



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Find time to explore these questions as a family after each session.

Session 1

- Who or what has been the biggest influence (positive or negative) on your faith and beliefs?
- Do you ever have doubts about whether your beliefs are legitimate? If so, what sorts of doubts have you had? How did you respond to your doubts?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "Where do your beliefs come from and how do you know they're legitimate?"

Session 2

- What element of the Christian faith do you find easiest to believe? What element of the Christian faith do you find hardest to believe?
- Which beliefs are common among all Christians? About which beliefs do some Christians disagree?
- How would you sum up your Christian beliefs in one sentence?
- What makes stating your Christian beliefs easy or hard?

Session 3

- What is belief? What is faith? What is trust?
- What is the difference between belief and faith?
- Is *trust* a good word to describe what it means to believe or have faith in someone? Why or why not?

Session 4

- How do your Christian beliefs make you a different person from the person you would be if you weren't a Christian?
- In what specific ways do your beliefs directly affect how you live your life?
- What are the consequences of not having beliefs affect your life?



SESSION 1 FAITH STATEMENT

The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word: by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.

—Westminster Confession of Faith (6.078)

PARAPHRASED VERSION

The grace of faith, which enables God's people to believe in salvation, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; and is generally shaped by the ministry of the Word (ordained ministry): and which is also increased and strengthened by the administration of the sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper) and prayer.

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SESSION 2 FAITH STATEMENT

Question 22. What, then, must a Christian believe?

All that is promised us in the gospel, a summary of which is taught us in the articles of the Apostles' Creed, our universally acknowledged confession of faith.

—Heidelberg Catechism (4.022)

APOSTLES' CREED (ECUMENICAL VERSION)

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

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

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, 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, is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic [universal] church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

Amen.





CARDS



I believe it absolutely.

**Never thought about
it before now, but I
guess I believe it.**

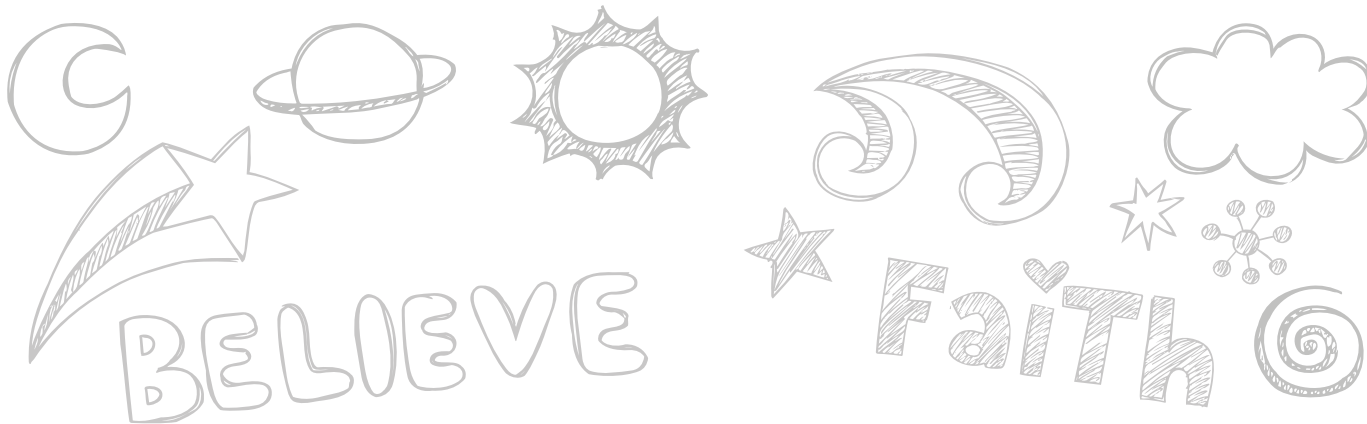
I don't get it.

**Hmmm, not sure
I can buy that.**

**Are you out of
your mind?**



CATECHISM EXCERPT



Question 5. What does a Christian believe?

All that is promised in the gospel. A summary is found in the Apostles' Creed, which affirms the main content of the Christian faith.

Question 6. What is the first article of the Apostles' Creed?

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

Question 7. What do you believe when you confess your faith in "God the Father Almighty"?

That God is a God of love, and that God's love is powerful beyond measure.

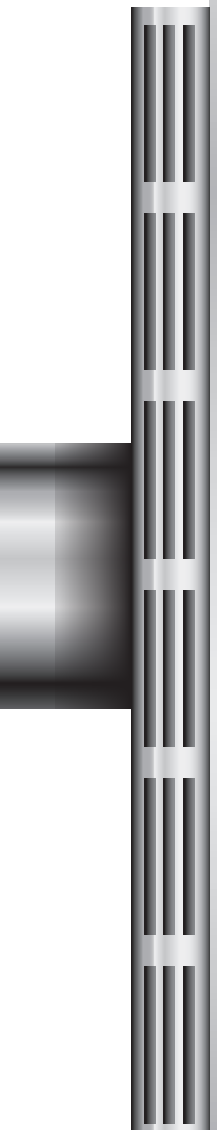


CHURCH SIGNS



First Presbyterian Church

**Ch __ch:
What's Missing?**

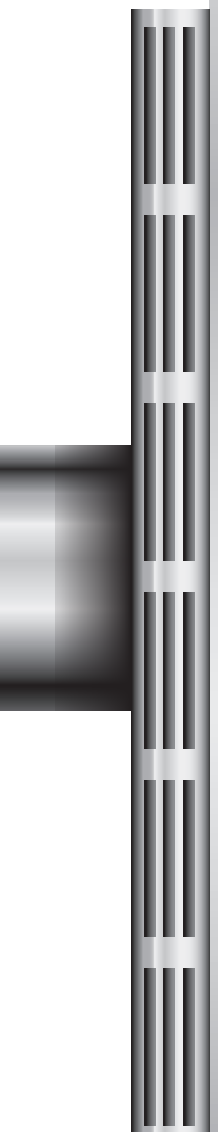




CHURCH SIGNS

First Presbyterian Church

**Jesus is the rizzle
for the sizzle.**

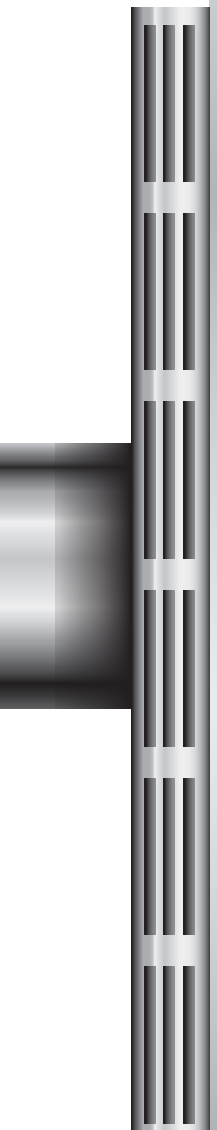


CHURCH SIGNS



First Presbyterian Church

**God answers
knee-mail.**

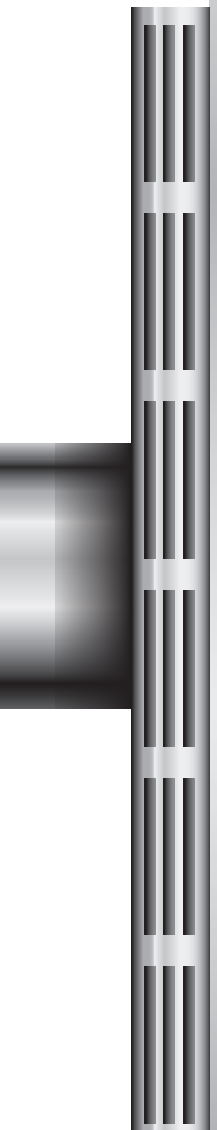


CHURCH SIGNS



First Presbyterian Church

**If God seems far
away, who moved?**

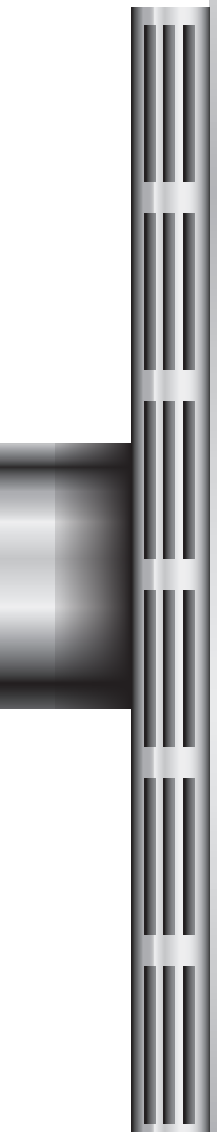


CHURCH SIGNS



First Presbyterian Church

**If God had
a refrigerator,
your picture
would be on it.**





JESUS BLANKED

As a group, fill in the blanks below without looking at a Bible. Then, create a skit that brings the story to life.

Jesus left that place and went away to _____.

Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a _____.

But he _____. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "_____
_____."

Jesus answered, "_____
_____."

But she came and knelt before Jesus, saying, "_____
_____."

Jesus answered, "_____
_____."

She said, "_____
_____."

Then Jesus answered her, "_____
_____."

And her daughter was healed instantly.



LITANY

Leader: In life and in death we belong to God.

Reader 1: Jesus went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

Reader 2: Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting,

All: "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David!"

Leader: In life and in death we belong to God.

Reader 3: Jesus went away and came to _____.

Reader 1: Just then a homeless man,

Reader 2: a single mother,

Reader 3: a banker, a lawyer, an insurance agent,

Leader: a Sunday school teacher,

Females: a high school student,

Males: a big brother, a little sister, a grandparent—

All: Just then they all came and kneeled before Jesus, crying out, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David!"

Leader: In life and in death, we belong to God.

All: Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,

Reader 1: whom alone we worship and serve.

—Based on Matthew 15:21–28 and A Brief Statement of Faith

Closing Prayer

God of grace, hear our prayer. All too often, when we try to speak, even when we shout, we feel ignored, dismissed, and insulted. But not by you. Fill us with your Spirit, we pray, so that we might keep speaking, even shouting, with faith that doesn't give up. Help us to trust in the truth that in life and in death, we belong to you. And thank you for listening. Amen.



LISTS

Works of the Flesh	Fruit of the Spirit
Sexual Immorality	Love
Moral Corruption	Joy
Doing Whatever Feels Good	Peace
Idolatry	Patience
Drug Use and Casting Spells	Kindness
Hate	Goodness
Fighting	Faithfulness
Obsession	Gentleness
Losing Your Temper	Self-control
Competitive Opposition	
Conflict	
Selfishness	
Group Rivalry	
Jealousy	
Drunkenness	
Partying	



Lists taken from the Common English Bible version of Galatians 5:19–22.



GALATIANS 5:13–25

(Common English Bible)

¹³ You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only don't let this freedom be an opportunity to indulge your selfish impulses, but serve each other through love. ¹⁴ All the Law has been fulfilled in a single statement: *Love your neighbor as yourself.* ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour each other, be careful that you don't get eaten up by each other!

¹⁶ I say be guided by the Spirit and you won't carry out your selfish desires. ¹⁷ A person's selfish desires are set against the Spirit, and the Spirit is set against one's selfish desires. They are opposed to each other, so you shouldn't do whatever you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are being led by the Spirit, you aren't under the Law. ¹⁹ The actions that are produced by selfish motives are obvious, since they include sexual immorality, moral corruption, doing whatever feels good, ²⁰ idolatry, drug use and casting spells, hate, fighting, obsession, losing your temper, competitive opposition, conflict, selfishness, group rivalry, ²¹ jealousy, drunkenness, partying, and other things like that. I warn you as I have already warned you, that those who do these kinds of things won't inherit God's kingdom.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against things like this. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified self with its passions and its desires.

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let's follow the Spirit.

Scripture taken from Common English Bible. © 2010 by Common English Bible.





SESSION 4 FAITH STATEMENT

The new life does not release people from conflict with unbelief, pride, lust, and fear. They still have to struggle with disheartening difficulties and problems. Nevertheless, as they mature in love and faithfulness in their life with Christ, they live in freedom and good cheer, bearing witness on good days and evil days, confident that the new life is pleasing to God and helpful to others.

—Confession of 1967
Inclusive language text (9.23)

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