



THE CREED

WHAT WE BELIEVE

PERSONAL, GROUPS, AND HOME STUDY GUIDE

WRITTEN AND COMPILED
BY ABBEY SITTERLEY AND ANDREA BURKE





INTRODUCTION

In Romans 10:9-10, the Apostle Paul extols the Roman church,

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”

This spring we will be studying the Apostles’ Creed: a statement of core Biblical beliefs developed by the early church and carried on through the centuries as a form of confession. Rather than a monotonous statement meaninglessly recited for formality’s sake, the Creed arose out of, and implies, a desire to praise and delight in the Gospel story in which we have anchored our identity as Christians. As such, it has long been a helpful tool in the Church’s spiritual growth.

WHAT IS THE APOSTLES’ CREED

The Apostles’ Creed took shape first in the correspondence and writings of early church fathers in the third century, largely in response to various heresies that were distorting Biblical truth. Church leaders such as Ignatius, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus of Rome all strove to encourage the young congregations to know, cherish, and return to the truth of what the Bible teaches, so as not to be led astray by fashionable falsehoods. In his book *The Creedal Imperative*, Carl Trueman describes these statements as “skeletal framework”¹ of the Biblical message. These exhortations were simple outlines of the undiluted Gospel. Here’s what Ignatius wrote:

“Stop your ears, therefore, when any one speaks to you at variance with Jesus Christ, who was descended from David, and was also of Mary; who was truly born, and did eat and drink. He was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate; He was truly crucified, and [truly] died, in the sights of beings in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. He was also truly raised from the dead, His Father quickening Him, even as after the same manner His Father will so raise us up who believe in Him by Christ Jesus, apart from whom we do not possess the true life.”²

1 Trueman, Carl R. *The Creedal Imperative*. Crossway, 2012.

2 Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians

Statements like these in early church writings became known as the rule, or standard, of faith (*regula fidei*). In other words, they served to ground believers in sound theology by giving them a litmus test by which to discern correct Biblical teaching amid the sinking sand of false gospels.

As the usefulness of such succinct statements of the Gospel became apparent, their notoriety spread. By the time the Apostles' Creed was first mentioned by name in recorded history (in the writings of St. Ambrose of Milan in 389 A.D.) it was likely already a familiar term to the church. Eventually, the Creed was formalized by Charlamagne in 800 A.D. and reciting it became a common part of church gatherings.

WHY SHOULD WE LEARN THE APOSTLE'S CREED TODAY?

PREACH THE GOSPEL TO OURSELVES

Every day, we are inundated with messages telling us a certain story of what constitutes a flourishing life. In return, our habits form according to the story in which we choose to ground ourselves. These habits become liturgies, practices that both express our desires and shape them. Since we are constantly told by the world that our personal ends, means, and desires are the zenith of our purpose, we need to be reminded of the ultimate story we are part of and to remind ourselves of the Gospel regularly.

Scripture is full of passages that impress the importance of knowing, remembering, and cherishing the Gospel. In a similar vein, Jeremiah 6:16 encourages us to 'Ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it.' Not only is there profound value in listening to what our predecessors in the faith have done and advised, but keeping reminders of God's truth close to our hearts and minds helps us avoid sin and walk uprightly.

Because we are formed by our beliefs, and we are formed most of all by what we believe about God, knowing and delighting in the essential elements of the Christian story is formative. Memorizing and repeating the creed helps to shape us.

DISCERN THE TRUTH

C.S. Lewis once wrote, “A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.”³ As the early church fathers summarized the truth of scripture to warn against error, so the Apostles’ Creed serves to remind us of the true Gospel. However, the Creed is not on par with Scripture. Instead, it directs us *to* the Bible and encourages us to examine its claims in light of what holy Scripture says. It summarizes key biblical truths, but does not replace the Bible as the highest written authority for Christians.

We, like the church of old, can use the Creed as a straight line by which to identify crooked lines. If the assertions of today’s popular teachings, however right-sounding, contradict the explicit Gospel summarized by the skeletal framework of the Apostles’ Creed, then they are not the truth.

CONFESS AS ONE CHURCH

Writing on the Christian call to community, Rosaria Butterfield stated, “There is no such thing as an independent Christian.”⁴ As people living in an individualistic society with a current climate of distance and isolation, we are likely to forget that, as part of the body of Christ, we’re meant to be together! And not just in proximity. Confessing the Apostles’ Creed together as one people binds our local, present-day church to the historic and global church. It reminds us of our family tree, the saints that trusted in God in their day. It also speaks to the endurance of God’s truth, which, like the Lord, is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

DELIGHT IN THE GOSPEL

The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever! When we revisit the Gospel through the Apostles’ Creed, we are reminded of who God is, what Jesus has done on our behalf, and who we are called to be in response. The more we see the character, justice, mercy, and beauty of God, the more we know Him. The more we know Him, the more we savor Him. The more we savor Him, the more we remember that He is the soul’s true fulfillment. As love for Jesus takes greater root in our hearts, how can we not cry the Gospel with our lives!

³ Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. Royal Blind Society, 1957.

⁴ Butterfield, Rosaria Champagne. *The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World*. Crossway, 2018.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS

As each Sunday sermon will cover a new section of the Creed, this guide can help unpack and complement the ideas we went over in service throughout the remainder of the week. There are six questions to mark Monday through Saturday, but they don't need to be filled out each and every day! If you'd rather answer them in one fell swoop - go for it! This only serves to help us continue to digest the importance of the Creed as we live our daily lives.

GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

These are optional questions to use in addition to each week's Grace Group questions. Use one or two or all of them! Though the Apostles' Creed seems simple at first glance, as the outline of the Gospel it is chocked-full of deep theological truths. We could spend a lifetime exploring the Gospel, let alone the basic statements of the Creed. The Group Study Questions are just a few extra prompts to keep you going.

HOME DISCIPLESHIP

Home Discipleship doesn't look the same for everyone but our homes are the first mission field we're called to as Christians. This section of the Study Guide is for families, spouses, roommates, community groups, and all other various forms of homestead hospitality. Use these lessons / guides as opportunities to see and embody the Gospel in the day to day, let the truths of the Creed take anchor in our worldview, and exhort each other to keep our eyes on Jesus.

MEMORIZATION

Psalm 119:11 says, "I have stored up Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You." While the Creed is not on par with the very words of Holy Scripture, it is profitable to memorize the good, the true, and the beautiful — of which, the summarized framework of the Gospel is chief! We will be memorizing the modern English version (don't worry, not the original Latin!) of the Apostles' Creed as a church this season. Use the next page to help you commit it to remembrance.



I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY,
CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST,
HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD,
WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT
AND BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY.
HE SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE,
WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED, AND WAS BURIED;
HE DESCENDED TO THE DEAD,
AND ON THE THIRD DAY ROSE AGAIN
HE ASCENDED TO HEAVEN
AND IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD
THE FATHER ALMIGHTY.
FROM THERE HE WILL COME TO JUDGE THE
LIVING AND THE DEAD.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT,
THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH,
THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS,
THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS,
THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY,
AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

AMEN.

God said to Moses,
“I AM WHO I AM.”
And he said, “Say this to the
people of Israel: ‘I AM has
sent me to you.’”

— Exodus 3:14



For you did not receive
the spirit of slavery to fall
back into fear, but you have
received the Spirit of
adoption as sons, by whom we
cry, “Abba! Father!”

— Romans 8:15



But now, O LORD,
you are our Father;
we are the clay, and
you are our potter;
we are all the work of
your hand.

— Isaiah 64:8

WEEK 1: I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

“When the Christian says the first clause of the Creed, he... confers his Creator as both the Father of his Savior and his own Father through Christ - a Father who now loves him no less than He loves His only begotten Son. That is a marvelous confession to be able to make.” - J. I. Packer

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, spend time pondering and answering these questions:

1. Why is it important to be able to articulate what we believe?
2. What does it mean for us to confess belief alongside other Christians?
3. The Hebrew word for God Almighty is the highest name for God: YHWH, or Yahweh. What does this name mean?
4. How does knowing God as our Father impact how we approach him?

5. What does our understanding of, and belief in, God's sovereignty mean for our daily lives?

6. In what ways do you delight in God as your Almighty Father?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you heard of the Apostles' Creed before or recited it in corporate worship?
2. C. S. Lewis coined the term "chronological snobbery" to describe our tendency to look down upon and disregard the wisdom of our forefathers. What is the root of such an impulse?
3. How does the Creed teach us to better cherish Scripture?
4. Why do you think the Creed begins with the line "I believe in God the Father Almighty"?
5. How does our understanding of who God is shape our worship of Him?



HOME DISCIPLESHIP

Consider the repeated things of your home. Do you make coffee every day? Do you always watch a certain show at a certain time with your roommates or spouse? Do you sing certain songs to your children at bedtime? Is there a story about a family member that you could retell every year at Christmastime? In the same way, we can introduce Gospel truths into our home rhythms through pieces of liturgy such as the Apostles' Creed. How might you begin to incorporate the Apostles Creed into your home? This week, take time with your roommates, spouse, and family to discuss what the importance is of writing these Gospel values on the "doorposts of our home" as Deuteronomy 6:7-9 talks about.

"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." — Deuteronomy 6:7-9

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME:

1. Listen to the song from The Village Church's "The Apostles Creed" album for children. Maybe make this a part of your morning or evening routines.
2. What are some words people would use to describe our family? What do we believe and do all the time?
3. What does it mean that God is our Father? This week, how can we as a family/home delight together in God as our father? Make a list and try to do some of those things together.
5. Consider writing out the Apostles Creed to place somewhere visible in your home to remind everyone of what we're learning. Get kids involved with this!



**"STUDY FOR THE CREATION OF LIGHT, PLATE 3, PHYSICA SACRA"
BY JOHANN JAKOB SCHEUCHZER**

God's Grandeur

Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Week Two

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

— Colossians 1:16



In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

— Genesis 1:1-2



Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

— Genesis 2:7

WEEK 2: CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

“This is the fundamental lie of modernity: that we are our own.” - Alan Noble

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, ponder and answer these questions:

1. Why does it matter that we are created beings made in God's image?

2. Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us “He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.” Psalm 19:1-2 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.” What is similar about these verses? What do they tell us about the Creator?

3. What are some ways in which we forget that we are “dust, and to dust we shall return?” (Gen. 3:19)

4. How does remembering our creatureliness define what our approach to God should look like?

5. How should understanding the value of creation as God's handiwork change the way we interact with the natural world?

6. How have your limitations served to strengthen your dependence on God?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some subtle ways we forget our humanity?
2. How can knowing ourselves as beings created by God teach us to submit to Him?
3. How should we treat the natural world around us?
4. Name a time when you felt utterly dependent on God.
5. Has nature ever reminded you of God's providence?

Week Two



HOME DISCIPLESHIP

This week, spend time paying attention to creation. We are inching closer to spring, eagerly awaiting the warmth, the final thaw, the sign that winter has passed for good. In so many ways, we can learn about our Creator through His creation and the seasons that play out in silent praise before us. Pay attention to the changing light of spring, even as we change our clocks this weekend.

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME

1. Get some soil, seeds, and some flower pots from a local store. Plant them together and talk about the principles of planting things in faith, God creating the earth from nothing, and ask your children what they can learn from this.
2. Ask what big things we can see in creation that point to a Creator. Where can we see design, beauty, creativity in nature and in humanity?
3. What are some things that you aren't good at? For example, do you want to learn to cook, dribble a basketball, become a better reader, dance or play the guitar? Is there someone at home who can help you grow in this? Reminding ourselves that we are created beings with flawed bodies, limited skills, and many imperfections can actually bring us closer to one another and community if we're willing to be humble and admit those things.
4. What are some things that you love about the way God created you and the people you live with? Celebrate those things at a dinner with good food and feast from his creation!

And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us, and we
have seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son
from the Father, full of
grace and truth.

— John 1:14



For there is one God, and
there is one mediator
between God and men, the
man Christ Jesus

— 1 Timothy 2:5



In this the love of God was
made manifest among us,
that God sent his only Son
into the world, so that we
might live through him.

— 1 John 4:9

WEEK 3: I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD

“You know how it is when some great king enters a large city and dwells in one of its houses; because of his dwelling in that single house, the whole city is honored, and enemies and robbers cease to molest it. Even so is it with the King of all; He has come into our country and dwelt in one body amidst the many, and in consequence the designs of the enemy against mankind have been foiled and the corruption of death, which formerly held them in its power, has simply ceased to be. For the human race would have perished utterly had not the Lord and Savior of all the Son of God, come among us to put an end to death.” — — Athanasius of Alexandria, *On The Incarnation*

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, ponder and answer these questions:

1. Throughout the Old Testament, we see images of a savior and prophecies of a messiah to come. What does it mean that this person was long-expected? What does this say about God?

2. 1 Timothy 2:5 says there is one mediator between God and men: the man Christ Jesus. Why do we need a mediator anyway?

3. What does the title “Christ” mean?

4. The Father and Son exist in a perfect relationship with each other. What does this mean for Christians, who are co-heirs with Christ? (Rom. 8:17)

5. If Jesus is Lord, what does this mean for our lives? How do your heart and flesh resist His lordship?

6. In Matthew 16:15, Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Who is Jesus to you?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When we say this portion of the Creed together, we are saying that Christ is “our Lord.” How is this different than saying that He is “my Lord?” Why do we need to affirm both?
2. In John 10:30, Jesus says quite clearly, “I and the Father are one.” Jesus, the Son of God, is equal to God. How does the Trinity help us unpack this?
3. How is confessing that “Jesus is Lord” a countercultural, even political, act?
4. What does the lordship of Jesus Christ look like in your life?
5. How can we better surrender to His reign each day?

Week Three



HOME DISCIPLESHIP

We don't have a clear picture these days of what it looks like to have a king or queen rule over us. Spend some time talking about what it means to have a sovereign ruler. Recite the Apostles Creed together up to this point.

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME

1. Who makes the rules of your home? Does everyone have to submit to those rules? What happens if someone breaks those rules? Talk about what this looks like for us as we submit to Jesus as our Lord.
2. For kids, play this game: Pick a chair to make "the throne." Each family member gets a turn to sit in the chair and be "king" or "queen." (You could even make a crown or a scepter!) The ruler gets to tell the family to do things: a funny dance, or sing a silly song, or make certain faces. Have fun with this! Then take time after the game to talk about what it means to have someone sit as a Lord or ruler over our lives. What does it mean for us to follow his commands?
3. Discuss as a household: Jesus, our Lord, tells us in Matthew 22:37-39 that the greatest commandment is "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." How can we obey and submit to him through these commands this week? Ask one another for ideas for how to love each another in tangible ways this week.



“THE NATIVITY” BY JUAN GONZALEZ



And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

— Luke 1:30-35

**WEEK 4:
HE WAS CONCEIVED BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY
SPIRIT AND BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY**

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be
upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.

— Isaiah 9:6

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

— Hebrews 2:14-17

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, ponder and answer these questions:

1. C. S. Lewis referred to the virgin birth as "...that miracle which for some reason proves hardest of all for the modern mind to accept." Why do you think it's hard for us to accept this miracle?

2. Lewis goes on to define a miracle as "an interference with Nature by supernatural power." What does God's interference in our world tell us about Him?

3. In his book on the Apostles' Creed, J. I. Packer writes that, since the resurrection and the virgin birth are both embodied miracles, it is "unreasonable" to deny one while attempting to accept the other. Do you agree? How does belief in one invite belief in the other?

4. What does it mean that God took the form of a human child?

5. Read Mary's song, known as the Magnificat, in Luke 1:46-55. What do her words tell us about the purpose of Jesus' birth?

6. Why is it important to understand and embrace the miracle of Christ's birth?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is confessing this part of the Apostles' Creed important?
2. Do miracles still happen today?
3. What are some other miraculous occurrences in Scripture that are hard for our modern minds to grasp?
4. How should God's supremacy over space, time, and matter define our trust in Him?
5. How can the rarity of miracles remind us of God's power to sustain all things on ordinary days?

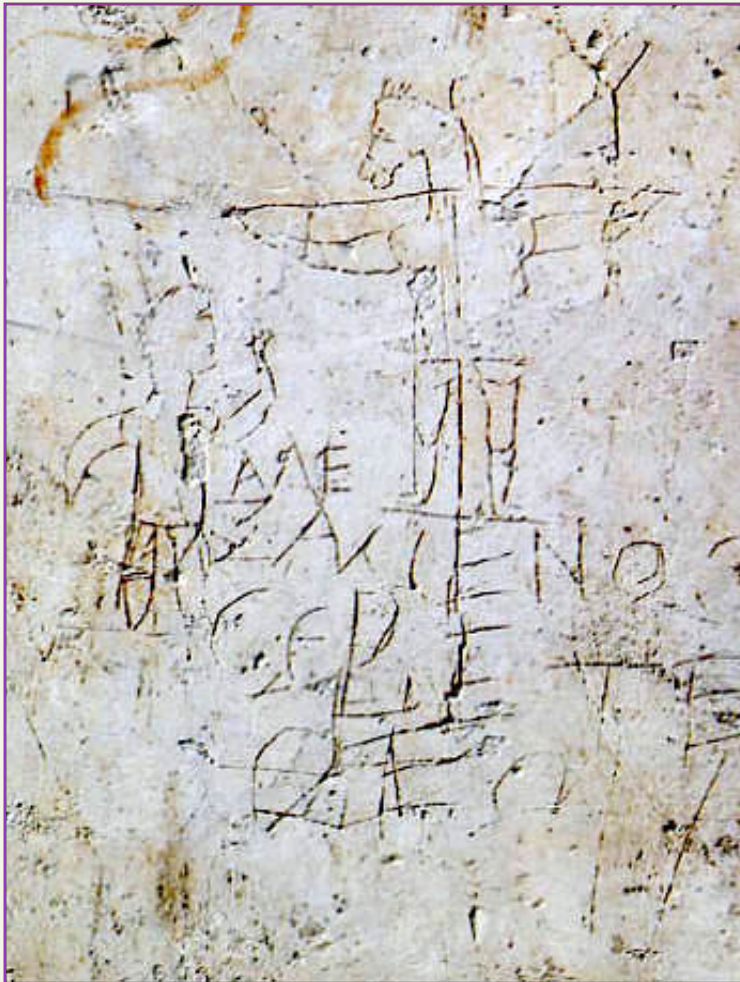


HOME DISCIPLESHIP

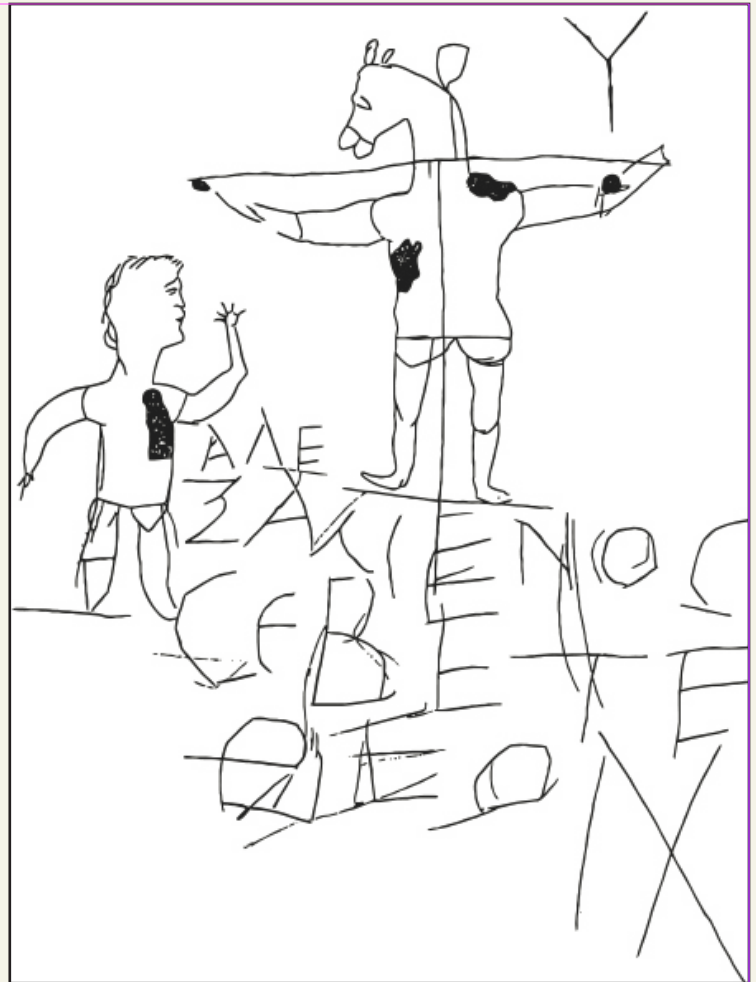
We often don't reflect on Christ's birth outside of Christmastime. Bring Christmastide into your home this week by playing Christmas songs and reflect on the beautiful truths of Christ's birth. Here are some ways to have these conversations at home. Also, continue to recite the Apostles' Creed together at your table, in car rides, or wherever is best for your home.

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME

1. Tell your children the stories of how they were born. What exciting events happened? What funny or scary things happened? Then ask them, why is it important that we understand how Jesus was born and his arrival on earth?
2. Talk about the meaning of your name. If you have children, tell them what their name means. What importance does a name have? What does Jesus' name mean?
3. With your family or housemates, have one meal that is only lit by candlelight. Use this visual example to talk about the way light disrupts darkness, what light illuminates, and how different the experience would be if we were completely in the dark. In what ways can we learn about light interfering with dark to help us understand the light of Christ coming into the complete darkness of the world? Can darkness create light?



THE ALEXAMENOS GRAFFITO



THE ALEXAMENOS GRAFFITO RUBBING

‘Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies...’

Malcolm Guite

Oh let me fall as grain to the good earth
And die away from all dry separation,
Die to my sole self, and find new birth
Within that very death, a dark fruition,
Deep in this crowded underground, to learn
The earthy otherness of every other,
To know that nothing is achieved alone
But only where these other fallen gather.

If I bear fruit and break through to bright air,
Then fall upon me with your freeing flail
To shuck this husk and leave me sheer and clear
As heaven-handled Hopkins, that my fall
May be more fruitful and my autumn still
A golden evening where your barns are full.

Week Five

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

— Mark 10:45



Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.”

— John 19:1-6

4. Why is the crucifixion of Jesus offensive and foolish to the world?

5. Refer to Jerry Bridges' quotation above. What are some ways you try to earn or merit your salvation?

6. List what Christ's death on the cross won for you.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Look up more information on the Alexamenos graffito. What does this piece of ancient art tell us about how faith in the crucified Christ was viewed by the world in the days of the early church?
2. Why does it matter for us to confess that Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate?"
3. Read the crucifixion account in John 19 again. Which prophecies are fulfilled by Jesus in this passage?
4. When we try to earn our own salvation, what are we saying in response to Jesus' last words, "It is finished?"
5. What does following Jesus look like in light of the cross?



HOME DISCIPLESHIP

Spend time looking at “The Descent from the Cross” by Rembrandt, included on the next page. Look at this painting with those in your home, children too! Observe each of the different facial expressions, the way Rembrandt represented Christ, Mary, the men, and the women. What emotions do you see? What feelings does this image evoke? Why is it important to remember Christ’s death? Some other conversation ideas for this week:

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME

1. Spend time walking through a local cemetery or visiting the grave of someone you love who has died. Remind yourself, your children, your spouse, your roommates, that while death is certainly part of the human experience, we have hope along with the many whose faith was in Christ who are likely buried in that cemetery, that we will be joined together with him in resurrection.
2. Death can be an intimidating topic to discuss with your children. Carve out some time during family time (after dinner, after church, a special morning) to allow your family to ask anything they want to ask about death, Jesus’ death, and resurrection. If you don’t have children, consider doing this with anyone else you live with. Share the fears, questions, concerns and encourage one another to look at Christ, in both his suffering and victory.
3. Listen to classical hymns that sing about Christ’s death and resurrection (*In Christ Alone*, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, *Jesus Paid it All*, *How Deep the Father’s Love For Us*) in your home this week and sing these songs with your family.



"THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS" REMBRANDT, 1634

Week Five



"THE HARROWING OF HELL" ALBRECHT DÜRER, 1511

Week Six

But they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

— 1 Peter 4:5-6



But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.”

— Matthew 28:5-6

WEEK 6: HE DESCENDED TO THE DEAD, AND ON THE THIRD DAY ROSE AGAIN

“Had He never come forth from the prison of the grave, how could we ever have been sure that our ransom had been fully paid? (1 Cor. 15:17.) Had He never risen from His conflict with the last enemy, how could we have felt confident, that He has overcome death, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil? (Heb. 2:14.) But thanks be unto God, we are not left in doubt. The Lord Jesus really “rose again for our justification.” True Christians are “begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” They may boldly say with Paul, “Who is he that condemns – it is Christ that died, yes rather that is risen again” (Rom. 8:34. Rom. 4:25. 1 Pet. 1:3).” - J. C. Ryle

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, ponder and answer these questions:

1. Refer to Sunday’s sermon on this part of the Creed. Did you learn something you didn’t know before?
2. The matter of Jesus’ descent into hell has been widely debated. Why is it controversial?
3. Why is the resurrection hard to grasp with our modern minds?

4. Read the above J. C. Ryle quote again. List the assurances you have as a Christian in light of Christ's resurrection.

5. What does it mean to have a 'living hope?'

6. In light of the empty tomb, how then should we live?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Has reliving these Gospel truths as we examine them in the Apostles' Creed deepened your affection of and delight in Jesus Christ?
2. Have there been parts of the Apostles' Creed that you've struggled with? Have you discussed those in community with other Christians?
3. Why is it important to preach the Gospel to ourselves?
4. What does Christ's death and resurrection mean for our death one day?
5. Do you believe there is no condemnation for you in Christ Jesus, not just with your mind, but in your heart?



HOME DISCIPLESHIP

Resurrection hope gives us a path to living differently in this world. As Christians, we shouldn't fear death the same way the world does. While we might wonder at its mystery, we certainly know that we can trust Christ in his sufficient work. Hell might come up as a topic of discussion in your home this week. Don't shy away from talking about it and don't hesitate to ask the church for resources if you need any to further this discussion in your home.

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME

1. Post a piece of paper somewhere visible, or a chalkboard that everyone can write on and start daily adding to it the things you and your home have hope for. Do you hope for someone's salvation? Hopeful for spring? Hope in God's provision? Hope that God will give us good sleep? Write these things down, no matter how small they may be. We can have gospel-fueled hope in the goodness of Jesus.
2. Find something to celebrate this week. Maybe it's good news for someone in your home. Maybe it's an answered prayer. Maybe it's a new skill for one of your kids. Let's be a people of joyful celebration in light of all we have in Christ. Make your home a place of joy this week!

Psalm 47

Clap your hands, all you peoples;
shout to God with loud songs of joy.
For the Lord, the Most High, is awesome,
a great king over all the earth.
He subdued peoples under us,
and nations under our feet.
He chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom he loves.
God has gone up with a shout,
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.
For God is the king of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm.
God is king over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne.
The princes of the peoples gather
as the people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God;
he is highly exalted.

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away.

— Acts 1:6-12



So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.

— Mark 16:19-20



**WEEK 7:
HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN,
AND IS SEATED AT THE
RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER**

“His ascension in stately pomp, amidst the acclamations of angels, to the enjoyment of His Father’s continued smile, is the sure proof that the work is complete.” - Charles Spurgeon

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, ponder and answer these questions:

1. Why does it matter that Jesus ascended in his physical body?
2. Charles Spurgeon says the ascension is ‘sure proof that the work is complete.’ Why do you think that is?
3. What does it mean that God’s work on our behalf is permanent and complete?

4. When Jesus ascended, He promised that the Holy Spirit would come. Who is the Holy Spirit?

5. Jesus promised that He would be with us always “unto the end of the age.” How do you know that Jesus is with you?

6. What kind of people should we be in light of Jesus’ promised return?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. To be at someone’s ‘right hand’ was to be in a position of authority. What does it mean that Jesus is sitting right now at the Father’s right hand?
2. Is the reality of Jesus’ current reign as Lord of All present in your worldview?
3. What are some ways our culture denies Jesus’ total reign?
4. In Mark 16:19-20, what was the apostle’s response to seeing Jesus’ ascend?
5. What should be our response to the Ascension?



HOME DISCIPLESHIP

It was at the ascension that Jesus gave what is now commonly known as “the Great Commission.” Spend time reading that passage at home this week. Consider the following conversation starters to discuss this week’s line of the creed. Continue to recite the creed in your home together.

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME

1. Look for ways to participate in The Great Commission this week. As a household, how can you be a part of bringing the good news of Jesus to the world? Take some time to learn about Grace Road missionaries this week, pray for them, look at where they are with your kids on a map. Consider how you might bring the nations into your own home. Seek out ways to interact with different cultures around you!



"THE LAST JUDGEMENT" JOHN MARTIN, 1853

The Kingdom

R.S. Thomas

It's a long way off but inside it
There are quite different things going on:
Festivals at which the poor man
Is king and the consumptive is
Healed; mirrors in which the blind look
At themselves and love looks at them
Back; and industry is for mending
The bent bones and the minds fractured
By life. It's a long way off, but to get
There takes no time and admission
Is free, if you purge yourself
Of desire, and present yourself with
Your need only and the simple offering
Of your faith, green as a leaf.

Week Eight

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

— 1 Corinthians 5:10



Because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

— Acts 17:31



And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

— Matthew 12:26

4. Why does mankind need to be judged?

5. What are the results of God's judgment?

6. What has God's mercy looked like in your life? What has His justice looked like?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where does our desire for justice come from?

2. How is God's justice different than ours?

3. Our culture is inundated with messages to not judge others. While we should not condemn others for sins we are also prone to committing, we should pursue discernment. How does refraining from judgment as discernment turn into an excuse for sin?

4. Read the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant in Matthew 18:21-35 together. What does our unforgiveness of others say about our gratefulness to God?

5. How does expecting Christ's return motivate us to share the Gospel with an unbelieving world?



HOME DISCIPLESHIP

As you look at the definitions of the words you learned this week (first question in personal study), discuss these terms with your housemates, spouse, and/or children. Spend time discussing anything you may have misunderstood about these terms or still don't understand. It's a good thing to wrestle with big ideas in community.

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME

1. Waiting happens all the time in our lives. Leverage these moments to talk to your children about waiting well. Talk to your children about how there are good and bad ways to wait for something. Point out those moments as they happen in your life. Perhaps you as an adult are looking forward to something — a spouse, your wedding, a promotion, a baby, a big trip. How can we faithfully wait for Christ's return? What does this look like?

2. Tune your heart to Christ: Look at all of the sources of input into your home and personal life. Discuss these things as a house, maybe over dinner. What TV shows, movies, music, news feeds, games, apps, have influence in your home? Do they acknowledge, in any way, the supremacy of Christ? If not, in what ways could you dial down the noise and bring in other streams of Christ-centered truth into your family or home?

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my
name, he will teach you all things
and bring to your remembrance all
that I have said to you.

— John 14:26



And hope does not put us to shame,
because God's love has been
poured into our hearts through
the Holy Spirit who has been
given to us.

— Romans 5:5



Go therefore and make disciples of
all nations, baptizing them in the
name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit, teaching
them to observe all that I have
commanded you. And behold,
I am with you always, to the end
of the age.

— Matthew 28:19-20

5. How does each person of the Trinity point to the other?

6. Why is it important to believe in the Holy Spirit?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some misconceptions people have about the Holy Spirit?
2. Is the Holy Spirit simply our conscience?
3. What work does the Holy Spirit do between believers in community?
4. Name something you learned from Sunday's sermon about the Holy Spirit.
5. How can we better acknowledge the Spirit's work in our daily lives?



HOME DISCIPLESHIP

It's a good and beautiful thing to reflect on the nature of the Trinity. Have conversations about how you talk about the Trinity at home this week, listen to worship music and notice the way the words point to different members of the Godhead, and recite the Apostle's Creed again together as a home!

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME

1. Listen to The Village Church's song "Trinity" with your kids to help them understand the Trinity and to provide an easy way to remember!
2. If you have kids, find a way to spend intentional, one-on-time with them. Split your available time between spouses or between kids, but make sure they get dedicated, undistracted, uninterrupted time with you. Listen to their stories, go on a walk, play games, eat meals together, go shopping. Use this time to remind them that in the same way you love being near them and spending time with them, the Holy Spirit is near to us always in all we do. He is always near, desiring to be near to His children.
3. Galatians 5:22-23 outline the fruits of the Spirit. These are things the Spirit produces in us as we're transformed by his work. Look for ways to encourage others when you see these things in them this week. Your roommates, spouse, kids, friends. When you see it, encourage the work of the Spirit in them!



Holy, Holy, Holy

1. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!
2. Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.
3. Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love and purity.
4. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

So then you are no longer strangers and
aliens, but you are fellow citizens with
the saints and members of the household
of God, built on the foundation of
the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus
himself being the cornerstone

— Ephesians 2:19-20



And day by day, attending the temple
together and breaking bread in their
homes, they received their food with glad
and generous hearts, praising God and
having favor with all the people. And the
Lord added to their number day by day
those who were being saved.

— Acts 2:46-47



Therefore, since we are surrounded by so
great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay
aside every weight, and sin which clings
so closely, and let us run with endurance
the race that is set before us, looking to
Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our
faith, who for the joy that was set before
him endured the cross, despising the
shame, and is seated at the right hand of
the throne of God

— Hebrews 12:1-2

WEEK 10: THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

“A church is not a group of friends you’ve picked, it’s a group of brothers and sisters God has picked for you.” - Michael S. Horton

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, ponder and answer these questions:

1. What does catholic mean in its original sense?
2. Why do we meet in church each Sunday?
3. Have you experienced brokenness in church?
4. Why should we strive to love God’s church despite her fallibility?

5. Paul in Ephesians 5:25 encourages husbands to love their wives “as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” What does Paul mean by drawing this comparison?

6. What’s one way you can serve the body of Christ this week?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is community among Christians of the utmost importance?
2. What does meeting together do for us? What does it ask of us?
3. Do you struggle finding community? What’s one way you can put yourself out there this week? What’s one way you can invite someone into fellowship with you this week?
4. Is there a Christian from the past that inspires you in your walk with God?
5. How can we love someone well who has been hurt by the church?



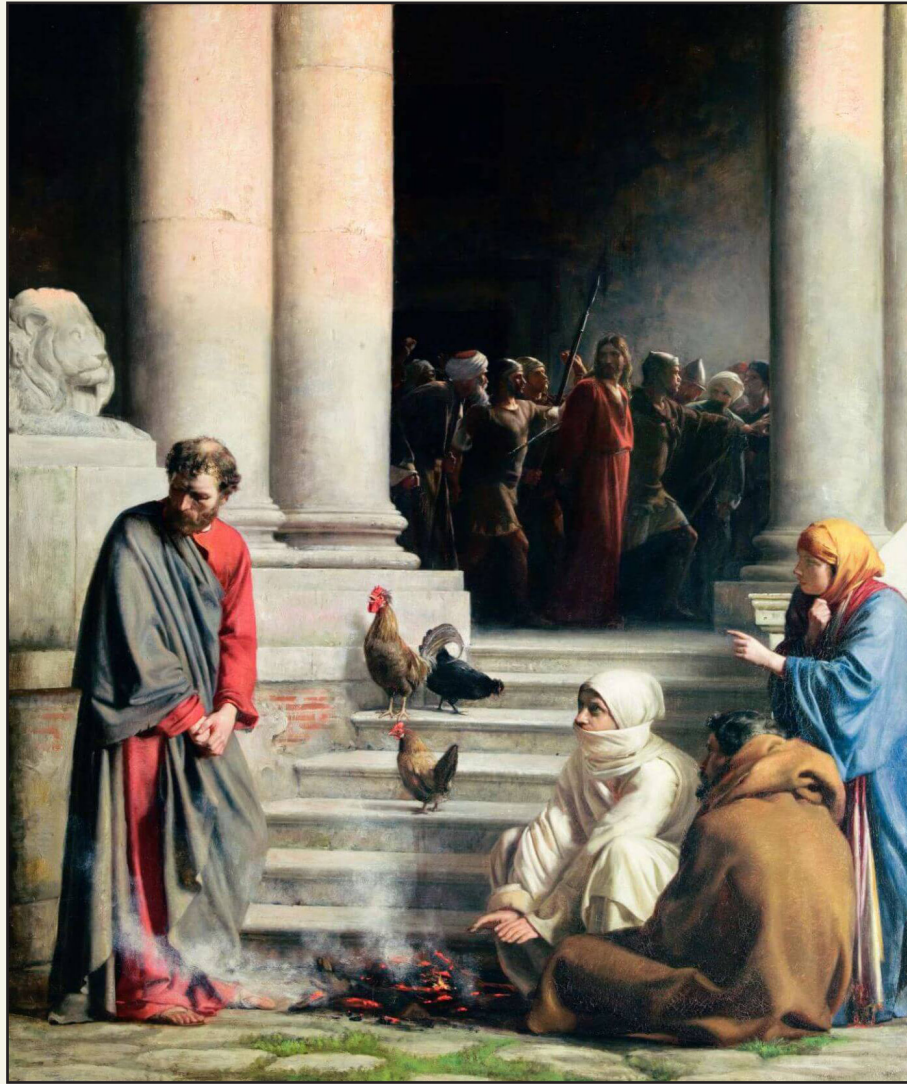
HOME DISCIPLESHIP

What a great cloud of witnesses we are surrounded by! Recite the Apostles' Creed together and this week and consider these conversation starters:

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME

1. Attend church this week and consider bringing your kids into the Big Church service with you. Let them see how you worship, who you interact with, and how you listen to the teaching. The adults are their church family too and they will learn from you how to interact with the greater family of God!
2. Spend time with your home talking about those in the family of God who have already died and gone on to eternity. These could be great heroes of the faith, a family member, or someone from the church community. Talk about their faith, read stories about them, and let your heart be encouraged by those who have gone before us.

At home, whether it's with your roommate or your family, discuss the early church in Acts 2:42-47 and how they were described as "... they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." What things can you do in your home and in the church to make this more true about us? Brainstorm some ideas and write them on a chalkboard or a visible place where you can all be reminded at ways you want to serve and be involved in the local church.



"THE DENIAL OF PETER" CARL BLOCH, 19TH CENTURY

The Holdfast

George Herbert

I threatned to observe the strict decree
Of my deare God with all my power and might:
But I was told by one, it could not be;
Yet I might trust in God to be my light.

Then will I trust, said I, in him alone.
Nay, ev'n to trust in him, was also his:
We must confesse, that nothing is our own.
Then I confesse that he my succour is:

But to have nought is ours, not to confesse
That we have nought. I stood amaz'd at this,
Much troubled, till I heard a friend expresse,
That all things were more ours by being his.
What Adam had, and forfeited for all,
Christ keepeth now, who cannot fail or fall.

And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

— Luke 23:34



If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

— 1 John 1:9



Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

— Ephesians 4:31-32

4. Read 1 John 1:9 above. Why should this verse give us hope, peace, and joy?

5. Have you ever struggled to forgive someone?

6. How is Jesus' posture of forgiveness toward his crucifiers in Luke 23:34 an example for us as others sin against us?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does comprehending the weight of our sin help us more clearly understand the holiness of God, the price Jesus' paid for us, and the treasure of being forgiven?
2. Is repentance a one-time thing or a daily act?
3. Refer to Week 8's questions on justice. How is God's justice unlike our justice?
4. How can we, as a community of forgiven sinners, better forgive and give grace to each other?
5. Talk about a time when you were forgiven. Share about a time you forgave.



HOME DISCIPLESHIP

Our roommates, spouse, and children get a front row seat to see what we really believe about sin and forgiveness. Whether it's our sin or theirs, what we believe shows the most when we're behind closed doors. Consider these actions for your home this week:

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME

1. You will inevitably sin against one another this week. In small ways and maybe even big ways. Use these moments to seek forgiveness quickly. Even with your children, ask for forgiveness and ask for them to pray for you. We all need the Spirit at work in our hearts to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and even the smallest prayers are heard. In turn, seek to give forgiveness quickly where you can this week. Remind your children that it's not just you that forgives them, but that ultimately, it's the forgiveness of their sins from God they need the most. Pray with them for the work of the Spirit in their hearts.
2. If you haven't yet, carve out some time to share your testimony with your housemates, spouse, and/or children. Look for the places where you can point out God's faithfulness to you. Celebrate this time with music, dancing, or dessert! God is faithful and His work is worthy of celebration.



Crown Him With Many Crowns

Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless king
through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save;
his glories now we sing
who died and rose on high,
who died eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

— Romans 6:5



For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

— John 6:40



Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

— Revelation 21:1-4

**WEEK 12:
THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY,
AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING**

AMEN.

“We are all strangers in a strange land, longing for home, but not quite knowing what or where home is. We glimpse it sometimes in our dreams, or as we turn a corner, and suddenly there is a strange, sweet familiarity that vanishes almost as soon as it comes.” - Madeleine L'Engle

PERSONAL STUDY

Over the next six days, ponder and answer these questions:

1. Do you have a hard time thinking about death? Why or why not?

2. How has Christ's resurrection secured our resurrection?

3. What is our sole purpose on this Earth as Christians?

4. What is our sole purpose when we are fully united with God in Christ?

5. Why should this part of the Creed encourage us to share the Gospel with others?

6. How does expecting eternal life with Christ impact how you live today?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so hard for us to comprehend things like ‘the resurrection of the body’ & ‘eternal life’?
2. What does this part of the Creed mean for us as a community of believers?
3. Why does our culture resist acknowledging aging, suffering, and death?
4. How does viewing God as Lord of both life and death give us confidence?
5. Why is it important to think about the end of all things? How does our eschatology define our thoughts and actions today?
6. How has our study of the Creed together impacted your faith?



HOME DISCIPLESHIP

We made it! Recite the Apostles' Creed together with your home and pray, giving thanks for the faithful ones who have gone before us who preserved these words for us.

BRINGING THE IDEA HOME

1. Talk with your home about all of your favorite things that we enjoy in this world. How might these things be even better in the eternal kingdom? Any joy we have here on earth is just a shadow of the joy we will experience in Heaven. Use these conversations to remind your children that our greatest joys and hopes are found in God. Even our deepest longings will be satisfied in Christ and the new Kingdom. There is nothing to fear or dread in Christ. No disappointed hope or dismayed heart in Him. No boring days or dirges that make us hang our heads in sorrow.
2. Recite the creed together from beginning to end.
3. Think of someone that you can pray for (as a family or household) who you long to see come to Christ. Pray for that person(s) every night together. Your kids might want to know even for themselves how to know Jesus. Use these conversations as opportunities to share the good news of the Gospel for them!

Resources

READ

Why We Believe: Understanding and Confessing the Apostles' Creed by R. C. Sproul

The Apostles' Creed: Discovering Authentic Christianity in an Age of Counterfeits by R. Albert Mohler Jr.

The Creedal Imperative by Carl R. Trueman

Affirming the Apostles' Creed by J. I. Packer

Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation (Cultural Liturgies, Vol. 1) by James K. A. Smith

The Explicit Gospel by Matt Chandler

Praying the Apostles' Creed by Martin Luther

Christian Classics Ethereal Library

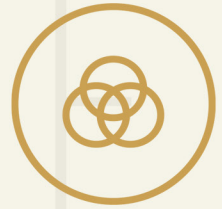
WATCH

The Apostles' Creed - 10 Lectures by R. C. Sproul — available on ligonier.org

The Apostles' Creed Sermon Series by J. Ligon Duncan — available on fpcjackson.org

LISTEN

Grace Road Church Apostles' Creed Playlist on Spotify



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