
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025

Do you believe this?

All-age resources

Material for all ages together to supplement the ecumenical worship service

Gather

Use the activity and prayer to gather the group and introduce the theme.

Prepare: Hide A4 or A3 cards around the front of the worship area with the following pictures: a hand, a question mark, a globe, a cross, a dove.

Hold up a magnifying glass, pad and pen – ask the congregation: ‘If I gave you these items, what might you be doing?’

Give more clues if necessary: Sherlock Holmes, etc.

‘You would be looking for evidence or clues. I wonder if you can spot any clues, at the front here, of what might be part of our service today?’

Invite the congregation to point out the cards you hid earlier and ask someone to come and hold each one up at the front.

‘These are all going to be part of our service, but I wonder where we might come across them?’

Call to worship

As we gather today, we give thanks for one another,
may we see the beauty in each person,
all of us united in worship together.
May we know God’s presence among us.

A gathering prayer

Father God, we welcome you into our service today,
we invite you to meet with us, just as we are.
We pray for those all around the world who gather to worship you.
Unite us together as we worship you.
May we all learn more of you and your love for us.
Amen.

Share the Word

John 11:17-27 Jesus in Bethany – dramatic reading.

(International Children's Bible version recommended)

Act it out! Pre-arrange three volunteers to take on the roles of a narrator (to start the reading), Jesus and Martha to speak and act it out. Begin with the narrator as Jesus walks through the congregation to find Martha, followed by Martha getting ready in a hurry, coming from a different direction, anxious to see Jesus. The dialogue between them begins.

Pause and continue at a slower pace as verses 25-27 are read.

Or show this video: Saddleback kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dca8SSxXCmM>

(stop video at 2:50 mins to match the passage or continue to the end).

John 20:24-29 Jesus Appears to Thomas – monologue using the following script through the eyes of Thomas, who has just seen the wounds in Jesus' hands and side.

(Thomas rushes in)

Oh, there you are! You will never believe this! You know my friend Jesus? Well, he was recently put to death on a cross. I don't understand, he hadn't done anything wrong, but they put nails in his hand and feet. And when he died, they put a spear in his side to check he was dead. We were all so sad. Well then, last week, my other friends, the disciples, told me that Jesus had come back to life. Well, I wasn't sure... I mean, risen from the dead!? I wanted to believe. I really did, but I just wasn't sure. Was it really him? I would need to see where the nails had been in his hands and the hole in his side before I could believe.

Well, you will never guess what has just happened?! I was with the other disciples when suddenly Jesus was there... in the room... with us! Can you believe it?!

And he showed me his hands and side. Now I know it is true! Jesus is alive!

Now I believe it!

Or alternatively, a congregational reading

The service leader to narrate and take the voice of Jesus, congregation to take the voice of Thomas.

Or show this video: Saddleback kids https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_QcGnwilXI

Sermon ideas

Highlight how the Bible readings explore the concept of personal belief, and outline some of the core beliefs of the Christian faith which will connect to the Nicene Creed later in the service.

Sermon starter 1: Belief or opinion

Which of the following questions are true and which are an opinion?

Green is a mixture of blue and yellow. *True*

Red is the best colour. *Opinion*

The 2nd of July is halfway through the calendar year? *True*

June is the best month to be born. *Opinion.*

Some things we know and believe because they are true. Other things may be based on our opinions or what we have been told. They may be true, but sometimes we may doubt and want to check, searching for clues or the evidence to make sure.

Sermon starter 2: Do you believe me?

Hold up an item enclosed in a paper bag. Tell the congregation it's a chocolate muffin. Say: Who likes these? Who would like to come and check? Without looking in the bag, how could you work out whether what I have said is in there is true? Touch, weight, smell.

Invite someone to come and investigate without looking in the bag. Does it feel the right weight/smell/feel to be a chocolate muffin?

Eventually, open and take out item, as stated.

Did you believe me? Or would you have wanted to come and check for yourself?

What do we believe?

In the Bible readings, Martha knew that Jesus could perform miracles and trusted that he could bring her brother back to life. In their conversation, Jesus explains who he is and about eternal life and asks a very important question – 'Martha, do you believe this?' An important question for Martha, and for us today.

In the second reading, Thomas had been told by others that Jesus had been raised from the dead, but he wanted proof. He wanted to see for himself. When Jesus showed him his hands and side, then he believed.

I wonder how easy we find it to believe and trust in what we can't see. Are we like Martha, or maybe like Thomas, having doubts or wanting to see proof before we believe?

Introducing The Nicene Creed

Within the Christian faith around the world, there are beliefs that are a core part of our faith. There is a prayer/profession of faith called the Nicene Creed which focuses on what we believe about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We are going to explore this further a little later in the service, but we will begin with an overview with some actions.

Share the core elements of the Nicene Creed in simple words using actions (the actions will be repeated during the prayers)

We believe in God the Father who created the world and everything in it.

(make the shape of world using hands and hold it close to the body, palms together facing upward)

He created night and day, land and sea, the sky and all that is in it, the animals, birds and people... and it was amazing!

And God loved people so much that he gave a special gift to the world. *(stretch out arms as if to give a gift)*

Jesus was a tiny baby *(cradle baby in arms)* who came to help and rescue the world but later he was put to death on a cross *(arms make an upright cross in front of the chest)*, even though he hadn't done anything wrong.

But Jesus rose from the dead. When he was taken into heaven to live with God, *(uncross arms still at shoulder height, palms upward)*

God sent the Holy Spirit to be with us. He came down like a dove *(link thumbs to make a bird flying)*

We are going to explore this in more detail a little later in the service.

Explore & respond

A sequence of active worship ideas; individual items can stand alone.

Believing without seeing: What's in the bag?

SA

Have a few medium size paper bags, each with a single item inside. People have to work out what's inside using touch, but no looking! Suggested items: apple/firm pear, teddy, key, ruler, magnifying glass. Have cards with the answer on face down on the table in front of the bag. Guess and then look.

From hand to heart

ES

You will need: coloured paper, scissors, glue.

In the Bible reading today, Thomas wanted to see Jesus' hands so that he could confirm for himself that Jesus had risen from the dead. Have A5 printed cards with the outline of a hand and 'Help me to believe in Jesus' printed on (**see template at the end**). Invite the congregation to cut out hearts from coloured paper and stick one into the centre of the palm. Encourage them to write their name inside the heart. Take the card home and place it somewhere visible, as a reminder and encouragement to believe in Jesus.

Read and reflect

WE

Have printed copies available of **John 11:17-27** from 2 versions if possible.

As you read the passage, ask: Is there anything that stands out for you?

At the end, Jesus explains who he is and about eternal life and asks Martha a question: Do you believe this? Reflect on Jesus' question. Are there areas where you find it hard to believe? Name those to God or write them down around the edge of the paper, and prayerfully ask God to help you. Take the page home as a reminder to pray for God to help you to believe.

Exploring key beliefs – create the picture

S

You will need: large paper, colouring pens, scissors, glue, (optional) pre-printed pre-cut images

On a large piece of paper, have a picture of the world, the sky and land – hand-drawn and coloured is fine. Underneath in large letters, write 'Father, Son, Holy Spirit.'

Invite the congregation to draw, cut out and stick on images or symbols of things that are mentioned in the Nicene Creed, for example: a cross, a dove, stars, moon, animals, fish, etc. Offer pre-cut shapes if preferred. When complete, display the picture.

Declaring the Creed

WA

As we come to a time of prayer, we think back to the key beliefs we heard about earlier. The Nicene Creed is a prayer/profession of faith that focuses on what the Christian faith and those who follow it believe about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We will say this together using the actions from earlier.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth. (*make shape of world using hands and hold it close to body, palms together facing upward*)

(pause)

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, (*cradle baby in arms*)
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,

(pause)

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried; (*arms make an upright cross in front of the chest*)
he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; (*uncross arms still at shoulder height, palms upward*)
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

(*pause*)

I believe in the Holy Spirit, (*link thumbs to make a bird flying*)
the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints, (*hands into a praying position*)
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Music

You may want to sing or show a contemporary version of the Nicene Creed in song.

I believe, Hillsong <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtUNQpu2b7Q>

I believe, Newsboys <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjZ01FcK0yk>

Go with God

Share the Nicene Creed sheet (**see template at the end**) with words missing and answers to select from at the bottom. Offer a simpler version for children or those who would prefer it (**see template at the end**).

Fold the answers back out of sight, to make it more of a challenge.

Can you fill in the blanks?

Repeat the Creed during the week and see if you can learn the words by heart.

A closing prayer

Father God, thank you for your precious world.

May we treat it with respect and take care of it.

Thank you for the gift of people.

May we love and care for one another.

Thank you for sending Jesus to bring hope in the darkness.

Thank you that because he died, our sins could be forgiven.

Forgive us for the things we have done wrong,

and help us to live as you would want us to.

Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to help us and to bring peace.

We pray for your peace to be with those who are sad, or worried,

for those who are unwell and those who find life difficult.

In Jesus name we pray,

Amen.

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From Hand to Heart |



Help me to believe in Jesus

From Hand to Heart |



Help me to believe in Jesus

Go with God

The Nicene Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, _____,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was _____, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into _____,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the _____,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the _____ everlasting.
Amen.

Word selection: Holy Spirit, crucified, life, earth, heaven, our Lord

The Nicene Creed (simplified)

In the beginning _____ created the _____ and everything in it.

It was a beautiful world of animals, birds, plants, trees, and _____

After he created the world, he gave a special gift to the people.

It was his son, the baby _____.

He grew up to be a friend to everyone, to help people, to make people better and to teach people about God.

But Jesus was put to death on a _____ even though he hadn't done anything wrong.

But he rose from the dead and lives with God in _____ forever.

After he went to heaven, God sent the _____ to be with us, to help us.

Word selection: people, Holy Spirit, heaven, Jesus, cross, God, Earth