

Theoacademy

BEING PRESBYTERIAN

PREPARATION FOR ORDERED MINISTRY

Session 7: A Brief Statement of Faith

Theocademy

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Getting started

Before watching the video, consider the following questions.

- Of what you've learned about the *Book of Confessions* so far, what has stood out to you the most?
- Have you ever written your own personal statement of faith before? If so, what was the occasion?

During the video

During the video, Dr. Shannon Craigo-Snell will be discussing the Brief Statement of Faith. You'll find it printed in its entirety here, along with space to take notes on any new insights you may learn about it.

In life and in death we belong to God.
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,
whom alone we worship and serve.

We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.
Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed
and blessing the children,
healing the sick
and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts,
forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.
Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
Jesus was crucified,
suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.
God raised this Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal.

We trust in God,
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

(Continued on next page)

In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image,
male and female, of every race and people,
to live as one community.

But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.
Ignoring God's commandments.
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth,
exploit neighbor and nature,
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.
We deserve God's condemnation.

Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.
In everlasting love,
the God of Abraham & Sarah chose a covenant people
to bless all families of the earth.

Hearing their cry,
God delivered the children of Israel
from the house of bondage.

Loving us still,
God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,
God is faithful still.

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God &
neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.

The same Spirit
who inspired the prophets and apostles
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,
engages us through the Word proclaimed,
claims us in the waters of baptism,
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,
and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.

In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and

Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death

Stating your faith

In the past two sessions, we've looked at what belief is and why it's important, and we've seen how our *Book of Confessions* translates our Christian beliefs into the language of specific times and contexts. Now it's your turn. This is an important time and context in your life – God has called you to a term of leadership within this church. And in order to help your sisters and brothers more deeply understand and express *their* faith, you need to understand and be able to express *yours*. Over the course of the next few pages, you'll find some of Christianity's key topics – they'll form the skeleton of your statement, which you can then flesh out with your own words. Feel free to add any other information that you think is important; these categories are merely suggestions.

God

- I believe God...
- I believe God...
- I believe God...
- I believe God...
- I believe God...

Jesus Christ

- I believe Jesus Christ...
- I believe Jesus Christ...
- I believe Jesus Christ...
- I believe Jesus Christ...
- I believe Jesus Christ...

Holy Spirit

- I believe the Holy Spirit...
- I believe the Holy Spirit...
- I believe the Holy Spirit...
- I believe the Holy Spirit...
- I believe the Holy Spirit...

Humanity

- I believe humans...
- I believe humans...
- I believe humans...
- I believe humans...
- I believe humans...

Creation

- I believe creation...
- I believe creation...
- I believe creation...
- I believe creation...

- I believe creation...

Sin

- I believe sin...
- I believe sin...
- I believe sin...
- I believe sin...
- I believe sin...

Salvation/Redemption/Reconciliation

- I believe...
- I believe...
- I believe...
- I believe...
- I believe...

Scripture

- I believe scripture...
- I believe scripture...
- I believe scripture...

- I believe scripture...
- I believe scripture...

The Church

- I believe the Church...
- I believe the Church...
- I believe the Church...
- I believe the Church...
- I believe the Church...

End times/things

- I believe...
- I believe...
- I believe...
- I believe...
- I believe...

Other ideas I want to include

- I believe...

Putting it together

Now, as you'll probably notice, very few (if any) statements of faith are merely lists of "I believe" declarations. They're crafted into paragraphs, and tend to follow some sort of narrative structure. So, as you form your statements into a statement, consider the following questions:

- Where do you want to start? Which of your beliefs lays the foundation for your others?
- How might you transition from one topic to another? What logical progression might you follow?
- What overall message (what "why") do you want to convey with this statement? How might you craft all your descriptions around that message?
- Where do you want to end? What idea do you want to leave people with?

Remember, this is a *rough draft*. It neither needs to be, nor *will* it be, perfect. Just start crafting, and you may be pleasantly surprised with what you end up with.

Personal reflection

After the session, complete the following statements.

- Of all the creeds, statements, and declarations in the *Book of Confessions*, I seem to resonate the most with:
- I found it (easy/difficult) to write my own statement of faith because: