

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BIBLE FOR ALL (BFA) MATERIAL FOR DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Dig Deeper Study Tools

Author's Purpose
Context
Structure
Linking Words
Parallels
Narrator's Comment
Vocabulary
Translations
Tone and Feel
Repetition
Quotation/Allusion
Genre
Copycat
Bible Timeline
"Who am I"
"So What"

Apostles' Creed – Anchored in the Gospel

Sermon Series

14, 21, 28 Jun 2026

July Study 1

Nehemiah 13

19 July, 26 July, 02 August 2026

July Study 2

We Believe in God the Father

THE APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the grave. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. He will come again 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.

WHO WROTE THE APOSTLES' CREED?

We don't know. However, there is historical record of these statements asked in question form to baptismal candidates going back perhaps as far back as 40-50 years after Christ. By 200 AD, Tertullius refers to what is called the Old Roman Creed which is almost identical to the Apostles' Creed and he refers to it in terms of those baptismal questions, "Do you believe...?" "Do you believe...?" ... The first reference to the Apostles' Creed, per se, is by a man named Rufinus in 390 AD.

Regardless of its precise origins, what is beyond question is that the Apostles' Creed eventually came into widespread use, especially in Western churches. In the early centuries, its precise wording varied somewhat from church to church. But in the eighth century the wording was generally standardized into the form that we recognize and use today.

With this understanding of the historical development of the creed in mind, we should look at the purpose behind the creation and use of the Apostles' Creed.

WHAT IS THE APOSTLES' CREED

The Apostles' Creed is a short, straightforward statement of beliefs that could and should be understood by all professing Christians. It is actually a narrative summary of the Christian's faith. And it points out the fact that even though we believe that every single word of the Bible is the inerrant and infallible word of God, we are in need of a summary to help people understand what the essence of the gospel is. And the Apostles' Creed is just that kind of summary, emerging from so early in the Christian tradition, encapsulating what the apostles taught on the basis of Christ's revelation to them concerning the essence of the faith. "I believe." Everything flows from that. And so, what's so important here is that the Apostles' Creed helps us to say everything we have to say in order to say enough to communicate the gospel.

[excerpted from thirdmill.org]

Outline of Apostles' Creed – Anchored in the Gospel (with preaching schedule)

<i>BFA</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Text</i>
Jul Study 2	19 Jul	We Believe (Faith) Romans 10:8-13
	26 Jul	We Believe in God (The Trinity) Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 17:16-34
	02 Aug	We Believe in the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth Psalm 136
Aug Study 1	09 Aug	We Believe in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord John 1:14-18
	16 Aug	We Believe in the Suffering Saviour Isaiah 53
	23 Aug	We Believe that Jesus Rose, Reigns, and Will Return Philippians 2:5-11
Aug Study 2	30 Aug	We Believe in the Holy Spirit John 14:16-17, 16:7-15; Romans 8:1-17
Sep Study 1	06 Sep	We Believe in the Holy Catholic Church and the Communion of Saints 1 Peter 2:4-10; Ephesian 2:11-22
Sep Study 2	13 Sep	We Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins Titus 3:3-8
	20 Sep	We Believe in the Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting Romans 8:18-30

We will be in 1 Thessalonians (The Gospel-Centred Church) from 27 Sep to 22 Nov 2026.

14, 21, 28 Jun 2026

July Study 1

Nehemiah 13

PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): READ, MARK, AND REFLECT

Read the text throughout the week(s) before your group time.

Nehemiah 13

Nehemiah's Final Reforms

13 On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God, ² because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.) ³ When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

⁴ Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, ⁵ and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and olive oil prescribed for the Levites, musicians and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

⁶ But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission ⁷ and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. ⁸ I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. ⁹ I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

¹⁰ I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and musicians responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. ¹¹ So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.

¹² All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and olive oil into the storerooms. ¹³ I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zakkur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because they were considered trustworthy. They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their fellow Levites.

¹⁴ Remember me for this, my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services.

Notes and Questions
Book of Moses refers to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible.

See Deut 2:24-37, 23:3-5; Num 22-24; but also the example of Ruth the Moabitess in David's genealogy

"On that day" denotes a specific period of time in which the events of Nehemiah 13 are happening. Given the chronology of events implied by v.4, it is unlikely to be the same period of time as the wall dedication in Nehemiah 12 unless that event was delayed significantly.

See Neh 10:37-39

¹⁵ In those days I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. ¹⁶ People from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. ¹⁷ I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, “What is this wicked thing you are doing—desecrating the Sabbath day? ¹⁸ Didn’t your ancestors do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity on us and on this city? Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath.”

¹⁹ When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day. ²⁰ Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem. ²¹ But I warned them and said, “Why do you spend the night by the wall? If you do this again, I will arrest you.” From that time on they no longer came on the Sabbath. ²² Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Remember me for this also, my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love.

²³ Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. ²⁴ Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. ²⁵ I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God’s name and said: “You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves. ²⁶ Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. ²⁷ Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?”

²⁸ One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. And I drove him away from me.

²⁹ Remember them, my God, because they defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.

See Neh 10:31

See Neh 10:13

See 1 Kings 11:1-13
for Solomon’s
disobedience to God

³⁰ So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign, and assigned them duties, each to his own task. ³¹ I also made provision for contributions of wood at designated times, and for the firstfruits.

Remember me with favor, my God.

PREPARE TO SHARE (INDIVIDUAL): LOOK BACK

What has God been teaching you in the last few weeks?

Who has God laid on your heart to pray for?

GROUP: SHARE AND PRAY

Take note of one another's prayer concerns.

Come together to pray for each other, the church, and the world (see this month's prayer bulletin).

GROUP: WORSHIP TOGETHER

Prepare your hearts to meet God and one another in His Word through worshipping together.

GROUP: STUDY 1

Read Nehemiah 13



CONTEXT:

What happens around (before/after/during) this passage?

1. In Nehemiah 11, who was the city of Jerusalem repopulated with? What groups were included? How was it done?
2. What preparations and arrangements were made for the dedication of Jerusalem's walls? What does this tell you about worship in the life of God's people?
3. How does Nehemiah 11-12 show that the rebuilding was not about the building but about restoring a worshipping community centred on God?



OBSERVATION:

What do you notice as you read this passage?

4. What problems are identified by Nehemiah in this chapter? Are these new problems or old problems?
5. How does Nehemiah respond to each of the problems he finds? What actions does he take? On what basis does he act?

6. What phrase repetitions do you see in Nehemiah 13, and what do these tell you about this passage?

7. Nehemiah summarises his work at the end of the book of Nehemiah (see Neh 13:30-31). What does he include in this summary?



INTERPRETATION:

What is the meaning & significance of your observations?

8. What do these problems reveal about the state of Israel's hearts? In other words, why were these considered problems?

9. Why do you think this book ends the way it does? What message does it convey?



BIG IDEA: What is the main message of the passage?
Sum up the main idea and supporting ideas.

In Nehemiah 13, we see Nehemiah acting once again to bring Israel back to living as God's people after Israel once again falls into sin.

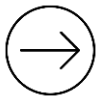
10. What does Nehemiah show is needed for God's people apart from rebuilding walls and making commitments?

Think further:

How would you describe Nehemiah's emotions at the end of this book?
Would you consider him to have finished well?
Why or why not?

11. Nehemiah confronted sin externally through reform and discipline, but these ultimately still failed. How should we address sin today? Is it more effective? Why?

12. Consider the whole book of Nehemiah. What have you learnt about what it means to be part of God's people?



APPLICATION:

Why did the Holy Spirit give us this text?

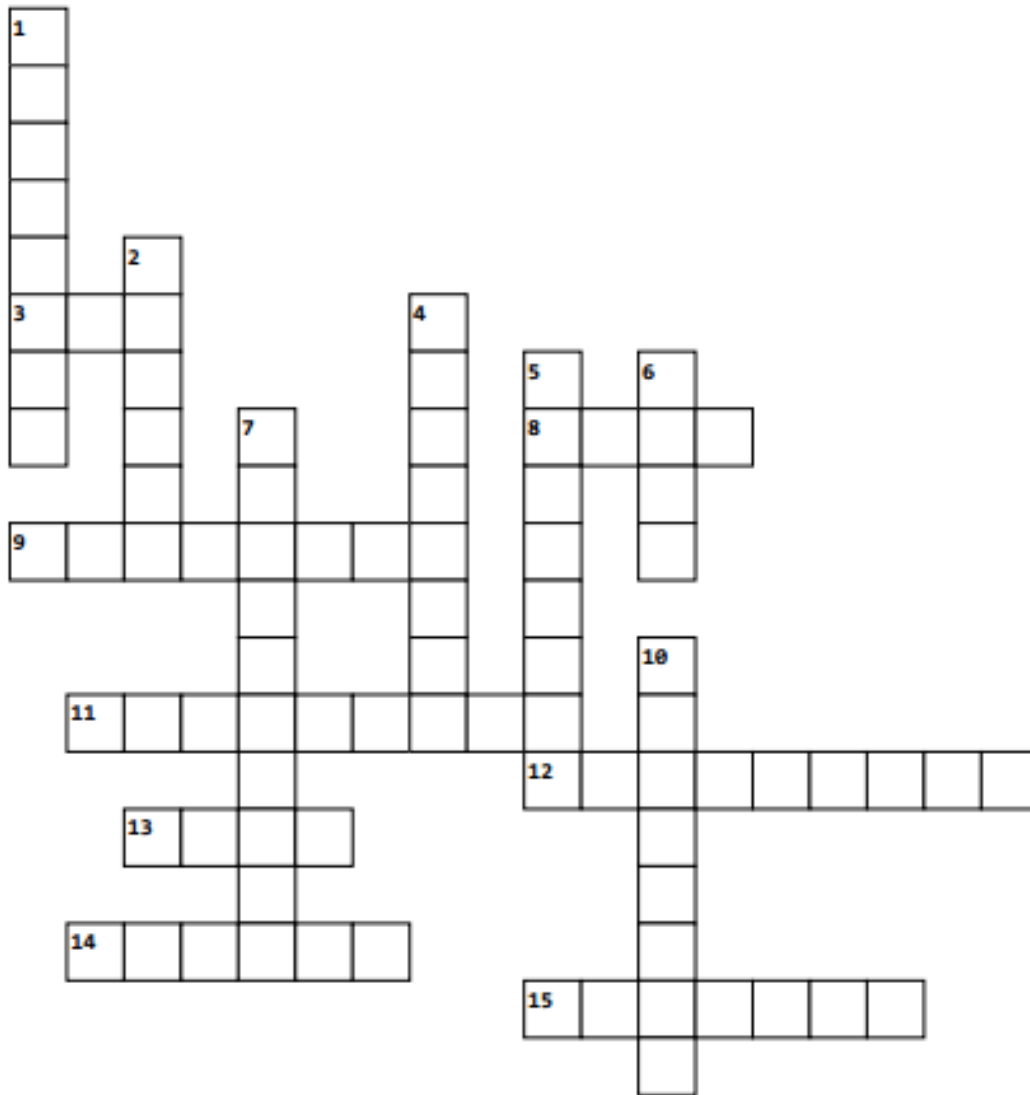
13. Where do you see similar patterns of neglect/compromise that can slowly creep into: (i) your daily life, bringing you away from God; (ii) the life of the church?

14. What do you think church discipline and confrontations on sin should be like? How should your group tackle it if you yourself needed to be confronted about a sin in your life?

→ Spend some time as a group to reflect, confess, repent, and to ask the Holy Spirit to change your hearts and lives. Give thanks for the work of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

→ What practical rhythms or forms of accountability can help our group remain faithful to God instead of slowly drifting into compromise?

Nehemiah



Across

Down

- 3.** the number of choirs involved in the dedication of the wall
- 8.** what the people said in response to the reading of God's word
- 9.** son of Hacaliah, he prays a lot, is very determined, and sometimes seems kind of angry
- 11.** Horonite, a mocker, has a son-in-law in the high priest's family
- 12.** first thing to be rebuilt (two words)
- 13.** he who read the law in Nehemiah 8
- 14.** do not _____, Nehemiah said, for the joy of the Lord is your strength
- 15.** the length of day the people took to confess and worship

- 1.** number of days for the wall to be built (two words)
- 2.** Ammonite official who wanted to live in the temple
- 4.** God is _____ though Israel was not
- 5.** how Israel decided who was to stay in Jerusalem (two words)
- 6.** amount of food demanded by Nehemiah for his table
- 7.** Nehemiah's most famous phrase (two words)
- 10.** false prophet trying to undermine Nehemiah by scaring him into the temple

19 July, 26 July, 02 August 2026

July Study 2

We Believe in God the Father

PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): REFLECT

1. Think of a time when you had to trust someone completely – maybe a doctor, a pilot, a taxi driver. What made you trust that person?

2. If you had to describe God in just three words, what words would you choose?

PREPARE TO SHARE (INDIVIDUAL): LOOK BACK

What has God been teaching you in the last few weeks?

Who has God laid on your heart to pray for?

GROUP: SHARE AND PRAY

Take note of one another's prayer concerns.

Come together to pray for each other, the church, and the world (see this month's prayer bulletin).

GROUP: WORSHIP TOGETHER

Prepare your hearts to meet God and one another in His Word through worshipping together.

- c. Focus on Isaiah 40:21-31. These verses include many word pictures, especially in verses 21-26. Taken as a whole, what do you think these word pictures are trying to convey about God's relationship with the created world?

4. Read Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15; and Galatians 4:6. Who is God a Father to? Why is this important?

5. Consider what we have read so far.
 - a. What does it mean when the Apostles' Creed speaks about God the Father almighty?

 - b. Why is it important for us to believe that God is almighty?

 - c. Why is it important for us that the God we believe in is a Triune God?

A Quiz on the Doctrine of the Trinity

In *Delighting in the Trinity*, Michael Reeves rightly calls the Trinity “the governing center of all Christian belief” and “the cockpit of all Christian thinking.” It is not an irrelevant or secondary doctrine, but one that is of primary importance. How well do you know this central doctrine? This quiz is designed to help you find out. Read each question carefully and circle your answer.

1. There is one God.
True False
2. God is one person.
True False
3. God is three beings.
True False
4. There are three persons in the Godhead.
True False
5. The three persons in the Godhead have always related to one another as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
True False
6. Each of the three persons of the Godhead is one-third of God.
True False
7. The Father is fully God.
True False
8. The Father has the whole fullness of God’s being in himself.
True False
9. The Father is eternal.
True False
10. The Father is not the Son.
True False
11. The Father is the Holy Spirit.
True False
12. The Son is half human and half divine.
True False
13. In his humanity, the Son is subordinate to the Father.
True False
14. The Son has the whole fullness of God’s being in himself.
True False
15. The Son came into being at the time of his incarnation.
True False
16. The Son was brought into being in eternity past.
True False
17. The Son is eternal.
True False
18. The Son is not the Father.
True False
19. The Son is the Holy Spirit.
True False
20. The Holy Spirit is fully God.
True False
21. The Holy Spirit has the whole fullness of God’s being in himself.
True False
22. The Holy Spirit is a force.
True False
23. The Holy Spirit is not the Father.
True False
24. The Holy Spirit is not the Son.
True False
25. In their nature, the Son and the Holy Spirit are co-equal and co-eternal with the Father.
True False

26. The Son and the Spirit are subordinate to the Father in their essence or nature.

True False

27. God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in different eras or for different purposes, but never at the same time.

True False

28. The persons of the Trinity have distinct roles.

True False

29. "Father," "Son" and "Holy Spirit" are three different names for the one person of God as he displays his work in three distinct roles.

True False

30. A right understanding of the Trinity is vital to right worship of God.

True False

31. A right understanding of the Trinity is vital to a right understanding of redemption.

True False

32. Any analogy used to explain the Trinity will fail to represent it with complete accuracy

True False

33. We cannot confidently derive the doctrine of the Trinity from the Biblical text.

True False

“ *This truth is a great mystery. Let it be enough to receive and believe it, and let us ever abstain from all attempts at explanation. It is childish folly to refuse assent to things that we do not understand. We are poor crawling worms of a day, and at our best, know little about God and eternity. Suffice it for us to receive the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, with humility and reverence, and to ask no vain questions. Let us believe that no sinful soul could be saved without the work of all three Persons in the blessed Trinity, and let us rejoice that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who co-operated to make man, do always co-operate to save him. Here let us pause. We may receive practically what we cannot explain theoretically.*

—J.C. Ryle