

# week 2

## the creed:

### i believe in jesus christ

### his only son, our lord



- Welcome (5-10 minutes)

Of the 10 facts below, 9 are true and 1 is incorrect. Can your group spot the incorrect fact?



1. The Bible, the world's best-selling book, is also the world's most shoplifted book.
2. Someone paid \$14,000 for the bra worn by Marilyn Monroe in the film 'Some Like It Hot'.
3. Your tongue is the only muscle in your body that is attached at only one end.
4. More than 1,000 different languages are spoken on the continent of Africa.
5. In the U.S.A over eleven thousand people (*up until the end of 2003*) have visited a

tortilla chip that appears to have the face of Jesus Christ burned into it?

6. A kiss lasting one minute can burn more than 100 calories.
7. Buckingham Palace has over six hundred rooms.
8. There was once an undersea post office in the Bahamas.
9. Abraham Lincoln's mother died when she drank the milk of a cow that grazed on poisonous snakeroot.
10. After the death of Albert Einstein his brain was removed by a pathologist and put in a jar for future study.



- Worship (10-15 minutes)



*The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.*

John 3: 35&36

- Word (50 minutes)

Read the Apostles' Creed together.

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our  
Lord.*

*He was conceived by the power of the  
Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.*

*He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.*

*He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
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.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

**Jesus is fully God and fully man. His human and divine origins are key to this creed. Any less than God, Jesus would be a fake, an impostor claiming power over sin and death. Any less than human, Jesus would have no authority to bear our sin, be the 'second Adam' and redeem creation. Fully God and fully human, Jesus comes among us and lives a sinless life culminating in trial, crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension.**

- **Talk together about the most important facts of who Jesus is and what he has done as far as the group sees them.**

a.

b.

c.

**Read the following passage:**



26. In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27. to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David.

The virgin's name was Mary. 28. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you." 29. Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. 31. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33. and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." 34. "How will this be," Mary

asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" 35. The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. 37. For nothing is impossible with God." 38. "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. **Luke 1 (NIV)**

**Jesus: "Conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary". This is possibly one of the most difficult statements about the Christian faith. It speaks of both human and divine origins. It challenges reason and opens debate about Mary's integrity and of Joseph's credibility. Did they not know that a baby's beginnings require the physical presence of man and woman?**

- **Talk about the virgin conception. Look at the different questions that Mary has and how they are answered. Is Mary 'forced' to be Jesus' mother? What makes you think this?**

**Luke writes his Gospel as an historian, concerned with getting the story right. He is not influenced by Jewish style nor with making sure Jesus is seen to be fulfilling Old Testament prophecies. John Stott suggests that:**

*(Luke) claims to have written historical truth. For the events surrounding the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus had been handed down by eyewitnesses. Luke had himself investigated them, and he was now writing them down, so that his readers might know the certainty of what they had been taught and had believed. (P 31 Stott)*

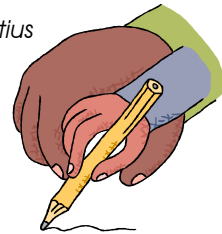
**There is much in historical non-Christian documentation that points to the real person of this Jesus who was a remarkable man, living over 2000 years ago in Palestine. Josephus was a Jewish historian, born around AD 37. He wrote in his *Antiquities*:**

*Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to himself both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was (the) Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principle men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them on the third day; as the prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him, And this tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.*

*Josephus did not use italics, but we have, because many scholars believe that those words were inserted later by devout Christians. But there is no textual evidence against either of Josephus' 'Jesus passages' and most scholars believe the rest to be authentic. (p147 Young)*

**Young also goes on to point out that the Roman historians Suetonius and Tacitus have written about Jesus. Non Christian sources which speak of Jesus agree on these statements as fact:**

- *Jesus of Nazareth was a real person who lived during the reign of Pontius Pilate*
- *He was a notable teacher*
- *He gained a reputation as a miracle worker*
- *Popular opinion about him was divided*
- *He offended the authorities*
- *He was executed by crucifixion*
- *His influence grew rapidly after his crucifixion (p148 Young)*



- **How would you describe Jesus to a person asking about your faith?**

**The Apostle's Creed describes Jesus, not only as his Son but as 'our Lord'. This is a term we often use in our prayers.**

- **After a *short* discussion about the term 'Lord', as you see it applying to Jesus;**



**Pray for each other, claiming Jesus' Lordship over the person in the words of the prayer.**

- **There are lots of hymn & song words that contain the word 'Lord.' As a group, think of and sing some of the verses/ choruses together.**

- **Witness (20 – 25 minutes)**

**Remind each other of the areas you committed to work on bringing ‘God back into the right perspective.’**

**Share progress with each other and pray for further development!**

**Read 2 Corinthians 11 verse 2, talk about how this affects your life of witness and then learn it ‘by heart’.**



- **Time for refreshments, you’ve earned them!**

Bibliography

John Stott, *The Incomparable Christ*, IVP, 2001

John Young with David Wilkinson, *The Case Against Christ*, Hodder Publishing, 2006

Ralph O Muncaster, *Examine the Evidence*, Harvest House, 2004

Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Luke*, BST, IVP, 1979