

THE CREED: I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER

Jan-Feb 2017

ABOUT THESE NOTES

Although I hope that they will be useful also to individuals, these notes are intended to assist disciple group leaders as they prepare to lead a session for their group. They will serve you best if you DO NOT SIMPLY SIT AND READ THEM TO YOUR GROUP. I am anticipating that the leader will look at them prayerfully in advance of the session, using them as a prompt or guide to your discussions according to the particular circumstances of your groups. I hope that they will prove useful as you invite the Holy Spirit to lead you into a deeper knowledge of what Jesus wants for your lives.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

8 th January I believe in God the Father: I believe...	15 th January I believe in God the Father: The Father, our Father	22 nd January I believe in God the Father: Creator of heaven and earth
John 20:1-18	1 John 2:28-3:10	John 1:1-11

5 th February I believe in God the Father: Holy Father, rebellious children	12 th February I believe in God the Father: Full of grace and truth	19 th February I believe in God the Father: who made an eternal covenant	26 th February I believe in God the Father: Committed Father, whatever the cost
John 1:9-14	John 1:9-18,32-4	Genesis 17:1-8	John 12:1-6,23-26

JOHN 1:9-18

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. **11** He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. **12** Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – **13** children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, 'This is the one I spoke about when I said, "He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me."') **16** Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. **17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED

These questions can be used as ice-breakers in the beginning OR interwoven between the questions below to draw the group into the discussion.

- If you could use two words to describe yourself, what would they be? I am full of... [encourage people to think positively, or you could do this as an exercise for each other.]
- Do you know anyone (apart from Jesus!) that you would describe as 'full of grace and truth?' What are they like? how does this show?
- What's the most gracious thing someone has ever done for you? How did it feel?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP

TRUTH

- How do we feel about truth?
 - Is truth easy or hard to find and stick to?
- What do you do if you're not sure something's true? Where or what is your 'go-to' truth teller?
- John's gospel is very concerned with truth - he uses the word 25 times. But truth didn't just start in the gospels. Break into pairs/threes and look up any of these passages:
 - Isaiah 45.18-20
 - Ps 15 1-3
 - Zech 8. 15-17
 - John 18.33-38
 - John 16.12-15
 - John 8. 31-32, 42-47
- What does each of these tell us about truth?
 - It may be helpful to substitute 'truth' for 'reality' to give a fresh perspective on these passages.
- Key point: When God sent Jesus, truth became a person - a living, breathing reality, not just an idea or concept.

GRACE

- "The religion of the Bible is a religion of grace or it is nothing. No grace, no gospel."
 - Do you agree?
 - Why is this important?
- What part has grace played in your journey of faith - can you give examples?
 - [bear in mind some might struggle to feel there's been much grace in their faith, or may not have yet understood or received grace from God.]
- The story of the prodigal son (Luke 15. 11-32) is a key example of the gracious love of the Father. Look at this if you have time and consider the following questions:
 - At what points does the Father show grace?
 - At what points is grace notably absent?
 - Why does the Father behave this way?

FOR PRAYER

- Receiving grace from God and accepting it is difficult!
 - Pray for courage and trust to ask for help from God, and to willingly accept the free grace he offers.
- Receiving grace from God can make us aware of our lack of grace with others.
 - Are there situations or people you want to ask God to help you to be gracious towards?