

Church & One Baptism
Various Verses

*These questions are provided to lead the group in **applying** the teaching from Sunday. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you in being a doer of God's Word. Challenge each other and be vulnerable as God works IN and THROUGH you together.*

1. How have you engaged in the **Taste & See** October spiritual practice of thanksgiving? In what ways does thanksgiving help you experience God and be formed by him?

2. When you hear the word "church," what is the first thing that comes to mind: a building, an organization, a worship service, a bad experience, or something else? Why?

3. The Nicene Creed affirms that we are to believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and then it goes on to say that we should also believe in the Church. What does this convey about the importance of the Church? How does this compare to your view of the Church? How does church hurt affect the way we see the Church?

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. **The 4 Marks of the Church:**

4. ***one***: Read Romans 12:4-5 and Ephesians 2:14-16; 4:1-6, 29-31. Why is unity essential for a church? What are some things that tend to divide or create disunity in the Church? How can we keep secondary issues from becoming sources of division? From Ephesians 4:1-6, 29-31, what is one practical way you can contribute to the unity of our church?

5. ***holy***: Read Hebrews 10:10, 14; 12:14 and 1 Peter 1:1-2, 14-16. The word "holy" means "set apart, to be different." Does being holy mean being perfect? If not, what does it mean? If someone who doesn't follow Jesus spent time around our church community, what holy characteristics that make us different would they see in us? Is there an area of your life where you need to repent to become more holy (more like Jesus)?

6. ***catholic***: Read Matthew 28:19 and Revelation 5:9; 7:9. The word "catholic" means universal. Who makes up the true Church? How does remembering that we belong to the universal Church historically and globally change the way we view Christianity? How does this encourage your faith and how you see the church?

7. ***apostolic***: Read Acts 2:42, Ephesians 2:19-20, 2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2:2, and John 17:18; 20:21. Why is it important that we remain grounded in the apostles' teaching? What is the difference between simply attending a church and actively participating in the mission of the Church? The word "apostle" means "one who is sent." How can you be sent?

8. All four of these marks are essential. If any are missing from a congregation, it is not a true church. What can we do to strengthen each of these marks in our church? What can you do to grow in your love and devotion for our church?

9. ***We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.*** Read Ephesians 4:4-5 and Romans 6:3-4. How is baptism described? Baptism does not save us. It is a God-given sign of our identification with Jesus Christ and the forgiveness only found in him. Have you been baptized? If not, why not?

10. How can this group pray this week for our church, you, and your thanksgiving?

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one essence with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Adapted from the *Book of Common Prayer*, 1979.