



Queensland
Churches Together

CHRISTIANS IN DIALOGUE

The Faith We Confess: The Nicene Creed

A series of four ecumenical studies for small groups

A. Introduction

Many Christian churches use creeds to confess their faith, particularly in their public worship. The most common of these is:

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

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

The material in these sessions is designed to help Christians in small ecumenical groups to share their understanding of what the Creed means to them, to pray together, and so to take another step along the road to Christian Unity.

These studies are composed of four sessions:

1. How did we get creeds?
2. We believe in One God: The Father
3. We believe in Jesus Christ: God's only Son
4. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church.

It is recommended that the sessions last for one and a half hours, and that the groups be kept small. It is important that each group has in it people from a number of denominations, all of whom are able to share equally in the discussion.

For the groups to function successfully leaders need to make themselves familiar with the material.

References from the Bible are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

This is a revised version of the 1988 document from Christians in Dialogue 'The Faith We Confess – The Relevance of the Nicene Creed for Today's Christians – 1988.' The earlier study drew on *Baptism Eucharist Ministry* (BEM), World Council of Churches (WCC) Faith and Order Commission 1982. This revised study has incorporated material from the subsequent revised version of BEM, *Confessing the One Faith: An Ecumenical Explication of the Apostolic Faith as it is Confessed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381)*. Faith and Order Paper No 153. WCC: Geneva, 1991.

There is no copyright on these studies, so they may be reproduced for use by small study groups. If parts or all of these documents are reproduced, acknowledgement of the source is requested as follows:

The Faith We Confess: the Nicene Creed. A series of Ecumenical Studies for Small Groups. Produced by the Faith and Unity Commission of Queensland Churches Together, October 2012

Hard copies of most of the Christians in Dialogue studies are available from:
Christians in Dialogue - Queensland Churches Together, PO Box 2096,
Toowong Qld 4066. Telephone: (07) 3369 6792
Email: admin@qct.org.au www.qct.org.au

LEADER'S GUIDE

1. Gathering

People coming to a group for the first time will often have some anxiety –

- ◆ Will I know anyone?
- ◆ What will be expected of me?
- ◆ Did I switch off the oven?
- ◆ It is important to help them through this first awkward stage. Have all your preparations done well beforehand so that you are able to greet each person warmly on arrival, introducing them to one another, and perhaps having tea and coffee available.

2. Beginning

- A. When all have arrived get the session started by giving them a clear statement of what the group is about -
- Welcome the group
- ◆ who we are;
 - ◆ why we're here;
 - ◆ when we will finish.

It might go like this: "Welcome to my place, and I'm delighted that each of you has been able to make it. We are a group of people from Churches gathered together to reflect and share our ideas on ... (*name of study*). Tonight we will be looking at Study One

- B. Then invite the members to introduce themselves saying:
- ◆ who I am;
 - ◆ why I'm here;
 - ◆ what I hope to get out of the program.

Lead yourself by giving a short response to each of the three areas. Then invite each of the others to do likewise. Don't worry if some respond to only one or two of the areas.

- C. Then distribute copies of the program.

Encourage participants to listen to one another's ideas with respect.

3. Opening Devotion

- A. You may wish to play some music quietly in the background and give the group a few moments to reflect on the opening devotion. Then call for volunteers to lead it.
- B. You might like to choose an appropriate song for the group to share

4. Reflection on the Topic

Invite a couple of people to read the teaching. Encourage the readers to pause between each section.

5. Discussion

Allow a few minutes of quiet time to reflect on the questions. Encourage participants to share responses to each question but there is to be no pressure put on anyone to speak. Be sure to make some response to each speaker if only to say e.g. "Thank you John". This makes sure the participant feels that he / she has been heard.

6. Closure

Thank the participants for their participation. Check to ensure venue is right for next session.

Closing Devotion

Cuppa

Christians in Dialogue

Queensland Churches Together,
PO Box 2096, Toowong Q 4066

Telephone: 07 3369 6792

Email: admin@qct.org.au

Website: www.qct.org.au



The Faith We Confess

EVALUATION FORM

The group leader invites the participants to complete the Evaluation Form at the end of the fourth study.

1. What did you appreciate about these studies?

2. What aspects of these studies did you find difficult?

3. What was the greatest challenge for you and your Church?

4. What topics would you like *Christians in Dialogue* to cover in future?

The Planning Committee invites the leader to respond to the two questions below.

1. Name of your group, each Church represented, and the number of people present from each denomination.

2. Generally speaking, how fully did participants enter into the discussion?

Thank you for your response.

Christians in Dialogue - Queensland Churches Together, PO Box 2096 Toowong Q 4066
Telephone: (07) 3369 6792 Email: admin@qct.org.au www.qct.org.au



The Faith We Confess: The Nicene Creed

SESSION 1: How Did We Get the Creeds?

Reflection on the Topic

1. In the New Testament, we find a number of statements which are clearly confessions of faith in use in early Christian communities. They vary from the very simple to the more complex. Here are some examples:

- “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor 12:3)
- “if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Rom 10:9)

“that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.” (1 Cor 15:3-5)

2. Although there are no creeds as such in the New Testament, there is significant material which points us to the major themes of the Christian faith. The book of Acts in particular provides examples of early Christian preaching. A good example is Acts 10:36-40, a sermon which Peter preached at Caesarea:

You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear...’

3. In the Early Church, Christians made profession of their faith when they were baptised. These baptismal formulae were in the form of question and answer, and became the first creeds. Hippolytus of Rome, writing at the end of the second century has left us a description of what happened at a baptism at Rome:

¹²When each of them to be baptized has gone down into the water, the one baptizing shall lay hands on each of them, asking, "Do you believe in God the Father Almighty?" ¹³And the one being baptized shall answer, "I believe." ¹⁴He shall then baptize each of them once, laying his hand upon each of their heads. ¹⁵Then he shall ask, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died, and rose on the third day living from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, the one coming to judge the living and the dead?" ¹⁶When each has answered, "I believe," he shall baptize a second time. ¹⁷Then he shall ask, "Do you believe in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Church and the resurrection of the flesh?"

¹⁸Then each being baptized shall answer, "I believe." And thus let him baptize the third time.¹

4. Despite its name, what we call the Apostles' Creed was not composed by the Apostles, but was a development of the creed used at Rome. In the West it became the profession of faith associated with baptism, as we note in the quote from Hippolytus above.
5. Traditionally, another function of creeds has been to express the faith of the Church and, by so doing, to distinguish believers from others. Almost all churches today assume that some explicit expression of faith is a criterion for belonging to the Church, and the creed has been a standard for orthodoxy. The Society of Friends (Quakers) is one Christian group who reject the use of creeds precisely because they see creeds as creating divisions.
6. The Nicene Creed - or to give its full name, the Nicene Constantinopolitan Creed - was developed at a time when Christians struggled with their understanding of the nature of God especially the relationship between the Father and the Son. One of the main catalysts for defining the teaching of the Christian Church about God was a controversy in the early fourth century about whether the Father and Son were equal. Arius was a priest in the northern Egyptian town of Alexandria. In about 318, Arius maintained that Jesus Christ was created by the Father, and therefore was not equal with the Father. The dispute developed into a widespread controversy over the relationship between the Father and the Son. At the council of bishops convened by the Emperor Constantine in 325 at Nicea to resolve the dispute, the bishops composed a creed which described this relationship. At another council convened at Constantinople in 381 the creed of Nicea was made more explicit, and affirmed that the Father and the Son are not only of 'similar' being, but of 'one' being.

It is this creed which is now commonly called the Nicene Creed. This is the only creed which today is shared by churches of the East and the West, including the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and most Protestant churches.
7. The fundamental use of the Christian creed today is as an element of worship. In the Nicene Creed the worshipping community expresses what it is that the worshippers believe. Indeed, the Nicene Creed begins "*We believe....*" whereas the Apostles Creed begins "*I believe....*" because of its original use as a part of the celebration of baptism. The faith being articulated in the Nicene Creed is not only the personal belief of the individual but it is the common faith of the Church across national and denominational borders. It is first and foremost the whole Church's faith which is being affirmed. A statement of common faith is a reminder to worshippers that they are part of the universal church.
8. The ongoing importance of the Nicene Creed in ecumenical discussions is that it:
 - has been more universally received than any other symbol of the faith, as a normative expression of the essential content of the apostolic faith,
 - is part of the historical heritage of contemporary Christianity,
 - has been in liturgical use through the centuries to express the one faith of the Church.

¹ The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, 21. <http://www.bombaxo.com/hippolytus.html>. Accessed 24th August, 2011.

9. In sharing the Nicene Creed, each church community is called to recognise:
- the apostolic faith in its own life and practice,
 - the need for repentance and renewal as a consequence of seeing where they are not faithful to the apostolic faith,
 - other churches as churches where the apostolic faith is proclaimed and confessed.²

Questions for Discussion

1. **Which creeds or confessions does your denomination or local church use, and how does it use them?**
2. **What are some of the different beliefs which today divide the churches?**
3. **How are these beliefs addressed in the Nicene Creed?**
4. **In what ways are you or your faith community affirmed or challenged by today's study?**
5. **What has been of most significance to you in your discussions?**

² Ibid., Introduction C 18

CHRISTIANS IN DIALOGUE

The Faith We Confess

SESSION 2: We believe in one God: The Father

Reflection on the Topic

1. The first of the three sections of the Creed expresses the Christian belief in one God who is
 - Father,
 - almighty,
 - and the maker of all that is in heaven and earth.
2. As long as the early church remained in Palestine the belief that God was the only God was taken for granted by the followers of Christ. Together with the Jewish religion, the early Christians affirmed the existence of one true God. They affirmed the Jewish saying of Deuteronomy 6:4-5:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. (The Islamic faith later emerged as a third major monotheistic religion.)

3. When the church began to spread to the Greek and Roman world it came into contact with religions which believed in a number of gods. Many who became Christians, particularly after Christianity became the officially recognised religion in the Roman Empire, had to move from belief in a number of gods to belief in one God. While Christianity affirms belief in one God, belief in a number of gods continues to be real for followers of a number of world religions today, including followers of Hinduism and Buddhism.
4. The image of God as Father is clearly taught by Jesus in the New Testament. He tells his followers to address God as our “Father in heaven,” And he himself addresses God as *Abba*, the familiar Aramaic term for Father. The God of Christians is a personal God who has an intimate relationship with all his sons and daughters. This image of God is very much a close and familiar one, suggesting his closeness and accessibility rather than distance from his people. The image of fatherhood as used by Jesus became the standard Christian concept as may be seen in Paul’s letter to the Romans 8:14-17.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ— if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

5. While masculine images of God predominate in the scriptures, and it is common to use the male pronoun ‘he’ to speak of God, Christians do not believe God to be male. Indeed there are images of God as mother in both the Old and the New Testaments. One example is in Isaiah 66:13: As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you;

you shall be comforted in Jerusalem. It is likewise important to note that Jesus' expression of God's parental concern for his people employs feminine as well as masculine imagery as when he compared himself to a mother hen trying to shelter her brood under her wing in Luke 13:34:

'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!'

6. For Christians, the image of God as Father has its origin very much in his relationship to the Son, and Jesus continues the image to show God's love for all human beings. It is from this starting point of God's love that we can understand the Nicene Creed's description of God as 'almighty.' When Christians describe God as almighty we mean that he is all powerful. The main manifestation of God's power is in redeeming his people. This relationship of loving concern is suggested in 2 Cor 6:18: 'and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.'
7. The idea of God as almighty is thus not meant to suggest God is a tyrant who always gets his own way. Indeed the existence of evil in our world clearly shows the world does not always run according to God's will. God allows free will in people and creatures, and even the existence of what we call natural disasters suggests the world itself does not run according to God's hopes and plans for it. Instead of enforcing his rule, God overcomes evil with love, by the death and resurrection of Jesus.
8. The description of God as maker of all things was included in the Nicene Creed in response to those groups in the early centuries of the church who, influenced by Greek philosophy, believed that God was too perfect to have been responsible for creating this world with all its imperfections. They thought that the world must have been created by some inferior god. Their reasoning led them to believe that the ultimate God must be remote from this world and was for most people unknowable. This heresy, called gnosticism, was so widespread that it nearly extinguished the Christian concept of God altogether.
9. Today Christians are challenged to look more carefully at their belief in God as creator. When we affirm belief in God "the maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible" we are not only affirming something about the past, about the beginning of all things. God continues to care for his world, and it continues only by his help and grace. Today it is a matter of urgency to focus on the care of God's creation which is being put in increasing jeopardy by the exploitation of nature through pollution and the destruction of the environment. Christians are called to cooperation with God in preserving and renewing his good creation.

Questions for Discussion

- 1. What range of worldviews are you aware of which acknowledge one God, a number of gods, or no god at all?**
- 2. How is it possible to speak of God as Father in an age of equality of the sexes or with bad experiences of our own fathers?**
- 3. How do you reconcile your belief in an all-powerful God with your experience of evil in the world?**
- 4. What for you is the significance of the Christian doctrine of creation in the light of ecological challenges?**

CHRISTIANS IN DIALOGUE

The Faith We Confess

SESSION 3: We believe in Jesus Christ: God's only Son

Reflection on the Topic

1. What is said about Jesus Christ in the second, and the longest, section of the Nicene Creed will be familiar to those who know the New Testament story of Jesus. Most of the phrases sound as if they were taken directly from the New Testament. For example, 1 Corinthians 8:6 speaks about one Lord, John 3:16 speaks about the only Son of God, and the pre-existence of Jesus before creation comes out clearly in John 1: 1-18. The metaphor of light by which Jesus Christ can be called light from light is one of the commonest in the bible. An early example is Isaiah 9:2.
2. The expression, "of one being with the Father," is the only statement about Jesus Christ in the Creed which cannot be found in the New Testament. It represents the efforts of the Early Church to make clear the nature of the relationship between the Father and the Son in the face of the Arian heresy. Against Arius, the Creed stresses that there was no time when God existed without a Son. God is not God independently of being Father. God is not God in any other way than as Father and Son in relationship. Thus Jesus' birth represents the incarnation of the pre-existent Son.
3. As well as affirming his full divinity, the Creed also insists on Jesus Christ's true humanity. God the Son became a real human being. He shared with us fully the human condition. He lived on the same earth as we do. He had an historical existence in time and place (Lk 2: 1-2), and was born of a human mother (Lk 2: 7). Like us Jesus endured the limitation of physical life. He was born into a human family (Lk 18: 9). Jesus Christ lived out his life in the circle of a human family, his friends, and those whose lives his ministry touched. Finally, in conflict with the oppressive forces of the Roman Empire, he came to his death.
4. The Church's affirmation in the Creed that Jesus Christ is both God and human cannot be fully explained. It will always remain a mystery of faith. As Christians, however, we need to keep a balance between these two aspects of the person of Jesus Christ, clearly recognising both his human and divine natures, while being careful not to submerge one in the other.
5. The 431 Council of Ephesus affirmed Mary, as the mother of Jesus who is God, to be 'theotokos' mother of God. Christians continue to affirm her reliance on God and her obedience to God's word as a wonderful example to the church. While different churches have differing understandings of the relative importance of the Mother of Jesus Christ, she does have a unique role in Christian history. Her obedience to God was the vehicle through which Jesus was born of a human mother, and as such is truly human.
6. The Creed affirms Jesus became a human being for a clear reason: 'for us and for our salvation.' While his teaching and ministry, his claim to be God and act in God's stead, could in a real sense be somewhat ambiguous, God raising him from the dead confirmed him to be Lord over all and victor over evil and suffering. Jesus destroyed the power of death, and took away our guilt. The human life of Jesus Christ, lived in

solidarity with humanity in general, and with human suffering in particular, is a concrete model for Christian living.

7. The Creed also recounts that 'For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.' With his resurrection and ascension, his work of salvation is complete. Paul's reflection on these events clearly states that 'Christ died for our sins,' (1 Cor 15:3), and are ones in which 'God reconciles us to himself.' (2 Cor 5:18).
8. Jesus proclaimed the impending arrival of God's kingdom on earth. Healing the sick and preaching good news to the poor were signs of this kingdom breaking into the here and now. United with Christ in his resurrection through faith and baptism, Christians know and are able to participate in the reign of Christ now through forgiveness and healing, justice and care for the outsider. Christians await a return of Christ, when all things will be made new once and for all.
9. In proclaiming that Christ will come again we affirm that history will not end in chaos, or just move to a natural conclusion, but that it will end with the coming of the one in whom it had its beginning. Christ will come again in glory, in the power and authority of God for the judgement of the world. While a judgement can bring a sense of dread and fear, Christians can be confident in the fact that Christ himself is our advocate and has made the perfect sacrifice for us.
10. Only God's kingdom will last forever. Christians expose as false philosophies or ideologies claiming to embody the ultimate meaning of life. Rather we seek to remind current powers of their final destiny, under the ruler of all creation.

Questions for Discussion

1. **What difference does it make in your life that Jesus Christ is divine and that he is human?**
2. **How does their common faith in Jesus Christ hold out hope for greater reconciliation among Christians of different racial and national backgrounds?**
3. **What do you believe about Mary? How is this belief reflected in your life? What does your Church affirm about Mary?**
4. **How do you think about the second coming of Christ? What is its importance in your Church? How does it influence your life?**

CHRISTIANS IN DIALOGUE

The Faith We Confess

SESSION 4: Holy Spirit and the Church

Reflection on the Topic

1. Following Jesus' resurrection in John's gospel we are told that Jesus greeted the disciples, saying "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." Then he breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained" (Jn 20:21-23). Jesus had previously told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would be sent in his name by the Father and that he would teach them all things and would help them to remember and understand what Jesus had taught them (Jn 14:26).
2. The most fulsome account of the gift of the Holy Spirit is in the second chapter of Acts. At Pentecost the disciples were assembled when suddenly they heard a sound like a cyclone and tongues of flame appeared in the air which seemed to settle on their heads. "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech" (Act 2:4).
3. The New Testament makes it very clear that in the Holy Spirit the first Christians recognised that they were experiencing God in a different way than they had experienced either Jesus or the one that Jesus called Father. But it was God they were experiencing. They referred to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as equal but different persons. Paul concludes 2 Corinthians with "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor 13:13). This equality was also evident in early liturgical formulations like 'Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.' Baptism was performed in the name of the triune God. These all strongly suggest that the Holy Spirit was always considered by the Church to be an equal part of the divine Trinity.
4. The term the Creed uses of the Holy Spirit to affirm its divinity is 'Lord.' The Creed also acknowledges the lordship of the Spirit over all creation and history. As a divine person the Spirit is one with God the Lord, and one with Christ the Lord. Christians confess, too, that the Holy Spirit is the giver of all life. All that exists has life because of the gift of the Spirit of God. The Spirit also gives the new life in Christ: human beings are born again, made a new creation.
5. The Creed says that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. This is to distinguish the relationship of the Spirit to the Father from that of the Son to the Father. The only Son of God is eternally begotten of the Father, whereas the Creed describes the relationship as a going out of or a proceeding. This procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father is to be understood not as an event of separation in history, but as an eternal relationship.
6. Most Western churches use a form of the Nicene Creed which says the Holy Spirit proceeds 'from the Father and the Son.' The Church in the West added these words because it wanted to insist on the equality of the Father and the Son. It was an attempt to clarify the wording of the Creed. The Church in the East found the *filioque*, as this

addition to the original Creed was called, unacceptable. They said that adding the words “and from the Son” would mean that the Creed would be nullifying the personal distinction between the Father and his only begotten Son. Western Christians had from an early time thought about the Holy Spirit as issuing from the mutual love of the Father and the Son. That has tended to mean, however, that the Holy Spirit is thought of as proceeding from a mutual relationship of the Father and the Son whereas the Father, who is the Godhead, is the source of both the Son and the Spirit in eternity. Eastern and Western Churches are now seeking ways of explaining these different understandings of this mystery to each other.

7. At first sight it appears that the Creed ended its description of the Holy Spirit with the words “he has spoken through the prophets” and then begins to talk about other things. These topics which the Creed now turns to, however, all have to do with the activities of the Holy Spirit. Indeed faith itself is impossible without the Holy Spirit. According to the Creed there is an indissoluble link between the work of God in Jesus Christ through the Spirit and the reality of the Church. The Church is seen to have its origin, life and unity in the communion of the Trinity. For the early Christians it became clear that it was through the preaching and witness of their communities that the good news of salvation was to be offered to all people. This is why the Creed links confessing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to confessing the Church.
8. The Creed affirms the Church to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic. These marks can be understood only in relation to the persons of the Trinity themselves. They are one and undivided. The Church is one because it participates in the fellowship of the Trinity. The Church is holy because it belongs to the Holy One. It is catholic, which means universal and complete in time and space, because it is the gift of God for all people, in spite of their varying nationality, race, language etc. It is apostolic in its commitment to the apostolic gospel of God’s grace in Jesus Christ.
9. Baptism is acknowledged as entry into God’s church, and actual participation in the mystery of salvation. Many denominations accept without reservation baptism in the name of the Triune God performed in each other’s communities.
10. The Church awaits the glorious return of its Lord, Jesus Christ. It is oriented towards the coming kingdom. God’s plan of salvation has not yet reached its completion, yet the church already experiences it today. Hence the church lives as a prophetic sign, as the means of God’s loving presence in the world, existing for the world God loves.

Questions for Discussion

- 1. How does your church recognise the action of the Holy Spirit in its life? Do you hear much about the Holy Spirit in the preaching in your church? What challenges and commonalities are there between your church and Pentecostal communities?**
- 2. The Creed states that like the Holy Trinity, the church is undivided. In reality we experience something different. What is the gift and challenge before us? What could we do to make our unity more visible?**
- 3. How were you taught about the Trinity when you were a child? Is this still the way that you think about the Trinity? How does believing that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit shape your faith and life?**
- 4. If you were asked to write a Creed which all Christians could affirm today what changes, if any, would you make to the Nicene Creed? Are there new challenges the church needs to address in talking about God?**