

6. How else do we communicate what the Church believes?

“The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church worshipping one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation. Led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer, and the ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.”

from the preface to the Declaration of Assent
made by Anglican clergy at ordination,
and when taking up a new post.

The Creeds are foundational documents of the Christian faith, shared by all Denominations.

- How else do we learn what the Church teaches?
- What other denominations or traditions are you aware of?
- Is it important to you to have a “creed” at all?
- Is there something missing? Something you believe about God, but not mentioned in church?

7. Next week...

In the group, talk about what you would like to discover next week.
You can set the agenda...

In the Temple Serving God

Session I: What We Say

1. What do we believe?

In the group (or in small groups), spend a few minutes discussing what Christians believe.

- What (if anything) is essential to the Christian faith?
- Is there something really central to your own belief? Something you would never give up?
- What do you find confusing?
- What *don't* you believe? Is there anything you struggle with, or want to reject, in the Christian faith?

2. Talking about beliefs

Alistair Burnett interviews Michael Foot during the 1983 General Election campaign. The topic is nuclear disarmament.

- What does Foot believe about nuclear weapons?
- How does he believe that public opinion is best understood?
- What does he think the country wants?
- And how does he try to persuade us?

How do you feel when watching this interview?

3. Deciding what we believe

How does the church make decisions?

“And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, [they] and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. When they came to Jerusalem, [...] they met together to consider this matter.”

see Acts 15:1 — 6

4. Controversies, councils, and creeds...

Throughout her history, representatives of the Church have met to disagree, debate and discuss, seeking God's truth and God's will.

5. Arius, Athanasius, and Constantine: The Council of Nicea and the identity of Jesus

*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 from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.*

*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 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 worshipped 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.*