations.

The goal is then to find a way to combine pictures like we combine words together in a meaningful whole.

c. Toward a "Grammar for Pictures"

When we put a few pictures together on a single page, we have already created a bigger picture that has different parts. For instance, in the case of the graphic on the articles of faith, the 16 pictures put together make a larger picture. In combining the images, I tried to use a basic 'spatial grammar', a grammar of spatial associations and distinctions. For instance, the first three articles of faith are tied together in order to manifest that they express the same reality: God, One in three persons. The separation between the pictures of 3 and 4 reflects the fact that the articles 1 to 3 are linked to one another in a very different way than 3 and 4. In the same way the image of article 4 is not connected to 5-10 (Original Sin - Entire Sanctification), since articles 5 to 10 will deal with humanity and its relationship to God while article 4 (the Holy Scriptures) shows where we can read about all these points.

In order to be meaningful, these spatial associations (spatial grammar) need to be combined with explanations, something previously illustrated in this guide. The spatial positioning of pictures enables us, through the connection between spatial position and theological relationships, to teach theology with such a graphic.

This "spatial grammar" shall strenghten the memory and lead to a deeper understanding because someone will have a graphical tool helping to develop associations between theological concepts. Pictures are not supposed to replace explanations, but to offer a memory framework that will allow a better memorization of the meaning of what is taught.

d. A "Graphic Sentence"

It is easier to remember a single sentence than five or ten unrelated words. In the same way, it is easier to remember the 16 articles of faith as a single 'combined picture' than 16 unrelated articles.

As a sentence shows specific and meaningful associations between words, the spatial relationships between pictures will attempt to communicate meaningful associations between the different articles of faith.

One of the biggest mistakes that we can make when we learn or teach with 'rote memory' is when we separate memorization from understanding. While understanding should be the cement that strengthens and gives its use to memory, when it is removed from the memorization process it significantly weakens the memory.

The purpose of the graphic on the articles of faith is to strengthen the memory through a better understanding of how all these elements fit together in our Christian faith.

In order to reach such a goal, I have tried to explain the choice of pictures¹⁶ and then the theological relationships in association with the spatial relationships. We could say that this process is a process of "loading with meaning," both at the picture level and at the relationships level. In these steps, a very important way of making these connections was to tell the story that relates all the articles of faith, what could perhaps be called a narrative approach.

NOTE: What is presented in this annex - in a rather theoretical way - does not need to be explained to people if you teach them the 16 articles of faith. I believe that most of the time it will be better not to speak about it. Once a person you teach realize that 'it works,' you could speak about some of these underlying elements if you sense the need; but sharing this at first could provoke unnecessary doubts or an outright rejection of this new way of teaching.

¹⁶ Depending on the cultural context you are in, some pictures will need more explanations than others. I hope most will be very simple, but I also realize that some will take more time to explain (like, for instance, the gavel that stands for 'justification' in the article 9).