



Week One, We Are a Rooted People

How to Use This Guide:

You and your small group are encouraged to listen to the weekend message. It is not required for this guide to be helpful. This guide will complement, but not compete OR complete what was communicated in the weekend message.

Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. In this series we will be exploring what Christians believe, why we believe it, and why it matters, using the Apostles Creed as our anchor. The Apostles Creed is the historic confession of faith for orthodox Christians around the world, with connections to earlier creeds dating back to the first and second centuries.

2. So many Christians affirm a belief, but it doesn't translate into a changed life. Too many people believe in Jesus (and a lot of other things) so they can go to heaven one day. But it doesn't affect their life in the here and now. Ideas have consequences and in this series we want to help solidify the claims of the Creed, emphasizing how belief in the statements of the Creed should turn into concrete change in our lives and in the world around us.

3. In the midst of a rapidly changing world, we want our church to be rooted in the historic confession of the church. Our culture is awash in pop spirituality and self-help advice, and many Christians who grew up in church are "deconstructing" not only their church experience, but orthodox faith. This series is an opportunity to provide a deeper reflection on a faith that is historic and has endured through countless generations.

Big Idea for Discussion: We are a people rooted in the historic Christian tradition.

Let's pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story (Help us get to know one another):

1. What is your church background...Have you read the Apostles Creed before?
2. When you hear the word "creed," what is the first thing that comes to mind?

Digging Deeper (Exploring the big idea in and through God's Word):

1. What does the statement "I believe" mean to you?
2. There is a communal aspect to the Apostles Creed - though it is something we should affirm as individuals, historically, churches recited this together as a part of their worship service. Why do you think it is important to not only affirm it individually, but to also affirm it as a community?
3. In Mark 9:24, we read the story of the father who brings his son to Jesus for deliverance from an impure spirit. Though the father brings his son to Jesus, he exhibits both faith and doubt, asking Jesus to help his unbelief and heal his son. As you read through the Apostles Creed, is there any area where you need "help" in your unbelief? Questions or doubts?

Taking It Home (Putting this into action):

1. Copies of the Apostles Creed have been made available to every person in your group. Spend a few minutes reading over each of the statements individually, and as you do, think about all of the Christians around the world and throughout time who have made this confession - church fathers and mothers, the persecuted underground church, martyrs, and others. Finally, as a group, slowly recite the Apostles Creed together aloud before moving into your prayer ministry time.
2. Throughout the Lenten season, we want to encourage you as individuals to recite the Apostle Creed on a daily basis during your daily quiet time, and as a group whenever you come together during the week. By the end of the series you might have it memorized!

Move into ministry time



Week Two, *I Believe in God*

How to Use This Guide:

You and your small group are encouraged to listen to the weekend message. It is not required for this guide to be helpful. This guide will complement, but not compete OR complete what was communicated in the weekend message.

Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. We began last week with exploring the ideas of “belief” and what it means to be a people rooted in the historic Christian tradition. This week we will begin working through the Apostles Creed statement by statement, beginning with “I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.”

2. There is a question inherent in this statement in the creed, and thankfully it is answered immediately; who is God? He is the Father and Creator. We know from studying church history that this line was included to combat the ancient heresy of gnosticism, the belief that all creation is evil and was created by an evil god, the “demiurge.” Gnostics “Christians” in the first centuries of the church claimed the Yahweh in the Old Testament was the “demiurge,” the evil god, and the God Jesus talked about in the New Testament was the good god. Consequently, orthodox Christians responded that if Christ did not come in the flesh, humanity is not redeemed and we are all still dead in our sin. Thankfully, orthodoxy won the debate, but aspects of gnosticism still influence parts of the Christian church to this day. Let’s not be like the gnostics who saw an evil, cold, distant god who created an evil world, but instead, as the creed says, believe in almighty Father and Creator.

Big Idea for Discussion: I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Let's pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story (Help us get to know one another):

1. God has revealed Himself as both Father and Creator. It is not uncommon for people to struggle with the idea of seeing God as Father, either because of the failures of their fathers or due to shame and condemnation. With as much information as you’re comfortable sharing, are there any aspects of God’s character that you’ve struggled with or are currently struggling with?

Digging Deeper (Exploring the big idea in and through God’s Word):

1. Have someone in your group read Acts 17:24-28 slowly.

2. The passage states that God doesn’t dwell in human-made temples and doesn’t need human offerings. How does this challenge our traditional understanding of worshiping a divine being? Does it suggest anything about the nature of our relationship with God?

3. The text mentions God creating all nations from one ancestor. How does this concept of shared ancestry influence our understanding of human connection and responsibility towards each other? How does diversity influence your understanding?

4. The final verse declares that “in him we live and move and have our being.” What does this suggest about our dependence on God?

Taking It Home (Putting this into action):

1. Spend a few minutes reading over each of the statements in the creed individually, and as you do, think about all of the Christians around the world and throughout time who have made this confession - church fathers and mothers, the persecuted underground church, martyrs, and others. Finally, as a group, slowly recite the Apostles Creed together aloud before moving into your prayer ministry time.

2. Throughout the Lenten season, we want to encourage you as individuals to recite the Apostle Creed on a daily basis during your daily quiet time, and as a group whenever you come together during the week. By the end of the series you might have it memorized!

Move into ministry time



Week Three, *I Believe in Jesus Christ: Part 1*

How to Use This Guide:

You and your small group are encouraged to listen to the weekend message. It is not required for this guide to be helpful. This guide will complement, but not compete OR complete what was communicated in the weekend message.

Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. Professing that Jesus was born of a virgin is a reminder that Jesus' birth, life, and death are the culmination of Israel's hope for a coming Messiah. Early Christians were acknowledging that their faith was rooted in the story of redemption as told in Israel's Scriptures. The birth of Jesus is the final fulfillment of God's promise to Israel.

2. The Christian life is a relationship with the person of Jesus. Our faith is not in a set of principles but in a particular person in history who suffered, was crucified, died and rose again from the dead.

3. Following Jesus leads us into a life informed by the cross.

Big Idea for Discussion: 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 hell.

Let's pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story (Help us get to know one another):

What do you know about your own birth? Does your family have any birth stories that get re-told?

Digging Deeper (Exploring the big idea in and through God's Word):

1. Read Galatians 4:1-7

2. The Apostle Paul points to Jesus birth as means of securing for us redemption and adoption. As a group define what redemption means and what adoption means and explore how they express different aspects of our calling God our Father.

3. God sending the Spirit of His Son into our hearts and the Spirit calling out, "Abba, Father" is a powerful expression of our intimacy with God...share as a group how you experience the intimacy of God the most as Father, Son or Holy Spirit?

Taking It Home (Putting this into action):

Sarah Codon, of Mockingbird Ministries, shares about the intersection of joy and sorrow in her life resulting from a deadly car crash that took both of her parents, "All this to say, I do not need bad theology when my life is at its worst. It might make the false theologian feel better, but it will make me feel abandoned. When we suggest that God is surprised by the bad things that happen in our lives, then we offer suffering people a creator who has no plan, and no capacity to respond when the bottom falls out . . . When we declare that God is only involved in the good things that happen, we take away divine action in our lives at every level. When we follow such a biblically baseless claim to its natural end, we find a God who does not know what will happen from one moment to the next, a Risen Lord is somehow taken unawares by the weight of sin that was placed on His shoulders. And this is no good for me. At this moment, my life feels so intersected by joy and sorrow, so cruciform. Only in the intersection of the horizontal and the vertical will I find God's heart breaking for mine, only there will I recognize a Jesus who knew the cross was coming."

Where are you experiencing the joy and sorrow of the suffering or the power new birth in your life?

Move into ministry time



Week Four, *I Believe in Jesus Christ: Part 2*

How to Use This Guide:

You and your small group are encouraged to listen to the weekend message. It is not required for this guide to be helpful. This guide will complement, but not compete OR complete what was communicated in the weekend message.

Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. Jesus' supremacy over all things captivated the imaginations of early Christians. His life, death, and resurrection promises power that serves and sacrifices. Jesus brings heaven to earth, not just in taking on flesh and walking among us, but also in bringing heaven to earth by empowering us and interceding for us while seated on the throne of Grace. It is a good reminder that the ascension of Jesus makes Him more present with us than we could ever dare hope or imagine.

2. For early Christians, proclaiming the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus meant acknowledging the power of Christ above all things. All worldly powers throughout creation answer to Jesus. Jesus is no longer confined to a bodily presence but is now present for all people everywhere who assemble in his Name. There is great comfort in knowing that on the ultimate day of justice and judgment we do not answer to one another. Instead, we will all answer to one final voice, full of grace and truth, that judges the living and the dead.

Big Idea for Discussion: The third day he rose again from the dead. 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.

Let's pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story (Help us get to know one another):

Who are examples from history where an individual's power brought promise?

What is the best example of power bringing promise to your own life?

Digging Deeper (Exploring the big idea in and through God's Word):

1. Read Psalm 22 slowly together

2. Jesus referenced this Psalm while dying on the cross how does knowing that Jesus our suffering servant moments that are right around the corner from being raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God inform how we can look to Jesus as one worthy of "coming to judge the living and the dead"?

3. How have you thought about Jesus as Judge in the past? Does reading Psalm 22 change or shift your perspective of Judgement and Justice coming from Jesus?

Taking It Home (Putting this into action):

Read Colossians 1:15-23

What part of dominant culture would you like to re-imagine so that Jesus' supremacy was more evident?

How does the influence of Jesus over all creation impact your current outlook on life?

What parts of your life are you neglecting to believe that Jesus holds together?

Move into Ministry Time



Week Five, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*

How to Use This Guide:

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Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. The early church learned through experience that Jesus' absence from them became the Spirit's presence in them. The Holy Spirit comforted, bringing peace, unity, and reconciliation to relationships; it also illumined, reminding and gracefully teaching the truth of sacred texts that became our Scriptures; and empowered, pouring out the gifts so that the witness of the early church spread throughout the world.

2. In the creed we profess that God is present with us in our world where-ever we find ourselves in whatever circumstances. His presence assures us that we are children of God. His presence is our hope as we wait for all creation to be restored. His presence groans with us in our prayers interceding for us. He is present empowering our work in his kingdom-bringing heaven to earth!

Big Idea for Discussion: I believe in the Holy Spirit

Let's pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story (Help us get to know one another):

Who is one person or relationship that you grew to appreciate more from their absence in your life than the time you spent together?

Digging Deeper (Exploring the big idea in and through God's Word):

1. Read John 16:5-15
2. How might Jesus' absence and the sorrow of the disciples keep them from understanding God's bigger plan?
3. How does Jesus describe the advantage of His going away and sending the Holy Spirit?
4. What three things does the Holy Spirit accomplish?
5. Which of these three roles of the Holy Spirit have you experienced or learned to appreciate?

Taking It Home (Putting this into action):

Melba Maggay, highlights the importance of her relationship to the Holy Spirit in her work to address the social, economic and political problems in the Philippines: *"There is a hardness to evil, a mystery to its persistence, that cannot be fathomed nor remedied by mere politics. We continue to fight. Yet we need to mine more deeply the resources of our faith if we are to make even a small dent in the monolith of injustice that fazes us...I need a deeper rootedness in God, a closer walk with him... Amid the gore, and grime, and grinding poverty, among people who serve quietly in the armpits of the cities, making space for grace in the squalor and violent hate, life springs forth from the Word, bringing a fresh blast of wind, carrying the weary and wounded on its wings...While all my professional expertise is useful, it cannot hold a candle to the clean white flame that descends on us when the Spirit speaks...Confronted once again with the wonder of his Word, I feel shame at how I had allowed myself to coast along, just sailing with my usual stock in trade."*

What roles of the Holy Spirit does Melba Maggay highlight in her life from this quote?

Where are you just coasting along or sailing aimlessly that needs to be empowered by the Holy Spirit?

Move into ministry time



Week Six, *I Believe in the Church*

How to Use This Guide:

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Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. The early Christians' confession of a "universal" church announced to the world that the power of the gospel stretches to every people everywhere. Social distinctions and divisions were redefined within the life of the church - all were considered to be sons and daughters of God. The early Christians' unity in faith, hope, and love transformed individual lives into a radical new expression of the family of God living in community.
2. The early Christians took these words of Jesus to heart, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." With people gathering for worship from over 120 different countries here at Vineyard Columbus we are a microcosm of God's plan for redemption to reach every family on earth. We do reflect "the holy catholic church" as a diverse multi-ethnic church, but there is still "more." There is always "more" in the Christian life as we follow Jesus who runs ahead of us and leads us to love. The "communion of saints" always pushes us to love and challenges us to live out justice and mercy to transform society.

Big Idea for Discussion: I believe in...the holy catholic church, the communion of saints

Let's pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story (Help us get to know one another):

What is your favorite story or historical moment of the church being a powerful witness of God's love and healing to our sin sick world?

Digging Deeper (Exploring the big idea in and through God's Word):

1. Read Ephesians 3:14-21
2. How does Paul ask the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to work?
3. What lessons can we learn from the Apostle Paul's praying?
4. What makes this prayer feel like it is ever-widening in inclusion, comprehensiveness, and expansion?
5. What importance does God's power to love play in the prayer?
How does assurance and confidence of God's love grow in us?

Taking It Home (Putting this into action):

1. Read Ephesians 3:14-21 one verse at a time and allow time for personal prayer and reflection between each verse (at least 1 minute). Ask each member of the group to record thoughts, words or images that praying together springs up within them.
2. At the conclusion of the time of reading the verses, reflecting and praying together ask the group to share from their experience while practicing this pattern of reflective prayer.
3. At the conclusion of your time read the Apostles Creed aloud together.

Move into ministry time



Week Seven, *I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins*

How to Use This Guide:

You and your small group are encouraged to listen to the weekend message. It is not required for this guide to be helpful. This guide will complement, but not compete OR complete what was communicated in the weekend message.

Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. History records for us that the early church was often ridiculed for the belief that God forgives and asks us to forgive. Although forgiveness was a familiar concept in the sacred texts and story of the Jewish people, it was a completely foreign idea to most of those outside of the early church. It was radical to say that God would forgive your weaknesses or shortcomings let alone your broken human condition of sin.

2. Forgiveness is an amazing gift from God. The creed offered the early church the opportunity to acknowledge to one another they were a people in need of being forgiven. In Scripture forgiveness is described as: debts being canceled; a penalty overturned; relationships restored; a heart restored; retribution surrendered and a victory completed. Forgiveness is one of the most practical acts of sharing God's love for us with one another. The world is simply a better place when we forgive.

Big Idea for Discussion: I believe in...the forgiveness of sins.

Let's pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story (Help us get to know one another):

What is the most powerful story of forgiveness you have ever heard?

When is one of the most meaningful times you forgave?

Digging Deeper (Exploring the big idea in and through God's Word):

1. Read I John 1:10

2. What does it mean to walk in darkness versus walking in the light?

3. What effect does walking in darkness have on us?

4. How have you experienced the purifying power of God's forgiveness of your sin?

5. What effect does walking in the light have on your fellowship with God and with others?

Taking It Home (Putting this into action):

One remarkable story of forgiveness is told by Corrie ten Boom in her book, *The Hiding Place*. She shares that after surviving the Holocaust she learned that one of her Nazi jailers became a Christian. She shares that she struggled to forgive him and that she did not want to meet him, but she prayed "*Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness.*" Upon eventually meeting the jailer she describes the experience with these words, "*As I took his hand, the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.*"

Forgiveness is often a place we experience intimacy with the power and love of God all at once. Who is one person that you find yourself in need of praying the same prayer as Corrie ten Boom, "Jesus, I cannot forgive them. Give me your forgiveness"?

Move into ministry time



Week Eight, *I Believe in the Resurrection and Life Everlasting*

How to Use This Guide:

You and your small group are encouraged to listen to the weekend message. It is not required for this guide to be helpful. This guide will complement, but not compete OR complete what was communicated in the weekend message.

Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. We need reminded that many in the early church were connected to those who saw and interacted with resurrected Jesus. In I Corinthians 15:3-8 we learn that Jesus appeared to Peter, the twelve disciples, to more than 500 at one time, to James, to all the Apostles and then to Paul himself. We need reminded that many in the early church were connected to those who saw and interacted with resurrected Jesus. In I Corinthians 15:3-8 we learn that Jesus appeared to Peter, the twelve disciples, to more than 500 at one time, to James, to all the Apostles and then to Paul himself.

2. William Barclay summarizes the hope that Jesus' resurrection proves to us: truth is stronger than falsehood, good is stronger than evil, love is stronger than hate and life is stronger than death. The promise of resurrection not only assures us our body and soul is raised to life immortal and imperishable for eternity, but also empowers us to participate in the work of the Kingdom.

Big Idea for Discussion: I believe in...Resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

Let's pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story (Help us get to know one another):

Reflecting on our journey in this sermon series of "I Believe" studying the Apostle's Creed what is one thing has changed about your belief and actions?

Digging Deeper (Exploring the big idea in and through God's Word):

1. Read John 11:1-44

2. How does Jesus delaying his travels in the face of Mary and Martha's appeal for help, "Lord, the one you love is sick," inform your own prayer requests?

3. How are Jesus and Martha talking past one another about the reality of the resurrection?

4. What impact does Jesus weeping alongside Mary and the others have on your understanding of Jesus power?

5. What do you make of Jesus prayer before he calls "Lazarus, come out!"?

Taking It Home (Putting this into action):

1. Read John 11:38-44

2. Why do you think Jesus asked for others to "take off the grave clothes and let him go" after he raised Lazarus from the dead?

3. Where do you find yourself most longing for Jesus love to come and bring life?

Move into ministry time

