



Creed

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

Small Group Discussion Resource

For this discussion we are going to focus on the first phrase of the Apostle's Creed. Pray that God would give you insight as you reflect on this important truth.

1. Read the creed together out loud. As you read it, and hear others speak these words, how does it make you feel?

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 hell. 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. 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.

2. When you read just the opening line, *I believe in God the Father, almighty, creator of heaven and earth*, how does it impact you?
3. Have you had any encounters with atheists? How about "new atheists"?
4. Review the lyrics of John Lennon's song – Imagine. How do nice songs like this subtly influence culture?

*Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today,
Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do*

*Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace
You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one*

5. Review the arguments for the existence of God. Do these make sense to you? What other ideas do you have that speak to the existence of God?

- **The ontological argument.**

This argument declares that generally all people have a concept of God. Theologians basically argue that if you and I have the ability to conceive of something greater than that which we can conceive, then there must be a reality behind this human conception. Otherwise, where did this idea come from? Universally most cultures have a sense that there is a divine being.

- **The cosmological argument.**

This is the “principle of cause and effect. What we see happening must have a reason for happening. Look at the world? Did it all just happen, or was there a reason behind it? Take your cell phone for example. Did that just spontaneously appear? Or did something equal to or greater create that. The same is true with our world. Did it just occur on its own, or was there something equal to or greater that created it?

- **The teleological argument.**

The argument is one of design indicates there is a designer. Look again at your cell phone. This is something incredibly complex. Did that design and intricacy just happen by accident, or did apple or Samsung create it intentionally. Likewise, when you look at our world and universe, whoever created it must be equally intricate and creative or more so. A design this complex must have behind it a designer.

- **The moral conscience argument.**

Universally there is a sense of right and wrong. Where did we get such moral ideas? Most cultures agree that theft, lying and murder are wrong. If you had to choose a neighbor of either Mother Teresa or Adolph Hitler, 99.9% of people would want Mother Teresa as their neighbor. Although not always clarified, we do have a sense of right and wrong, and where does that sense come from?

6. Read and reflect upon Isaiah 40:10-31. What jumps out of the text for you?

See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm.

See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. ¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

¹² Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

¹³ Who can fathom the Spirit of the LORD, or instruct the LORD as his counselor? ¹⁴ Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding? ¹⁵ Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

¹⁶ Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. ¹⁷ Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.

¹⁸ With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him? ¹⁹ As for an idol, a metalworker casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. ²⁰ A person too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot; they look for a skilled worker to set up an idol that will not topple. ²¹ Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded?

²² He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. ²³ He brings

princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴ No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. ²⁵ “To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One.

²⁶ Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

²⁷ Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God”?

²⁸ Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

²⁹ He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

7. Reflect on this part of the creed - *I believe in God... the creator of heaven and earth.*
What do you think of this quote: To confess that God is Creator is to confess that we are not cosmic accidents, devoid of ultimate value. We came from somewhere significant and we are headed toward a destination of importance. (R.C. Sproul)
8. Reflect on Colossians 1:16-17 ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:16-17
9. In the message several implications were given of God as creator. Share your thoughts about these.
 - God is not just some vague impersonal force. He is not like a distant watch maker who wound everything up but then went on vacation. Our universe is not random but carefully constructed and sustained by our God, the creator.
 - Every human you meet has incredible dignity, because we as humans are a deliberate creation of God, created in His image. Our dignity doesn't come from what we do but by who we are, the special creation of God.
 - When we consider the heavens and the earth we should be moved to praise.
10. Richard Dawkins, one of the promoters of the new atheism was once asked what he planned to say when he died and stood before God. Richard Dawkins responded “I will say ‘Sir, why have you hidden yourself so well?’”

How has God revealed himself according to Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. ² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. ³ They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. ⁴ Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. Psalm 19:1-4

11. Reflect on this part of the creed – *I believe in God –who is almighty.*
What do you think of this quote from A.W. Tozer?

Since He has at His command all the power in the universe, the Lord God omnipotent can do anything as easily as anything else. All His acts are done without effort. He expends no energy that must be replenished. His self-sufficiency makes it unnecessary for Him to look outside of Himself for a renewal of strength. All the power required to do all that He wills to do lies in undiminished fullness in His own infinite being. A.W. Tozer, The knowledge of the Holy.

12. In the message several implications were given of the phrase “God almighty”. Reflect on these and share if this has been true in your experience.

- There is nothing happening in this world that you and he can’t handle.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3: 20-21

- The almighty God empowers us and gives us the strength we need to carry on. Look again at Isaiah 40:29-31

²⁹ He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

- Things might not make sense to you but they always make sense to God.

13. Reflect on this part of the creed – *I believe in God the father*

If God were only the creator and only the omnipotent God, who would have the courage to approach him. But here is where the first line of this creed sets our faith apart from all other expressions of faith. Our creator Omnipotent God is also our father. He is a loving father, an all-powerful father an all-knowing father, a wise father. And it is his fatherhood that motivates him to act toward us as he does.

14. When did you first become aware of the term “Abba” (not the band, the Aramaic word for Daddy). Reflect on this verse from Romans.

¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” Romans 8:15

15. In the message, an implication was given of this phrase - God as father. What are your thoughts about this?

- The Bible invites us to call the creator of the universe, the all-powerful, all-wise God... dad! How profound is that. This God whom we worship is our heavenly dad. This is how God has revealed himself to us and this is the kind of relationship he wants to have with each of us – as our heavenly father.

16. Reflect on this quote from J.I Packer: *“You sum up the whole of New Testament religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one’s holy Father. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new, and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. ‘Father’ is the Christian name for God.*
17. As you close up your discussion, again read the creed together and then spend some time in prayer.

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 hell. 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. 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.