

The Nicene Creed

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

We 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.

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

*Catholic refers to the universal church.

Back Porch Theology

Theological Truth	Simple Concept
God is transcendent	God is bigger than we can imagine
God is glorious	But He condescends to be close to us
We are made in God's image	You were created to reflect God's nature
God exists in perfect community (Trinity)	God is relationship and made us for relationship
The Holy Spirit dwells in us	The Spirit gives us help and power daily
We are not alone in our walk	We don't have to figure things out alone
Love is the ultimate evidence of faith	Love is the proof of our theology
Spiritual maturity looks like Jesus	Live like Jesus; love like Jesus

Formal Theology vs. Functional Theology

Aspect	Formal Theology	Functional Theology
Definition	what we profess to believe	how we actually live out our beliefs
Example	creeds, statements of faith, church mission statements	how you treat your kids when you're late to church
Visibility	can be hung on a wall	seen in daily actions by neighbors and family
Biblical Parallel	Matthew 23: Pharisees had correct doctrine but wrong hearts.	John 5:39: The religious leaders studied Scripture but missed Jesus.
Theological Focus	orthodoxy (right belief)	orthopraxy (right practice) & orthopathy (right heart)
Common Misalignment	knowing doctrine but not living it out	living contrary to professed beliefs
Ideal Alignment	orthodoxy matches orthopraxy and orthopathy	actions and relationships reflect what you say you believe

TABLE TALK THEOLOGY

a “Get the Conversation Started”
card deck to deepen relationships
and live in authentic community



“Theology isn’t transactional. It’s relational.”

– LISA HARPER

INSTRUCTIONS:

Print this file on a standard sheet of paper (size 8.5 x 11), front & back. We recommend using cardstock for durability. Cut out the cards individually and stack them in a deck. Use them around your dinner table, coffee table, or wherever you gather to help deepen theological discussions and foster connection within your community.

What is your understanding or idea about “theology”? In what ways does the word or even idea of “theology” sound intimidating, complicated, or daunting?

Where does your knowledge of and relationship with God come from?

What would it look like for you to live a Jesus-shaped life right now?

What changes in your perception about your life when you consider Jesus at the absolute center of it?

What is one conversation you have had about God that brought you joy this week?

What are the areas of your life that feel heavily influenced by your conversations about God (theology)? Which areas feel disconnected?

What is one area of your life where you see your theology transforming you into living a Jesus-shaped life?

Why do you think the Pharisees searched the Scriptures yet did not see how the Scriptures testified about Jesus?

In what ways has studying Scripture brought you life and drawn you closer to Jesus?

What was a time in your life when you experienced spiritual growth or felt challenged in an area of faith? How did you see God show up, in love, during that time of growth?

When I picture God the Father, I see a God who is

_____ .

When I picture God the Son, I see a God who is _____ .

When I picture God the Spirit, I see a God who is

_____ .

Hebrews 13:8 says that “Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Why is it important to believe that God, in His unity, is consistent?

Picture God affirming your worth as His child. What does it feel like to receive that affirmation?

Can you think of stories in Scripture where Jesus' humanity is particularly important? Share which story comes to mind.

Can you think of stories in Scripture where Jesus' divinity seems to be a prominent feature? Share which story comes to mind.

How is Jesus different from the angels and prophets? Why do you think it is important that we know Jesus is not just a prophet or an angel?

What do we learn about God's nature through the life and ministry of Jesus?

How does what we learn about the nature of God through Jesus (the exact imprint of God) challenge us to imprint (albeit imperfectly and inexactly) the character of God in our own lives and in the world around us?

What aspects of Jesus' identity do you readily accept?

What do you struggle to believe about Jesus' identity?

Do you tend to emphasize either Jesus' humanity or Jesus' divinity more than the other? If so, which do you tend to emphasize the most?

How is the identity of Jesus compromised if we only emphasize His divinity?

How is the identity of Jesus compromised if we only emphasize His humanity?

When you talk about Holy Spirit, do you typically say “Holy Spirit” or “the Holy Spirit?” How have you heard Holy Spirit talked about? If dropping “the” is unfamiliar to you, what would it feel like to try to drop the “the”?

What do you think it felt like when the tongues of fire came to rest on the disciples?

How do you think would you have felt if you could suddenly understand the good news preached in a language different from your own?

Where have you seen the power of Holy Spirit in your own life?

How has your reading of Scripture, spiritual practices, church community, family upbringing, friends, teachers, or mentors informed how you understand your theology of Holy Spirit?

How does the truth that Holy Spirit is closer than breath shape your picture of Holy Spirit in your mind?

In what areas of your faith do you feel a closeness to God through Holy Spirit? Where could you grow in intimacy with God?

Has Jesus ever asked you to wait? What did you learn about Him during the waiting?

How does Imago Dei (knowing we were made in God's image) inform your own value and your perception of your worth? How does it inform your views of other people?

How can we settle deeply into the love of God when we also take sin seriously?

What does that mean to you to be uniquely God-imaged?

Why do you think the religious leaders were so threatened and angered by Jesus' association with people on the margins?

Who are the people in our society that you struggle to see in light of God's image?

What is a Scripture passage or command that has been difficult for you to live out in your faith?

Why do you think James (James 2:19) reminds us that “even the demons believe” in God “and shudder”? What do you think he is trying to tell us?

If you were calling your community to a giant feast, who would you invite? What would the celebration look like?

How do you imagine a giant feast in your community would point to God’s goodness and our worship?

What do you see when you picture a loving community?

Why do you think Paul chooses to use the metaphor of a physical body to talk about unity and diversity in the church?

Wild Card: Create your own question to foster community.

Wild Card: Create your own question to foster community.

Wild Card: Create your own question to foster community.

EXCLUSIVE BUNDLE

The Ultimate Resource
Bundle for Your Study on Theology!

One Low Price
+ Plus FREE SHIPPING!

SHOP NOW



<https://faithgateway.com/pages/a-jesus-shaped-life-bible-study-materials>