



NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy universal and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

WHAT IS A CREED?

The word "creed" comes from the Latin "credo" which means: "I believe." In other words, a creed is simply a summary of beliefs. These summaries tend to be short, punchy statements that are worked out in community with other believers. It's similar to how a local church might have a "Statement of Faith" under their "About Us" page on their website. Creeds don't add anything to the Bible or replace God's Word. Rather, creeds provide us with helpful, bite-sized summaries of the Bible that define our faith community, disciple us in the truth, and allow us to memorise these truths so we can recite them to ourselves and others. In other words, creeds help us grow as followers of Jesus, as together we confess these ancient beliefs.

WHO WROTE THE NICENE CREED?

The **Nicene Creed** is one of the oldest and most important statements of the Christian faith. It was first written at the **Council of Nicaea** in 325 AD, when Christian leaders from across the Roman Empire gathered together to respond to a serious disagreement about Jesus. A preacher named **Arius** was claiming that Jesus was not fully God, but rather a created being. The Church strongly disagreed and wrote the Creed to clearly affirm that Jesus is truly God, of the same nature as the Father.

The Creed was later expanded at the **Council of Constantinople** in 381 AD to say more about the Holy Spirit, affirming that the Spirit is also fully God. This final version is what many churches still say today. It outlines the core beliefs of Christianity: the nature of God as **Trinity**, the life and mission of **Jesus Christ**, and the work of the **Holy Spirit** and the **Church**. Therefore, the Nicene Creed provides *more* than just a summary of beliefs. It was written to help the Church stay united in truth and resist false teaching.

WHY DO WE NEED CREEDS TODAY?

We have ChatGPT now, can't we just ask it any question we have about God, the Trinity, Jesus or the Church? Sure, but creeds provide more than just information. They provide participation. Here are three reasons why it's still worth reciting creeds today:

1. It Brings Unity to the Church

The Creed reminds us that we are part of a global and historic faith. Saying it together connects us with Christians across time and place (the universal church).

2. It Protects the Heart of the Gospel

In a world full of mixed messages about God, confessing the Creed together keeps us focused on the essential truths of who God is and what he has done to save us in Christ Jesus.

3. It Shapes Our Faith and Worship

As we recite the Creed in community, it helps form how we think, pray, and live as followers of Jesus. It grounds our faith in "time-tested" truth – not in trends, feelings, or opinions.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY COMPANION

This study companion is split into five sections that tackle the main themes of the Nicene Creed. It's intended to be used in our fortnightly Discipleship Groups. However, you may also wish to go through it with a friend or even as a personal devotion. Each study will include a short background to the topic, Scripture readings, a few questions for reflection, and a prayer that you can recite at the end. No matter how you use this study, our prayer is that God's beautiful and eternal Word will come alive in your heart as you wonder anew at what it means to confess: "We Believe!"



God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth

The Nicene Creed opens with a statement about who God is at his core: God is Father. Out of this flows his attributes (God the Father is almighty) and his actions (God the Father creates). The Romans believed in many gods. The Greeks believed the gods were distant. The Creed challenges both worldviews by affirming that we believe in One True God and this God is relational. He is our heavenly Father who is personally and actively involved in all of his creation.



We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.



Genesis 1:1-3 | Psalm 104 | Matthew 6:9-13

GETTING STARTED

When you hear the word creed, what images or thoughts come to mind?

Can you think of any modern equivalents to a creed?

What might be lost if Christians stopped using creeds altogether?

What stands out in the Genesis creation account about God's power and purpose?

Why is the Creed's phrase "visible and invisible" significant in today's world?

What false views of God are challenged by this section of the Creed?

In Psalm 104:1–4 the psalmist piles on metaphors to describe God. What do these images reveal about God's majesty and relationship to creation?

In Psalm 104:5–23 the psalmist gives a sweeping view of creation. What patterns or rhythms do you notice? How is God involved in both the grand and ordinary aspects of life?

In the final section of the Psalm, vv. 27–30, we see a creation totally dependent on God. How does this shape your view of God's ongoing involvement in the world today?

What does it mean to call God "Father"? Why does the Creed begin this way?

How does Jesus' prayer in Matthew 6 affect your worship and trust in God?

PRAY WITH YOUR OWN WORDS, OR TRY THESE:



Our heavenly Father, may your name be kept holy on our lips. Lord let your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily needs, and forgive us our sins. Help us to forgive those who sin against us. And don't let us give in to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. For your glory and in your name, amen.



Jesus: The Eternal Son of God

This section not only introduces us to the main purpose of the Nicene Creed, but it invites us to ask the greatest question ever posed: "Who is Jesus?" How you answer that will greatly shape your view of God, life, and the universe. In the Creed, we confess that Jesus is both fully God (equal with the Father) and fully man (the beginning of a "new" humanity). And because Jesus is the eternal Son, God has always been a loving Father. Therefore, we can affirm that at his core, "God is love" (1 John 4:8).



We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.



John 1:1-14 | Colossians 1:15-20 | John 17:20-26 | Hebrews 1:1-4

GETTING STARTED

In one sentence, how would you answer the question: "Who is Jesus?"

Have you ever believed something about Jesus that you later realised wasn't quite right?

What are some common misunderstandings about Jesus' identity today?

What do the opening verses of John's Gospel tell us about Christ's divine nature?

How many connections can you make between John 1 and this section of the Nicene Creed? Is there anything about Jesus' identity that is particularly interesting to you here?

Verse 12 says that those who receive Jesus are given the right to become children of God. How does this reshape your own identity?

How does Jesus "make the invisible God visible" (Col. 1:15) – and why is that important?

In John 17:24-26, we're told that the Father loved the Son before the creation of the world and now loves us with this same eternal love. How might this affect the way we view creation, including ourselves? What comfort does this passage bring into your life?

Knowing that Jesus is both the Creator and Sustainer of all things (Heb. 1:2-3), how might this change the way you approach your work, relationships, or responsibilities this week?

If Jesus is Lord, what part of your life is he calling you to surrender?

PRAY WITH YOUR OWN WORDS, OR TRY THESE:



Heavenly Father, thank you for making yourself known through Jesus. Keep us close to you today. Make us holy by your Word. Thank you for sending the Spirit of your Son into our hearts so that we too can call you, "Abba, Father." In the power of your Holy Spirit, help us live in unity with others, so the world may see your love. In the name of Jesus, Amen.



Jesus: The Suffering Servant

This section takes us right into the heart of the gospel itself: Jesus came into the world "for us and for our salvation." He lived the life we could not live and died the death that we deserved. By naming Mary and Pilate, the Creed grounds the life and death of Jesus in real history, giving credence to the Creed. The emphasis on "for us" affirms Christ's substitutionary atonement – that is, Jesus died in our place in order to make us right with God.



For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.



Isaiah 53 | John 19:28-37 | Philippians 2:5-11 | Romans 5:6-11

GETTING STARTED

What's something that surprises you or moves you when you think about God becoming human?

If someone asked, "Why did Jesus have to suffer and die?" ... How would you answer in just a sentence or two?

Can you remember the first time you really understood that Jesus came "for you?" What was that moment like?

Why is the historical reality of Jesus' suffering and death emphasised in the Creed?

How does Isaiah 53 describe the purpose and result of Christ's death?

John 19 highlights how Jesus' death fulfilled specific Scriptures. How does seeing prophecy fulfilled affect your trust in God's plan?

In John 19:30, Jesus says, "It is finished." What do you think he meant by that and what does it mean for your life today?

Why was it necessary for Jesus to be fully human as well as fully divine?

The Philippians 2 passage traces Jesus' journey from heaven to earth. How does the "humility of Christ" encourage your own discipleship?

In Philippians 2, after Jesus suffers, he returns to heaven in glory. How does Christ's exaltation give you hope as you face your own trials and suffering?

Romans 5 reveals that – because of his love – Christ died for us "while we were still sinners." What encouragement does this bring when we're faced with loving difficult people in our own lives?

Romans 5:11 says we "rejoice in God" because of what Christ has done. What are some practical ways you can live joyfully and gratefully in light of God's salvation?

PRAY WITH YOUR OWN WORDS, OR TRY THESE:



Lord Jesus, thank you for entering our world for us and for our salvation. Thank you for bearing the weight of our sin, pain, and death so that we can be free. How wonderful is your love, Lord! Help us live today in the light of your grace. Help us love one another as you have loved us. Help us walk the path of salvation by grace through faith alone. Amen.



Jesus: The Risen King

Jesus not only rose to new life but ascended and reigns with the Father. In the final sentences dealing with Jesus, the Creed affirms Christ's current Lordship and future return in glory as Judge and King. Early Christians (like many today) lived under persecution. Affirming that Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead gave them hope in the face of suffering. For the Christian, the return of Christ is not something to be feared, but the completion of God's mission to "make all things new" (Rev. 21:5).



On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.



Luke 24:1-8 | Acts 1:4-11 | 1 Corinthians 15:1-22 Revelation 1:12-16

GETTING STARTED

If Christ returned tomorrow, would anything change today?

How does the resurrection give you hope in the face of death or injustice?

How does the resurrection "validate" Jesus' victory over sin and death?

What does 1 Corinthians 15 teach about the centrality of the resurrection?

Why does the Creed include Jesus' ascension? What's so significant about Jesus being seated at the right hand of God?

How does Jesus' current Lordship shape how the Church lives today?

What comfort does the return of Christ bring? What challenges?

What do you imagine when you hear "His kingdom will have no end?"

Revelation 1:12–16 paints a very different picture of Jesus than the one we're used to. What part of John's vision of Jesus stands out to you the most and why?

How does this picture of Jesus challenge or expand the way you usually think about him?

If Jesus truly stands in the midst of his churches (Rev. 1:13), how might that shape the way we worship, serve, or walk through hard times as a church today?

We live between the time of Christ's first and second coming. How can we be encouraging one another to wait faithfully for Christ's return? What might that look like, practically?

PRAY WITH YOUR OWN WORDS, OR TRY THESE:



Lord Jesus, you are our risen King, reigning in glory at the right hand of the Father. We commit ourselves to your loving and ruling power. We pray that our loved ones who don't yet know you might come to trust in your saving power for themselves. As we go out this week, keep our hearts anchored in your victory and our eyes fixed on your return. Amen.



The Holy Spirit & The Church

The final section of the Nicene Creed affirms that the Holy Spirit is fully God: he gives life, comes from the Father and the Son, and is to be worshipped just like them. It defends the Spirit's role in God's revelation (spoken through the prophets) and ongoing life in the Church. We believe in one united and faithful Church, shaped by the gospel and marked by baptism and forgiveness. The Creed ends with a strong hope in our own resurrection and the promise of eternal life with God for those who follow Jesus.



We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy universal and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.



John 14:15-17; 25-26 | Acts 2:1-4; 42-47 | 1 Corinthians 12:1-13 Ephesians 4:1-6

GETTING STARTED

When you think about the Holy Spirit, what comes to mind? Do you see him as personal and active in your life, or more mysterious and distant?

What does the word "church" mean to you: an institution, a community, a building, a global family? Why?

How often do you think about life after death? Does the idea give you comfort, confusion, or something else?

Who is the Holy Spirit, and how is he described in the Creed?

How does the Spirit create and sustain the life of the Church?

How does Acts 2 reflect the Spirit's power and presence in community?

In the passage from John's Gospel, why does Jesus want to send the Spirit? What role or purpose does the Holy Spirit have in the life of his followers?

Re-read Ephesians 4:1-6 but this time, imagine the Church without the Holy Spirit. Would it be possible to live out the realities Paul is speaking of here? How would our communities look and function differently without the Spirit?

What role does the Church play in your own spiritual formation?

How does the Spirit equip the Church for mission?

The Creed affirms that we believe in "one holy universal and apostolic Church." What do each of those four words mean and how do they help shape your view of the Church?

What does it mean to look forward to "the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come?" How can we help one another with that this week?

PRAY WITH YOUR OWN WORDS, OR TRY THESE:



Holy Spirit, giver of life, thank you for uniting us with Christ's life. Thank you for taking the truth of God's Word and speaking it into our hearts. May you empower us to remain united, set apart as God's people, and sent out into the world as we carry your presence with us. Please keep us secure in you so that we may always declare "we believe!"

