

Small Group Guide: "We Believe In" - The Nicene Creed Series

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and deepen your understanding of what it means to be part of the community of faith.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: If you could ask one question to the early Christians who wrote the Nicene Creed, what would it be and why?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. The Purpose of the Nicene Creed - A "rope" to guide us through confusing times, written in 325 CE to unite Christians around core beliefs
 2. We - The strength of community in faith
 3. Believe - Surrendering to the mystery of God beyond mere evidence
 4. In - An invitation to proximity and relationship with God
 5. The Longboat vs. The Canoe - We weren't meant to paddle alone in faith
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Context (10-15 minutes)

1. The sermon mentioned that "popularity has replaced credibility" in our social media age. How have you experienced this in your own life? How does it affect what we believe about faith, politics, or culture?
2. What struck you most about the historical background of the Nicene Creed? Why do you think it was so important for early Christians to define what they believed?

The Power of "We" (15-20 minutes)

3. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and verses 17-19 together. How does Paul connect personal salvation with community belonging? Why are both important?

4. The sermon used the metaphor of a canoe versus a Viking longboat. Which image better describes your current experience of faith—paddling alone or rowing with others? Why?
5. Have you ever experienced a time when you needed to "stay in the boat" and let others row for you? What was that like? How did the community of faith support you?
6. How can we create space in our church community for people who need to stop rowing for a season?

The Mystery of "Believe" (10-15 minutes)

7. The sermon stated, "Belief is not certainty." How does this challenge or comfort you? What's the difference between intellectual agreement and surrendering to mystery?
8. Hebrews 11:6 says it's impossible to please God without faith. Why do you think faith is so central to our relationship with God?

The Proximity of "In" (10-15 minutes)

9. The sermon emphasized that God seeks us out. How does this distinguish Christianity from other worldviews or religions you're familiar with?
10. The story of Charles Blondin walking the tightrope illustrates complete trust. What does it look like practically to "become part of Christ" rather than trying to balance on your own?
11. Read Galatians 2:20. What does it mean that "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me"? How does this play out in daily life?

Practical Applications

Personal Reflection (5 minutes of silence)

Take a few moments to quietly consider:

- Where am I trying to paddle alone instead of staying in the boat with community?
- What area of my life am I trying to "balance on my own" instead of clinging to Christ?
- How is God inviting me to draw closer to Him this week?

Group Commitments (10-15 minutes)

Choose 1-2 of the following to commit to as a group:

1. Memorize Together - Commit to memorizing the first section of the Nicene Creed about the Father this week. Recite it together at your next gathering.
2. Check In - Identify one person in your group or church community who might be struggling and "stopped rowing." Reach out to them this week with encouragement, a meal, or practical help.
3. Practice Proximity - Choose one spiritual practice this week that helps you draw near to God (prayer, Scripture reading, worship, silence, etc.). Share with the group what you choose and report back next week.
4. Study the Creed - Read one article or watch one video about the history of the Nicene Creed to better understand the context of early Christianity.
5. Community Over Isolation - If you've been paddling alone, commit to showing up to a church gathering, small group, or worship service this week, even if you don't feel like it.

Closing Activity (5-10 minutes)

Reading the Creed Together

Read the Nicene Creed aloud as a group. As you read, remember you're joining your voice with billions of Christians across 2,000 years of history.

We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,

and was made human.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried.
The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and to life in the world to come. Amen.

Prayer Requests and Intercession

- Share prayer requests, particularly focusing on areas where people need the community to "row for them"
- Pray for those who are struggling to believe or feel distant from God
- Thank God for being the One who seeks us out and draws near to us

Before Next Week

- Read the Nicene Creed daily and reflect on what it means to you
- Journal about one time when Christian community carried you through difficulty

Leader Notes

- Create a safe space where people can be honest about doubts and struggles
- Remind the group that it's okay to "stay in the boat" during difficult seasons
- Emphasize that we're all learning together—no one has it all figured out
- Be prepared to share your own story of when community carried you or when you struggled alone
- Keep the focus on unity around core beliefs rather than division over secondary issues