

ONEWITH

OneWith community, OneWith faith, OneWith Christ.

February 7, 2021

Reflection Break Outline Grade 9 ~ Session #9



Session Goals

Catholicism Unpacked:

Youth will explore the history and meaning of the Nicene Creed.

Youth will break down the “God Statements” of the Creed and reflect on their “theological” and “applied” meanings.

- *God is One*
- *God is powerful (almighty)*
- *God is Creator (Creator of all things)*

Scripture Unpacked:

- Articulate the meaning of a Scripture passage from the Sunday readings (or homily).
- Reflect on *and articulate* at least 1 way these lessons could apply to contemporary life.
- Commit to one practice of Christian discipleship that corresponds to their own learning before the next session.

Ice Breaker Activity / Questions (about 5 minutes)

OneWith format is a very different way of exploring the Catholic faith and experiencing liturgy. Peer-to-peer witnessing is a critical part of to the discipleship 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 as comfortable as one can, given the current circumstances...*
- *Try some “softball questions” to get them talking... Favorite activity/moment of the week,*

Pro Tip: *Some established groups have a standard faith question that they use as an opener. In addition to creating a known question/topic that the youth can reliably anticipate being discussed, you also build in the expectation that everyone will be expected to share.*

- *What was your “God-Moment” since the last time we met.*
- *1-5... On a scale of one (“Where the heck are you?”) to five (“We’re like this!” - side-by-side fingers)... Where are you and God right now?*
- *Who did you bless this week? / Who blessed you?*
- *How did you do on your “Discipleship Commitment” from our last session? (more on that below)*

Links to websites with games and activities:

- <https://www.jubed.com/9-Icebreakers-Thatll-Leave-Your-Group-Buzzing>
- <https://teens.lovetoknow.com/teen-activities/youth-icebreakers-without-materials>
- <https://www.thereligionteacher.com/catholic-ice-breakers/>

Catholicism Unpacked (8-10 minutes)

“I Believe...”

Over the next few sessions we will be revisiting the conversations that we had at the beginning of the year about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. This session you will reflect on the Church's nearly 2000 years of wisdom concerning the nature of God in the form of the Nicene Creed. These next few sessions will ask our youth 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

More than 1,600 years ago, the Council of Nicaea brought bishops from all over the Christian world to clarify and put into writing the basic beliefs about the nature of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the role of the unified Church. The result of their work was series of statements about that all of the Churches could agree on... it is called the Nicene Creed (I'm sure you've heard of it and even said it yourself...

Use the handout on pg. 6 to read through the Nicene Creed together. I will also send this to you as a separate document in case you want to send it as an attachment to teens/parents or screen share on Zoom.

Let's break it down... *(Break down the “God Statements” of the Creed and reflect on their “theological” and “applied” meanings).*

“I Believe...”

We say “I believe” because, although the creed expresses the collective beliefs of the Church, the creed is ultimately an individual confession of belief in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

in one God...

Christians, like Jews and Muslims, believe that only one God exists. The creed echoes the words of the *Shema*: One of the most famous (and important) prayers contained in the Bible - the Shema is found in the Book of Deuteronomy 6:4-5; "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one..." The Shema gets its name from the Hebrew word for “listen”/“hear” and is a prayer that the Israelites prayed twice a day.

the Father almighty...

Jesus frequently calls God "Father" in the Scriptures (even abba = daddy), and this usage tells us that although God powerful, he is also a loving, personal God, who is present His creation.

maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible...

As Catholics, we believe that God created the visible universe (created matter) as well as the invisible one (spiritual world of angels, etc.). Thus, God created everything.

Questions for Reflection:

- Do you think about what you are saying when you profess the Creed?
- Why do think that the Creed might be important enough to be included in every Sunday liturgy?

Want to Go Deeper?

- Which of these lines stands out to you? Why?
- Are there any beliefs statements in the Creed that you struggle with?

Scripture Unpacked (10-15 minutes)

As Catholics, we believe that the Bible is the living Word of God. That alone should give us reason to pay attention, but there's more! Scripture offers us lessons and wisdom that can be beneficial to OUR lives – right now!

Today's Gospel shows us that in the midst of an extremely hectic 24 hours where Jesus effectively launches his public ministry, he takes time to go aside to a lonely place and pray. The passage tells us that it was "long before dawn" that he did this. It may have been his usual practice to pray early in the morning or he may have been restless after the events of the previous day and the thought of what lay ahead. Nevertheless, Jesus provides us with a model of using prayer to reflect on events and to prepare ourselves for the day ahead.

Digging Deeper - Scripture Questions

Choose and discuss one or more of the following questions:

- Why might healing have been such an important part of Jesus' ministry?
- Why did Jesus go away by himself to pray?
- How can you better follow Jesus' example of using prayer in the busy times?

Homily: What was the main point of the Priest/Deacon's homily? How does that message tie back to the bible readings and/or your life?

Scripture Application Questions

Disciples Do! The "Discipleship Challenge" asks our youth to take the practical lesson/wisdom that they have discerned from the Scripture readings (aka – the Bible) and/or the homily – and apply that in the context of their own lived experience.

Note: We are looking for something specific/concrete for them to commit to. "Being a better person" would be too generic... We also want to stay away from "praying" or "praying for someone" - We certainly want them to pray, but prayer is a separate practice of discipleship. If a youth is having problems coming up with something, start with their learned lesson/wisdom and work from there. The point here is to put faith into action by working up a tangible way for them to become agents of mercy, justice and love in their families, among their friends and in our world.

"Discipleship Challenge"

- What is one "practical lesson" or bit of wisdom that YOU can take away from the Bible readings and/or homily?
- What is one thing that you can do in the next two weeks to "heal" someone's emotional or relational wounds?

OneWith Resources

Links to websites with games and activities:

- <https://www.jubed.com/9-Icebreakers-Thatll-Leave-Your-Group-Buzzing>
- <https://teens.lovetoknow.com/teen-activities/youth-icebreakers-without-materials>
- <https://www.thereligionteacher.com/catholic-ice-breakers/>

Resource Videos:

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*). <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-teach-nicene-creed-without-hosting-snore-fest-emily-jeffries/>
- Why do Catholics pray the Creed (*LifeTeen Blog post*). <https://lifeteen.com/blog/why-do-catholics-pray-the-creed/>
- The Nicene Creed: Symbol of the Catholic Faith (*phrase-by-phrase breakdown*): <https://catholic-link.org/the-nicene-creed-explained/>

Creed Videos...

- What is the Nicene Creed (*One Minute Apologist – If you have not already used it...*) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5afgRuqWbEg>
- The Trinity Explained in Under 3 Minutes (*Bob Rice*) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHF-y84rgIM>
- “Creed” (*Music Video – 3rd Day & Brandon Heath*) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3i-VWxOAc>

Links for total nerds

- What is the Trinity? (*Bishop Barron*) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMI4rA4cuiM>
- Christian "Trinity" Explained in 3 Minutes (*nice explanation of C.S. Lewis multi-dimensional analogy*) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQkFlzFJ3kA>
- St. Patrick's Bad Analogies (*One of my favorite videos ever!*) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQLfqaUoQCw>

Learn more about the *Shema*: <https://bibleproject.com/learn/shema-listen/>

Learn more about *The Gospel of Mark*: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/mark/>

Sunday Readings:

Reading #1: Job 7:1-7

Responsorial Psalm: 147:1-7

Reading #2: I Corinthians 9:16-23

Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

A full copy of the readings for the week can be found on the U.S. Bishop's website:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/020721.cfm>

Reflection on the 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (*Jeff Cavins – Bible Scholar, Author and SJTW parishioner!*) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xoW-oKNouA>

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.*

Gospel Reflection

Historical Context – Capernaum

Jesus appears to have made Capernaum his base after leaving Nazareth. He may, in fact, have based himself at Simon Peter's house. There are many references in the gospels to Jesus' actions in Capernaum. Archaeologists have identified the house in Capernaum that they believe to be Simon Peter's house—less than 100 metres from the Capernaum synagogue. Evidence reveals carved inscriptions and symbols that identify both Jesus and Peter. The house appears to have been used as a “house-church” until a church was built on the site in the 5th Century. Excavations of the site can be seen today.

Scriptural Context – Public Ministry

This week's gospel follows directly on from last week's reading and, as is typical with Mark's gospel, the events occur on the very same day. The urgency of the gospel is obvious in this week's reading; Jesus had a very busy 24 hours! Having launched his public ministry in the synagogue earlier that day, Jesus accompanies his new disciples to meet some of their family and have a meal. However, on arriving at the home of Simon and Andrew, they find Simon's mother-in-law is sick. Unlike the public displays of his healing power that preceded and will follow this episode, Jesus does not say anything but simply takes the woman by the hand and helps her up. Her response of beginning to wait on Jesus and his disciples is a faith response and a recognition of who Jesus is. A theme that runs through this gospel is that the disciples never fully understand who Jesus is. Here, a woman who has just met him recognizes him as the Messiah and begins to serve him

Prayer

In the midst of an extremely hectic 24 hours where Jesus effectively launches his public ministry, Jesus takes time to go aside to a lonely place and pray. The passage tells us that it was “long before dawn” that he did this. It may have been his usual practice to pray early in the morning or he may have been restless after the events of the previous day and the thought of what lay ahead. Nevertheless, Jesus provides us with a model of using prayer to reflect on events and to prepare ourselves for the day ahead.

Questions for Adolescents

- Q. Why might healing have been such an important part of Jesus' ministry?
- Q. Why did Jesus go away by himself to pray?
- Q. What message does this passage hold for us today?

Questions for Parents/Sponsors

- Q. What is the significance of Jesus healing by touch alone?
- Q. Why might people like Simon's mother-in-law recognize Jesus as the Messiah when the disciples don't?
- Q. Where and when do you find prayer most powerful?
- Q. How can you better follow Jesus' example of using prayer in the busy times?

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