

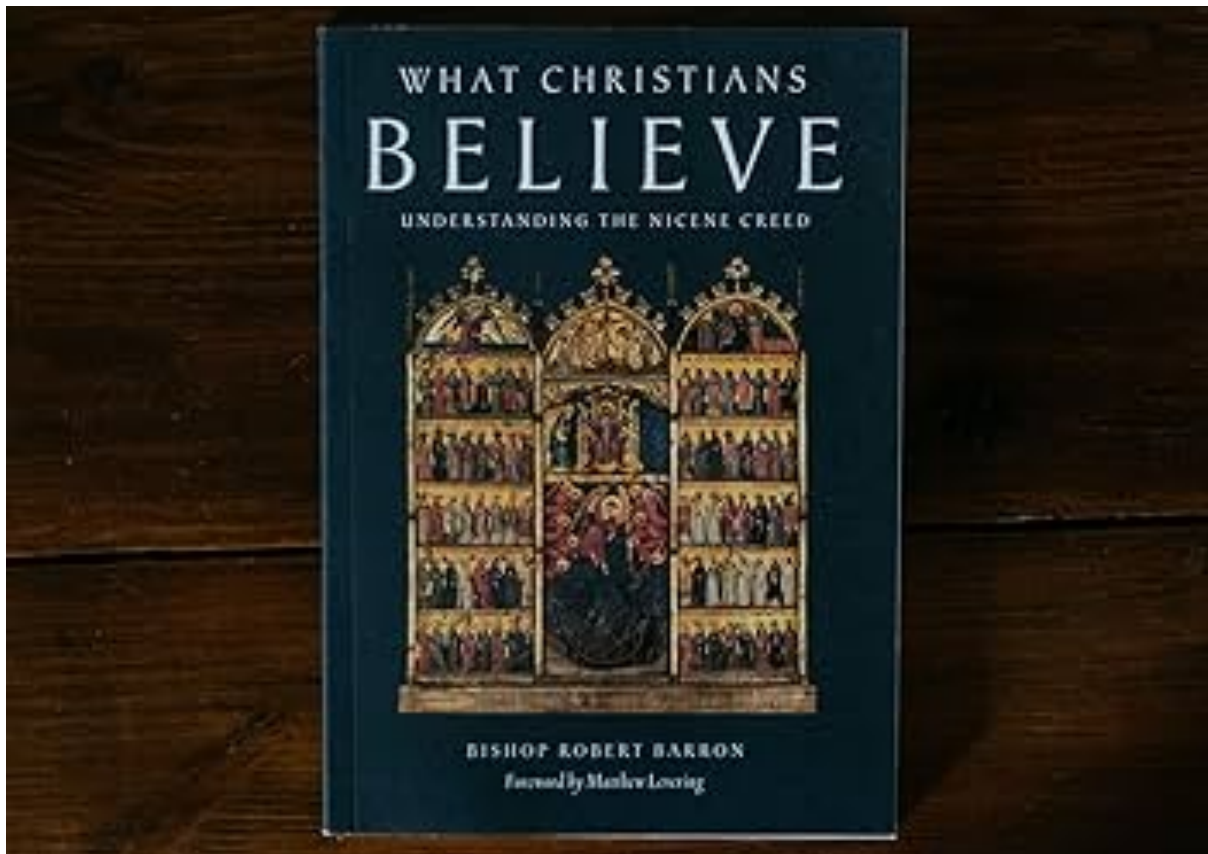
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# We Believe

## A Study Based on Bishop Barron's "What Christians Believe" Book

Holy Name of Jesus Church, Fall 2025

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## Introduction

The Christian faith is not simply a set of private beliefs; it is a living, shared confession that unites believers across centuries and cultures. At the heart of this confession stands the Nicene Creed—a concise, powerful summary of the Gospel proclaimed by the Church since the fourth century. In *What Christians Believe*, Bishop Robert Barron walks through the Creed line-by-line, revealing its biblical foundations, historical depth, and life-changing relevance for today.

This **Leader's Guide** is designed to help you guide your small group through an 8-week journey into the heart of the Creed. Each session focuses on a key section of the Creed as unpacked by Bishop Barron, combining Scripture, reflection, discussion, and prayer. The goal is not only to understand the Creed intellectually but to allow its truths to shape how we think, live, and love.

Every week's session includes:

- **Theme & Goal** – to focus your group's time and prayer
- **Opening Prayer** – to set the tone and invite God's presence
- **Scripture Cross-References** – to root each theme in the Word of God
- **Expanded Discussion Questions** – to spark meaningful conversation and personal application
- **Group Activity / Application** – to move from knowledge to lived faith
- **Closing Prayer** – to seal the session and send participants forth

As you lead, remember: the most important work is done by the Holy Spirit. Your role is to create a space of trust, openness, and reverence for God's Word and the Church's teaching. Encourage participation, listen well, and allow moments of silence for reflection.

Whether your group members are lifelong Catholics or exploring the faith for the first time, this study is meant to help them see the Creed not as a stale formula, but as the Church's living proclamation of the Good News—truths worth believing, celebrating, and sharing with the world.

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## Week 1 – Introduction & Chapter 1: “We Believe”

**Theme:** Faith as a communal act & the purpose of the Creed

**Goal:** Understand why the Creed is central to Christian unity and belief.

### Opening Prayer:

Lord, You have called us into Your family, the Church. As we explore the faith handed down to us, unite our minds and hearts to You and to one another. Amen.

### Scripture Cross-References:

- Acts 2:42 – “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching...”
- Romans 10:9–10 – Confessing with the mouth and believing in the heart
- Ephesians 4:4–6 – One body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith

### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean that the Creed is both personal and communal (“We believe”)?
2. How does reciting the Creed at Mass connect you with Christians across the centuries?
3. What role does shared belief play in unity among believers?
4. How do creeds protect the Church from drifting away from truth?
5. What parts of the Creed are easiest for you to believe? Which are more difficult?
6. If you were explaining Christianity in 1–2 sentences to a nonbeliever, what would you say?
7. How might memorizing and reflecting on the Creed change your daily spiritual life?

### Group Activity / Application:

Have each participant write their own short “creed” in their own words summarizing what they believe about God, Jesus, and the Church. Compare them to the Nicene Creed.

### Closing Prayer:

We thank You, Lord, for the gift of truth passed down through Your Church. Keep us steadfast in faith and united in love. Amen.

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## Week 2 – Chapter 2: “In One God, the Father Almighty”

**Theme:** God the Father as Creator and loving source of all

**Goal:** Deepen understanding of God’s identity as Father and Creator.

### Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we praise You as the source of life. Open our eyes to see Your hand in creation and our hearts to trust in Your providence. Amen.

### Scripture Cross-References:

- Genesis 1:1 – Creation “in the beginning”
- Matthew 6:9–13 – The Lord’s Prayer
- Psalm 104 – God’s care for creation

### Discussion Questions:

1. What do you picture when you think of God as “Father”?
2. Why is the belief that God created from nothing important?
3. How does the Father’s almighty power give comfort in times of uncertainty?
4. What are the implications of God being both transcendent and immanent?
5. How does modern culture’s view of the universe differ from the biblical view?
6. Where have you experienced God’s fatherly care personally?
7. What is one way you can honor God’s creation in your daily life?

### Group Activity / Application:

Take 5 minutes of silent reflection. Write down 3 ways you’ve seen God’s creative power in your life this week. Share one with the group.

### Closing Prayer:

Father Almighty, help us to trust You more fully and to see Your hand in every part of life. Amen.

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## Week 3 – Chapter 3 (Part 1): “And in One Lord Jesus Christ”

**Theme:** Jesus as eternal Son, fully divine and fully human

**Goal:** Grasp the significance of Christ’s divinity and identity.

### Opening Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You are Lord of all. Help us to know You truly and worship You rightly. Amen.

### Scripture Cross-References:

- John 1:1–14 – The Word became flesh
- Colossians 1:15–20 – Christ as image of the invisible God
- Philippians 2:5–11 – Every knee shall bow

### Discussion Questions:

1. What does the title “Lord” imply about Jesus?
2. How does “begotten, not made” protect the truth about who Jesus is?
3. What heresies in the early Church threatened the understanding of Christ’s nature?
4. How does believing Jesus is fully God affect your relationship with Him?
5. How do you respond to someone who says Jesus was just a good teacher?
6. Which Scripture passage about Jesus’ divinity speaks most powerfully to you?
7. How does Christ’s eternal existence change your view of salvation?

### Group Activity / Application:

In pairs, practice explaining in simple language what “consubstantial with the Father” means.

### Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, draw us deeper into Your mystery. Let us proclaim You as Lord with our lips and lives. Amen.

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## Week 4 – Chapter 3 (Part 2): “For Us Men and for Our Salvation...”

**Theme:** The Incarnation — God becoming man for our salvation

**Goal:** See how the Incarnation changes everything about our view of God and humanity.

### Opening Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank You for coming among us to save us. May we never lose wonder at the mystery of Your Incarnation. Amen.

### Scripture Cross-References:

- Luke 1:26–38 – The Annunciation
- John 3:16 – God so loved the world
- Hebrews 2:14–18 – Sharing in our humanity

### Discussion Questions:

1. Why did God become man instead of just forgiving sins from heaven?
2. How does the Incarnation show God’s humility?
3. How would the world be different if Jesus had never been born?
4. How does the phrase “for our salvation” make faith personal for you?
5. What role did Mary play in God’s plan for salvation?
6. How do we see God’s solidarity with human suffering in Jesus’ life?
7. How can we imitate Christ’s humility in our own lives?

### Group Activity / Application:

As a group, brainstorm ways to make Christ’s love tangible to someone in need this week.

### Closing Prayer:

Jesus, we praise You for humbling Yourself to be one of us. Help us live as witnesses to Your love. Amen.

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## Week 5 – Chapter 3 (Part 3): “He Suffered, Died, and Rose Again”

**Theme:** The Paschal Mystery — Christ’s suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension

**Goal:** Understand how the cross and resurrection are at the center of Christian faith.

### Opening Prayer:

Lord Jesus, through Your cross and resurrection You have set us free. Help us see Your victory in our own lives and live as witnesses to Your hope. Amen.

### Scripture Cross-References:

- Isaiah 53:1–12 – The Suffering Servant
- 1 Corinthians 15:3–8 – Paul’s summary of the Gospel
- Luke 24:1–12 – The empty tomb
- Hebrews 12:1–3 – Fixing our eyes on Jesus, who endured the cross

### Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it essential for Christians to believe in the historical reality of the Resurrection?
2. How does the cross redefine what victory and power look like?
3. What does it mean that Christ “descended into hell” (Sheol)?
4. How does the Resurrection give meaning to our own suffering?
5. What is the significance of Jesus’ ascension into heaven?
6. How would Christianity change if Jesus had not risen from the dead?
7. Where in your life do you need to trust in Christ’s resurrection power right now?

### Group Activity / Application:

Share in pairs a time when God brought life or hope out of a difficult situation in your life. Relate it to the pattern of death → resurrection in Christ.

### Closing Prayer:

We praise You, risen Lord, for conquering sin and death. May we live as people of the Resurrection every day. Amen.

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## Week 6 – Chapter 4: “I Believe in the Holy Spirit”

**Theme:** The Spirit as Lord and giver of life, active in the Church and in us

**Goal:** Recognize and welcome the Spirit’s ongoing work in our lives.

### Opening Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.  
Amen.

### Scripture Cross-References:

- John 14:15–26 – The promise of the Advocate
- Acts 2:1–13 – The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost
- Galatians 5:16–26 – Life in the Spirit

### Discussion Questions:

1. How is the Holy Spirit a “person” and not just a force or symbol?
2. In what ways does the Spirit give life to the Church?
3. How does the Spirit guide and protect the Church from error?
4. Which gifts of the Spirit have you experienced most strongly in your life?
5. How can we become more attentive to the Spirit’s promptings?
6. How does the Spirit help us in prayer?
7. How do you see the Spirit at work in the wider world today?

### Group Activity / Application:

Spend 2–3 minutes in silence, asking the Spirit to guide your thoughts. Then share one insight or word you sensed during the silence.

### Closing Prayer:

Holy Spirit, continue to guide, teach, and renew us. Make us bold witnesses of the Gospel.  
Amen.



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## Week 7 – Chapter 5: “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church”

**Theme:** The Four Marks of the Church

**Goal:** Appreciate the Church’s divine mission and our role within it.

**Opening Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, You founded Your Church to carry Your mission to the ends of the earth. Help us to love and serve her faithfully. Amen.

**Scripture Cross-References:**

- Matthew 16:13–20 – “Upon this rock I will build my Church”
- Acts 2:42–47 – Life in the early Church
- Ephesians 4:1–6 – Unity in the Body of Christ

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What do the “Four Marks” of the Church mean?
2. Which of the marks—one, holy, catholic, apostolic—stands out most to you right now?
3. How do you respond to people who say “I’m spiritual but not religious”?
4. In what ways is the Church holy even though its members are sinful?
5. How does apostolic succession safeguard the truth of the Gospel?
6. How can lay people actively live out the mission of the Church?
7. How does belonging to the Church shape your identity as a Christian?

**Group Activity / Application:**

As a group, brainstorm practical ways your parish can better reflect one of the Four Marks in the local community.

**Closing Prayer:**

Lord, thank You for the gift of Your Church. Strengthen her in unity and holiness, and help us be faithful members of Your Body. Amen.

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## **Week 8 – Chapter 6: “The Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the World to Come”**

**Theme:** Christian hope in eternal life

**Goal:** Live with the hope and joy of the promised new creation.

### **Opening Prayer:**

Eternal Father, You promise life beyond death. Strengthen our hope in the resurrection and help us live each day in light of eternity. Amen.

### **Scripture Cross-References:**

- John 11:17–27 – “I am the resurrection and the life”
- 1 Corinthians 15:50–58 – The imperishable body
- Revelation 21:1–5 – A new heaven and new earth

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the difference between resurrection of the body and immortality of the soul?
2. How does belief in the afterlife affect the way you live now?
3. What are some misconceptions about heaven that people have?
4. How does Christian hope differ from mere wishful thinking?
5. What do you think Bishop Barron means when he talks about “the life of the world to come”?
6. How can we live with a stronger sense of eternity in our daily choices?
7. What Scripture passage most encourages you about eternal life?

### **Group Activity / Application:**

Invite each person to share one hope they have for “the life of the world to come” and one way they can live in anticipation of it now.

### **Closing Prayer:**

God of hope, fix our hearts on the promise of resurrection. Help us live with joy, courage, and expectation until we see You face to face. Amen.