

The logo for 'ICEBREAKER' features the word in a bold, light blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly irregular and appear to be breaking through a dark blue, jagged horizontal line that resembles a snow-capped mountain range or a cracked surface.

Ice Breaker Activity / Questions (5-8 minutes)

OneWith format is a very different way of exploring the Catholic faith and experiencing liturgy. It is important for you to remember – and pass on to the youth, that you are still at Mass.

This is time is for you and the youth to reflect on the messages that you have just heard in scripture (and homily) and explore how this teaching might be practically applied your lives.

This peer-to-peer witnessing is critical to the process – but such authentic sharing does not happen easily. It may take a few or perhaps many sessions for your group to build trust in each other and become comfortable with this new format for exploring their faith.

Take a few minutes to help everyone get to know each other and feel welcome in this space...

“Dice Breaker”

Roll the dice, answer the question.

- Question Sheet attached
- Dice are available from Barry (yes, I have 20 sided dice)

Would you Rather...

- Question Sheet attached

Ice Breaker Link on the Week:

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/help-others-grow/leading-small-groups/small-group-icebreakers.html>

Processing Questions (3-5 minutes)

The following questions are more than just review, they help the young people to start the process of identifying, clarifying and focusing on the subject for discussion.

Be on the look-out for answers that synthesize “gospel” concepts with “secular” cultural beliefs. This is our (your) chance to correct or put a theological fine point on any misconceptions or perceptions that our teens might have.

Ask questions like...

- What did you hear in Scripture readings?
- What did you hear in the homily (Fr. Don's teaching)?
- What do you think was Father Don's main point?
- Did you see or hear anything that you did not understand/needs to be clarified in your mind?

Close this part of the lesson by reiterating the teaching focus for the session.

Reflection (12-20 minutes)

“I Believe...”

During these last few sessions we will be revisiting the conversations that we had at the beginning of the year about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed was distilled from 300 years of reflection and has been used by all (legitimate) Christian denominations for more than 1600 years!

You will be challenged to consider the wisdom of the Creed, compare that with their own experience, and begin to wrestle with the resulting questions or conflicting ideologies. This reflection will be an important part of your Discipleship Group's project to craft your own credo on God, Jesus, the Trinity and the Church.

~ Barry

“I Believe...”

This session we break down the 2nd half of the “Jesus statements” in the Nicene Creed...

- For us men (*all humanity*) and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of (*given human life through*) the Virgin Mary, and became man (*Fully Human/Fully God*).
- For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried (*John 18:28-19:42*) and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.
- He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father (*One-with/inseparable from the Trinity*)
- He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end (*eternal*).

(Please Note: The parenthetical comments are Barry's crude interpretations - intended to be helpful, not necessarily theologically precise)

Reflection: Building your own Creed...

Looking at the Church's list of things that we believe about Jesus...

- What stands out to you about this list?
- Does anything not make sense to you?

Compare this list with the one you made earlier this year...

- What is similar? What is different?
- Do any of these qualities conflict? Explain.
- Re-work your list of top 3-5 qualities/attributes that you can all agree on.

Coordinators Notes:

These two sections (Discipleship Challenge & Presentation & Prayer) can be done in any order you like. Some group leaders find that collecting the prayer intentions makes for a nice icebreaker at the beginning of the Reflection Break. I also know of at least one group that write their Discipleship Challenge on the note cards during check-in time at the very beginning of the session. I have placed them in this order as it roughly follows the Order of the Mass, but the only thing that really matters is that it happens.

Discipleship Challenge (2-3 minutes)

*With your group brainstorm some concrete ideas for the following question. Ask each member of the group to write down one of the brainstorm ideas (or one of their own) on an index card, post-it note, or **on their phone** – somewhere that they will be able to see and be reminded of the challenge to connect and act.*

- *How can I offer to others the Advent practices of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love?*
- *What is one thing I can do to prepare my heart to receive Christ this Christmas?*

Presentation & Prayer (5-8 minutes)

Both of these are part of the Mass experience so make sure to leave time for them. They also provide a prayerful tone as you transition back for Mass.

Presentation of Gifts: Ask each teen to fill out a note card describing a contribution that they have made to the community since the last time the group has met. *Ideally it will be a response to the challenge given by the priest during the closing prayer at the previous session, but this “gift” can be pretty much anything! A good deed, a monetary contribution to a worthy cause (almsgiving), talking to a friend about God, Jesus or the Church are all examples of the gifts we bring with us to Mass. Youth will offer these gifts (drop card into the basket) along with their tithe or donation during the Presentation of the Gifts portion of the liturgy. Then watch what God can do with our ordinary gifts!*

After everyone has filled out their cards, choose one person to represent your group and bring all of the cards with them to the Worship Space. That representative will be part of the procession for the Presentation of the Gifts. Meet at the statue of Jesus & Joseph in the Gathering Space for detailed instructions. Choose a new representative each week.

Intercessory Prayer: Collect prayer requests from your Discipleship Group and add them to the universal intentions. *Ask a volunteer to read the intentions aloud; and ask everyone to respond with “Lord, hear our prayer” (following each intention).*

Ask a volunteer to read the intentions aloud; ask everyone else to respond by saying “Lord, hear our prayer” (following each intention).

Leader: Our prayer response is “Lord hear our prayer”

For the Church, that we may always strive to be a light
That shines in the darkness...

For wise and just elected officials: may they serve with
Integrity for the common good...

For profound peace in our world, nation and community

For our sister parish, St. Catherine’s in Bouzy, Haiti...

For those who have died...

For [Read your group’s intentions here...]

For the prayers we hold in silence, (pause) ...

We pray: “Lord hear our prayer”

The Nicene Creed

*I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.*

*I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.*

*For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
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.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.*

*I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

OneWith

Leader (Parent) Resources

Sunday Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/020920.cfm>

Articles to get you thinking about ways to explain the Nicene Creed...

[How to Teach the Nicene Creed without Hosting a Snore-fest](#) (Clever Blog post)

[The Nicene Creed: Symbol of the Catholic Faith](#) (phrase-by-phrase breakdown)

Creed Videos...

[Don't be a Robot](#) (Excellent video from Outside da Box)

[What is the Nicene Creed](#) (One Minute Apologist – I've tagged this video before, but if you have not used it...)

[The Trinity Explained in Under 3 Minutes](#) (Bob Rice)

Mass Moment links:

How to Read the Bible: “The Gospel” (The Bible Project – Video)

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—known as the Gospel—contain some of the most familiar stories in the Bible. They offer the earliest accounts of Jesus’ life and teachings, but how often do we really take in their literary artistry from beginning to end? How can we reconcile the fact that there are four accounts with differing stories? This video is all about learning to understand and respond to these unique books. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrzq_X1NNaA

“*The Gospels*” (USCCB Article)

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/scripture.cfm?src=intros/gospels-intro.htm>

Links for total nerds

[Christian "Trinity" Explained in 3 Minutes](#) (nice explanation of C.S. Lewis multi-dimensional analogy)

Euangelion / Gospel (Bible Project - Video)

“Gospel” is one of the most common words in a Christian’s vocabulary. But what does it mean in the original languages of the Bible? In this video, we’ll discover that “gospel” is a royal announcement about Jesus, who is the crucified and risen King of the world who overcame death with his love.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HT41M013X3A>

Gospel of The Kingdom (Bible Project - Video)

This video traces the origins of the word “gospel” and how it ties the story of the Old Testament together with the story of Jesus and his announcement of God’s kingdom. Jesus brought God’s rule and reign to the world in a very upside-down way, which is the best news you could ask for.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmFPSof-kzs>

How to Read the Bible: “The Gospel” (The Bible Project – Handout)

A really great but very nerdy introduction to the NT Gospels that goes with their video

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrzq_X1NNaA)! These notes go a level deeper than we can cover in a five-minute video. You’ll be introduced to key concepts and passages that will guide your exploration of the four Gospel accounts. <https://d1bsmz3sdihplr.cloudfront.net/media/Study%20Notes/h2r-15-video-notesfinal-1.pdf>

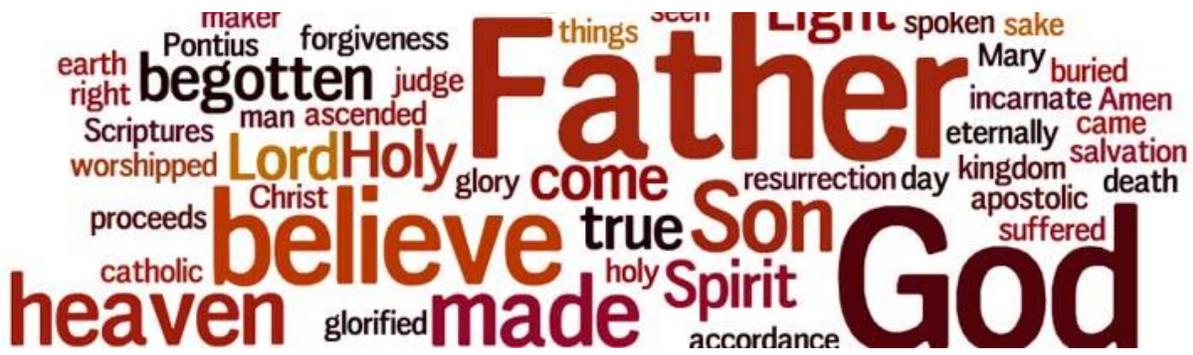


All the way back in the 4th century (AD 325 to be exact), a group of 318 bishops came from Rome, Jerusalem, Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Greece, Asia Minor, and more to meet in Nicaea (present-day Iznik, Turkey) to settle a very important matter —that there is One God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

At that time, there were many conflicting ideas about the nature of God, Jesus and the concept of the Holy Trinity. In particular, was a heresy (think of it as 4th century Fake News), that said; if Jesus was created by God He must have had a beginning, and therefore, like every other part of creation, was not as eternal as God. They reasoned that Jesus’ powers given to Him by God but that He was human, not true God.

The bishops settled on a series of statements about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the role of the Church that all people of faith could rely on. These statements of faith became known as the Nicene Creed. In the 6th century, the creed was officially added as part of the liturgy; to be recited by the gathered faithful following the homily. It is a great reminder of what we believe about our awesome God – just as we are about to encounter Him in the Eucharist [think of it as an ancient version of a “push notification”].

For nearly 1,700 years the Nicene Creed has helped guide and form the way we understand the nature of God. This simple *profession of faith* is still relevant today. In a society with so many competing ideologies; a barrage of conflicting ideas of what to believe about God; where celebrity and fame is idolized and our own technological achievement and knowledge is worshiped; the Nicene Creed provides a firm foundation for Christians everywhere to build our life of faith.



"I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible."

We are proclaiming that we believe in one God, who is almighty—having absolute power over all—who is the creator of everything in existence, spanning heaven and earth and things that are visible to the eye and things that are not, such as angels.

"Jesus is the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father."

Here, the Church is making clear the divinity of Jesus, that He was not made or created by the Father, but that Jesus always existed "before all ages." *There was never a time when Jesus did not exist.* It helps to understand this line further by defining certain words. Merriam-Webster defines *begotten* as: "to produce especially as an effect or outgrowth," and *consubstantial* as: "of the same substance."... Or as Fr. Don likes to say OneWith!

Jesus therefore, is the same substance as God the Father, and both are one in the same; one-with. Jesus was "*produced or brought forth*" from something that always existed (not created like when we were conceived and born).

"Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man."

This is the core of our faith: Jesus became human and walked the same earth we do to save us from death. Unlike us, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and is both fully-divine and fully-human. The Virgin Mary is also referenced to remind us of her role in the story of salvation.

"For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day 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."

As Jesus foretold, He suffered, died, and rose again three days later to give us the gift of eternal life. Forty days after His resurrection, He left the physical world and ascended into heaven. As believers we're reminded that Jesus will come a second time to judge all the living and the dead and those judged worthy will enjoy eternal peace in God's endless kingdom.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets."

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and as the Creed states, should be adored and glorified, because *the Holy Spirit is God*. As Scripture shows us, there were instances when the prophets reveal that the Holy Spirit spoke through them, "*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted...*" (Isaiah 61:1) and "*Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon me, and he told me to say, 'This is what the LORD says to the people of Israel: I know what you are saying, for I know every thought that comes into your minds (Ezekiel 11:5).'*"

"I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen."

In the final lines, we "confess" or "believe" that through our baptism we have died to original sin, and that we are reborn as a "new creature" in Christ.

Finally, though people have proposed many images of what "the resurrection of the dead" will look like, the truth is that it will be more than we can imagine. As the apostle Paul reminds us: "*eye has not seen, and ear has not heard ...what God has prepared for those who love him*" (1 Cor 2:9). For now, we look forward to being joined to Christ's resurrection and sharing in his life.

“Mass Moment”

There’s a moment at Mass when God speaks directly - and individually to each of us... If you have ears to hear! Through God’s living Word – we have the opportunity to understand God, ourselves and our relationships in a richer and more meaningful way! These “Testaments” of God’s mercy, justice and love are proclaimed through stories, poetry, histories and even songs, but there is one part of the sacred scriptures that holds a special place in our liturgy (and in our lives as disciples of Christ) – they are the Gospels!

Scripturally speaking, the gospels are the first four books of the New Testament. They are the Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each of these books recounts the life and teaching of Jesus’ from slightly different perspectives. Collectively they are called the Gospels.

However, while these four writings called “gospels,” there is in reality only one gospel which runs through all of Sacred Scripture, the gospel of and about Jesus Christ. This word “gospel” comes from a Greek word (*euangelion*) that means “good news.” For the writers of the New Testament, the good news refers to the announcement that Jesus is the Son of God who has brought the Reign of God into our world through his life, death, and resurrection from the dead.

This Good News is so important for us to hear and to know that it gets the “royal treatment” (pun intended) at each Mass!

- We stand!
- The Book of the Gospels is presented to us – and we respond (typically by singing) with “**Alleluia**” (*God be praised*)!
- The priest or deacon introduce the reading (something like – “the Gospel of Matthew”) Once again we respond! This time by saying, “**Glory to you O’ Lord**” - while at the same time, marking a small cross on our forehead, lips and heart (*a prayer to keep God’s word in our mind, on our lips and in our heart*).
- The priest or deacon finishes the passage by saying, “*The Gospel of the Lord*” and we respond “**Praise to you, Lord Jesus**” Christ,” again proclaiming our faith in the presence of Christ in the word.

So, why all the attention to these scriptures?

If we are to be followers of Christ, it is IMPERITIVE that we know about Jesus’ life, his teaching and mission for (us) his disciples!

St. Jerome, a Doctor of the Church, is quoted with the saying that “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ”... My brothers and my sisters, do NOT miss this moment!

Welcome to Mass!

Roll the Dice Break the Ice

1. My favorite television show is...
2. My favorite movie is...
3. My favorite place is...
4. My favorite band/singer is...
5. My favorite song is...
6. My favorite store is...
7. My favorite book/author is...
8. My favorite sports team is...
9. My dream car is...
10. My favorite food is...
11. My favorite actor/actress...
12. My dream job is...
13. In ten years I will be...
14. If I were a millionaire I would...
15. For a hobby, I...
16. The craziest thing I ever did was...
17. If I could travel anywhere new I would go...
18. The thing that makes me the happiest is...
19. The most important thing in my life is...
20. Make up your own question for the whole group!



Would You Rather?

- Would you rather not use your computer for a month or not eat junk food for a month?
- Would you rather have only two close friends or many acquaintances?
- Would you rather be known as the best student in your school or be the captain of one of the sport teams?
- Would you rather always have to sing instead of speaking or dance everywhere you went?
- Would you rather be the star basketball player on your school's losing team or sit on the bench all season with your school's winning team?
- Would you rather save your country from an invasion or from a terrible disease?
- Would you rather be very short or extremely tall?
- Would you rather live without your phone for two weeks or your computer for a month?
- Would you rather be the teacher at your school or the janitor?
- Would you rather be invisible or be able to fly?
- Would you rather lose your ability to speak or have to say everything you are thinking for a week?
- Would you rather live on a plant or beneath the sea?
- Would you rather have to listen to music you don't like all of the time or not be able to listen to music at all?
- Would you rather have live one hundred years in the future or one hundred years in the past?
- Would you rather be the best player on a losing team or the worst player on a winning team?
- Would you rather have extremely small freakishly eyes or an extremely large nose?
- Would you rather have friends that are smarter than you or friends that are be much better looking than you?
- Would you rather give a speech to the whole school, including teachers, for 30 minutes or work in the school cafeteria for a semester?
- Would you rather be poor and attractive or rich and ugly?
- Would you rather marry someone who has lots of money or someone with a good heart?

Would You Rather?

- Would you rather stay up all night helping an irritating family member with a problem or babysit a baby that will not stop crying?
- Would you rather be able to dress in designer clothes or buy everything you want at a discount store?
- Would you rather live out in the country or in the city?
- Would you rather be very strong or be able to run very fast?
- Would you rather spend one year sailing around the world or one year living in your foreign favorite country?
- Would you rather take a trip down the Amazon River or walk the Great Wall of China?
- Would you rather go skiing in the winter or to the beach in the summer?
- Would you rather lose your sense of smell or your sense of taste?
- Would you rather have hair that is always straight or hair that is super curly?
- Would you rather develop a paralyzing fear of heights or be afraid of water?
- Would you rather have the ability to read other people's mind or the ability to see into the future?
- Would you rather be able to sing like diva or be able to play the guitar like a rock star?
- Would you rather never eat your favorite food for the rest of your life, or only be able to eat your favorite food?
- Would you rather let it go or get even?
- Would you rather be the circus person who puts their head in the lion's mouth or the clown that is shot out of a cannon?
- Would you rather have a noisy neighbor or a nosy neighbor?
- Would you rather have a famous family member or be the famous family member?