



# God or Man: The Nicene Creed

## SUPPLIES Needed



### TO PRINT:

- Large Memory Verse to hold up (1 copy)\*

### TO GATHER:

- Hymnal/lyrics for songs\* (*Optional: guitar or music to sing along with*)
- Basket for offering\*
- Supplies needed for Hearing the Word activities: Deck of cards, bandana, hat, three pennies per child, blank sheet of paper for each child, and lots of stickers

### OPTIONAL:

- Kid's Activity Sheet (1 copy/child)
- Elements of Worship Icons\* (*Found in the introduction section.*)

*\*These items will be needed every week.*

## Note this...

Before class, prepare a "magic trick" to show students during the lesson time.

## LEADER'S Review

I hate magicians. I can't stand the fact that I don't know how they perform their tricks. How did they get the card into someone's wallet? How do they disappear? How do they perform those crazy things?!

I know the tricks aren't real, but sometimes I wonder if the magicians are possessed by something. I know it sounds nuts. How could they make these different things happen?

I'm sure during Jesus's time the religious leaders were asking the same questions amongst themselves. They were certain Jesus was demon possessed and was working for the enemy against God. However, as Jesus continually pointed out, He was working to bring glory to the Father.

Our lives are often the same. Recently a six-year-old told me she was convinced that it would take 1,000 years for God to change the heart of a friend who was being cruel. I had to ask her if she believed that God could perform miracles. Although she agreed, she still thought it impossible to change that one person.

We have great difficulties believing that our Jesus is God, God enough to perform even the most daunting miracles. Yet He changes our hearts each and every day. So, for us, the question remains, is He God or man? Or is He the God-Man?

*When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,  
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.*

— "How Firm a Foundation"





## Reading of the Word

*Read Scripture. (1-2 minutes)*

John 8:48-59

<sup>48</sup> The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” <sup>49</sup> Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. <sup>50</sup> Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. <sup>51</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” <sup>52</sup> The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’” <sup>53</sup> Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?” <sup>54</sup> Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’” <sup>55</sup> But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. <sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” <sup>57</sup> So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” <sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” <sup>59</sup> So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.



## Prayer

*Have a prayer of thanksgiving that indeed Jesus was before Abraham, He was in the beginning. (1-2 minutes)*

Dear Lord, we praise You, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. You, Jesus, are eternal, from everlasting to everlasting. We thank You for all You have created and all You have promised. In Your precious name, we pray. Amen.



## Hearing the Word

*Teach the lesson to the children using the text below as a guide. (6-9 minutes for lesson; 15-20 minutes for activities)*

This month we are learning about the special writings which help us know and share about our faith. Last week we talked about *The Heidelberg Catechism*. Let's see what you remember.

### *Review Questions:*

- What was the question from *The Heidelberg Catechism* we talked about last week? *What is your only comfort in life and in death?*
- What is the one thing that really gives us comfort? *Knowing Jesus and following Him*
- What did it say about the things that happen to us, even about when our hair falls out? *God knows about it, and all of it works for our salvation.*
- What book of the Bible (with a long name) did we talk about last week? *Ecclesiastes*
- What is the only thing the author of *Ecclesiastes* said would bring us real comfort, joy, hope, and peace? *Knowing and following God.*

*(Hearing the Word—Continued)*

This week, we are talking about a different document that was written to help us know who Jesus was. It is called The Nicene Creed. This document was written in 325 A.D. That's 1700 years ago! It is closer to the time of Jesus than our time today, but the people were confused about who Jesus really was. Some said He was just God. Some said He was just man, and others said He was both God and man. People were very serious about this argument. They would even kill people over it. This wasn't a little thing.

Today, the argument continues. Some religions say Jesus was only a prophet—sent by God, but not God Himself. Some think Jesus was only a good man, not even sent by God, but just a man who was a good teacher. If He wasn't really a man, then He couldn't have died on the cross. If He isn't really God, then He couldn't forgive sins and be worthy of our praise and worship.

Today, we are going to study from the Bible, the truth, who Jesus was and still is. The Nicene Creed was written to answer the same question. The authors wanted to make sure people weren't confused about who Jesus is and that they worship Jesus in spirit and in truth.

Let's pray first: "Dear God, thank You for the men who wrote this creed and who wanted to make sure we know Jesus for who He is—both God and man. Help us to know who You are in our lives today. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen."

Have you ever seen a magician? Don't you wonder how they do those interesting tricks? Sometimes it seems like they have special powers to help them do those tricks, doesn't it? **Optional: Perform a card trick or any other magic trick for the children. You may need to invite someone who is good at this to perform several tricks for the kids.** As good as some magicians are, we know their tricks aren't real. They are illusions, tricks used to make things seem real. That's why magicians are often called illusionists.

A long time ago people thought that there were people who had real "super" powers. They believed these people were supernatural—able to control how things moved and were formed. Those ancient illusionists used tricks to fool others into following them. (Remember, magic tricks aren't magic or real. They are just tricks. They are things people make happen with a twist of their wrist or a flick of their hand.) Sometimes those people who fooled others caused a lot of hurt to innocent people. They didn't want to do good for others. They just wanted power over others.

While Jesus was here on earth, some people thought He was like that. The religious leaders were sure Jesus's miracles were just tricks the devil made happen through Jesus. They were sure Jesus was just a man, working for the enemy. Instead of believing Jesus was God, the leaders were scared of Him, because He did many powerful things and was taking away their influence over people.

- Turned water into wine
- Healed sick people—lepers, blind men, a crippled man
- Calmed the storm
- Fed the 5,000
- Walked on water
- Helped fishermen catch fish
- He rose from the dead

*(Hearing the Word—Continued)*

Let's talk about some of the things Jesus did while on earth. Can you tell me some of the miracles Jesus performed on earth? **(You may want to find pictures to show here to prompt their memories)**

All these were amazing things to do. And if Jesus weren't God, it would be hard to determine how He did these things. Our Bible story today told about a time when those fearful leaders questioned Jesus about His actions. They wanted to trick Him, so they could arrest Him for causing problems. Jesus told them that He was only bringing glory to the Father who had sent Him. The leaders just couldn't accept it, and they tried to kill Jesus!

Three hundred years later, after Jesus had returned to heaven and churches were growing all throughout the world, the same debate began to rage about the deity of Christ. (The deity of Christ means that Jesus is God.) Just like the people in Jesus's time, the people 300 years later couldn't agree whether Jesus was just a man, just God, or both God and man. Because of the confusion, all the church leaders headed to a city in Turkey to debate the issue of whether Jesus was really the Son of God. They reached the conclusion which truly reflects what the Bible says, and they created a creed that expresses the reality of Jesus's divinity.

The Nicene Creed states: ***"[We believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, . . . true God from true God. . . of the same essence as the Father."***

The authors wanted to reinforce the fact that Jesus is from God, is God, and should be worshiped as God. This might not seem like a big deal to you, but people have killed people over this idea. They don't like that we believe Jesus is God and should be worshiped as God. There have always been people opposed to Jesus. Remember, while He was here on earth His identity was so frustrating to the religious leaders that they tried to stone Him! However, because Jesus was God, He knew what they wanted to do, and He fled before they were able to harm Him, for the time had not yet come for Him to die. Even today people still don't want to believe in Jesus and try to make others stop believing in Him.

Now, you might be saying to yourself, "I know that Jesus is God and Man. What is the big deal?" If you're thinking that, it's great you know who Jesus is, but if someone challenged what you believe, would you be able to stand firm? Is your faith in Jesus strong enough? Even Jesus's disciples, while He was still with them, struggled with having enough faith. Jesus had to chide them for it, saying, "You of little faith. If you have just a little more faith, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matt. 17:20).

Can you imagine having the faith to move a mountain? Well, when we walk with Jesus and believe He is the one true God, we have Jesus living in us, and He gives us the power to do the things He asks us to do, even share our faith with those who refuse to believe. No magician, no supernatural person, only Jesus can give us that strength, and only He can change hearts. Jesus is not only God, but He became a man to die for us and save us and to give us what only God can give—forgiveness and eternal life.