

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

06 September 2026

September Study 1

We Believe in the Holy Catholic Church and the Communion of Saints

13, 20 September 2026

September Study 2

We Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting

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.

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)

BFA	Date	Text
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.

PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Discipleship groups are meant to help people grow spiritually in community.

DISCIPLESHIP GROUP OBJECTIVES

Categories	Objectives
Build Community	Build friendships and community life on a deeper level and guide people to serve one another
Strengthen faith through study and application	Encourage people to grow by the study and application of God's word. Hold each other accountable
Help navigate life challenges	Minister to people of various life-stages and challenges
Offer support and encouragement	Discipleship group members offer support, care, and pray for one another
Outreach	Reach out or connect with those who are not part of a discipleship group

INDICATORS OF GROUP HEALTH

- Members know why the group exists and what is most important to the group
- Members consistently attend and demonstrate dedication to the group
- Members share ownership and responsibility for the sustainability of the group
- Members feel free to engage in authentic conversation and reflection on faith and life
- Members take care of each other
- Members feel free to invite others to join

06 September 2026

September Study 1

We Believe in the Holy Catholic Church and the Communion of Saints

PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): REFLECT

“Jesus is okay; it’s the church I can’t stand.” Why do people say things like this? How do you react to these kinds of statements?

What has most shaped your understanding of the church—your own experience, your family, your denomination, or the Bible?

Why do you think the Apostles' Creed moves next to "the holy catholic Church"? What is the connection between believing in the Triune God and believing in the church?

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

1. Read Matthew 16:13-19.
 - a. Who does Peter say Jesus is? How is what he said different from what others said?
 - b. What does Jesus' response tell us about how he establishes and preserves his church?
2. Read 1 Peter 2:4-10 and Ephesians 2:11-22.
 - a. Why is Christ called the cornerstone of the church? What does this mean for the church? How does this match with what Peter said in Matthew 16:13-19?
 - b. Who and what do Peter and Paul say the church is? In what sense can the church be said to be "apostolic"?

3. Read Ephesians 4:1-13.
 - a. According to this Scripture, what do all Christian believers have in common? Find as many responses as possible.
 - b. How does this Scripture passage express what the Apostles' Creed calls "the communion of saints"?
 - c. What will be the ultimate result of Christians' gifts working together (vv.12-13)?
4. Drawing together all the passages we have studied, what purpose has God given to His church?
5. How is the church unlike any other human community? What makes us unique?

In the Apostles' Creed, we confess that "I believe in the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints." Historically, Christians have described the church as:

- ONE church, the one people of God
- Holy, a dwelling in which our holy God lives by his Spirit
- Catholic, universal: wherever the church is found, it is the same church
- Apostolic: we teach all that the apostles taught, we guard the gospel entrusted to us and pass it down to faithful men and women who will teach others also

6. What does it mean to us personally that the church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic? How should these truths shape the life of our church today? What challenges do we face in living these out?
7. A church is a community of Christians. The church is the family of the Father (Eph 1:4-5), the body of Christ (Eph 1:23), and the community of the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:22). What are some practical ways that Christians can "keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace"? Consider not only theoretical ways but ways you have seen this actually happen.
8. What is the relationship between the local church (us) and the universal/catholic church? What does this mean for us in terms of how we view Christians from other denominations?
9. After studying these passages, what does it mean for you to say, "I believe in the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints"

13, 20 September 2026

September Study 2

We Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting

PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): REFLECT

If someone asked you, "What is the Christian hope?" how would you answer in one sentence?

We've confessed throughout this series, "I believe in God the Father... Jesus Christ... the Holy Spirit." Why do you think the Apostles' Creed ends with "the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting"?

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 2

1. Read Titus 3:3-8

- a. Consider Titus 3:3. What descriptions here describe humanity apart from Christ? Which do you particularly recognise in your own life?

- b. What did Christ do for us? Why did he do this?

- c. What blessings have we already received because of God's saving work? Which of these are ours now, and which point us toward our future hope?

- d. Why is it important for us to know where we came from?

- e. Consider Titus 3:3 again. Do any of these attitudes or behaviours remain a struggle for Christians? If so, what does this teach us about our need for forgiveness and our growth in holiness?

2. Read Romans 3:21-26.
 - a. Titus has told us that God saved us. How does Paul now explain the basis on which God can forgive sinners?
 - b. What does this passage teach us about God's justice and his mercy? Why are both important for understanding the forgiveness of sins?
3. Read Romans 8:18-30 and Philippians 3:20-21.
 - a. What future hope does Paul describe (in these two passages) for believers and for creation? List as many aspects of this hope as you can.
 - b. Paul says Christ will transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body. Why is this good news? What does it teach us about the Christian hope?
4. Read Rev 21:1-8, 21:22-22:5. What does John reveal about the life God has prepared for his people? What seems to be the greatest joy of this new creation? What stands out to you most about this picture of the new creation?

Consider:

- Through Christ, our sins are completely forgiven.
 - We have been justified and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
 - Christ will return to raise and transform our bodies.
 - God will make all things new, and his people will dwell with him forever.
5. How do these passages help us understand why the Apostles' Creed joins together the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?
6. Which aspects of this future hope are already ours today, and which are still awaiting fulfilment? Why is it important to hold both together?
7. How should believing in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting shape the way Christians live today? Consider our attitudes toward guilt, suffering, death, holiness, and hope.

Apostles' Creed

K X N H T Z P O T Z A Q U Z A V B J M M J C
 L W E W M K M L S I L C J N B Z I P O A T R
 M Y W X G J D P W O M Q J U N H Q F A F O O
 H R C F Q G K F W Q I E N N S L U Y W Z G V
 F A R L Q X Q F L D G U T Z G T J Q X C R N
 S P E O C L Y A M E H L G Z H I I N N K A E
 J X A R R H E W M A T I B R F I I C A K C P
 K B T D Y O R G V D Y V V K C I O B E V E E
 S B I I M O S I D F Z I A N G B V G J J R I
 I S O N H I A E S C K N B O D Y G Y Q H G P
 N D N W O B Z N K T P G C Y Z M D B K F U M
 S F N E L C F S W C Z E O B R T F Y Z F X A
 G N P Y Y C R U C I F I E D H O P E K A E R
 J J L X S S L Z F Z E K H S M A T S C T M Y
 R Q V V P H E A V E N O U Q X X M Y X H I F
 R H E Z I I W P O L A Q E R K F K K F E V F
 S Y H K R E S L Z V Z W G I K T M W V R I D
 E M E P I L A T E F O R G I V E N E S S J U
 R W P G T I B E L I E V E C U J V V B A M D
 E V E R L A S T I N G F I I I C A D M Z W H
 C A T H O L I C S W D G X L R W U Q R E O N
 L B U R I E D S A I N T S Z M Q B E D H Z V

Who created heaven and earth?	How is God the Father described?
Jesus is God's only _____.	By whose power was Jesus conceived?
Jesus is our _____.	What new reality will God bring?
Who gave birth to Jesus?	What kind of church do Christians confess?
Who washed his hands of Jesus' death?	What do we receive through Christ?
How did Jesus die?	What kind of life do believers receive?
What happened on the third day?	What does God freely show us?
Where is Christ now?	Another way of saying "I have faith"
Who will Christ judge?	Messiah =
Who are God's people called?	Our future is filled with _____.
What does God completely remove through Christ?	We think of soil but they used a cave to do this.
What will God raise?	What does God perfectly uphold?