

Session 1: GOD, THE HOLY TRINITY

'In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'

We begin with God, the creator of everything that exists, and the foundation of our own lives. Jesus Christ has told us that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our origin and our destiny is to share in the love between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

Almighty and eternal Father, You sent your Word to bring us truth and your Spirit to make us holy. Through them may we come to know the mystery of your life. Amen.



Fra Angelico. Baptism of Christ c.1441. Fresco, Museo di San Marco, Florence. © 2012. Photo SCALA, Florence.

At the Baptism of Jesus God shows us who he is

Scripture

And when Jesus had been baptised he at once came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And suddenly there was a voice from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.'

Matthew 3:16-17



1. Professing the Faith

We believe in one God – the Holy Trinity.

Activity 1

Look closely at the picture as the Scripture passage is read aloud.

- Who does God show himself to be?

At the Baptism of Jesus, God revealed himself:

- the Father in the voice from heaven (and in the cloud in the picture)
- the Son who has become one of us
- the Holy Spirit in the form of the dove

Through the words and actions of Jesus Christ we know that God is three divine Persons united in one Being. Because of this we call God the Holy Trinity.

God is love: he is three Persons united in one Being, in a relation of love. If God was one single, solitary person, how could he be love? We call God the 'Blessed' Trinity because he is a communion of perfect love which is perfect happiness. 'Blessed' is the word used in the Scriptures to describe the perfect happiness enjoyed by God in heaven which we are invited to share.

God chose to tell us who he is: God is Three in One; he is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father sends his Son and his Spirit to us in order to invite us and to make it possible for us to enter into his communion of love. This is the heart of our Christian faith.

At our own Baptism the Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – comes to us and makes a home in us: we become members of the Son Jesus Christ, beloved sons and daughters of the Father, filled with the active presence of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the beginning of our journey into the heart of the Holy Trinity.



3. Living the Faith

The Holy Trinity – the reason and the purpose of our existence.

Activity 3

Read the Scripture passage:

Then God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness...' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:26-27

- What do we learn about God from this passage?
- What do we learn about the human person?



2. Celebrating the Mass

We attend Mass so that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit can draw us ever deeper into their communion of love. And so on our part every Mass is an offering of praise to the Father, in the Son, through the Holy Spirit.

At the beginning of Mass we make the **Sign of the Cross** over our bodies.

- The Sign of the Cross reminds us that the One God is a loving Trinity of Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- The Sign of the Cross reminds us of the Cross on which Jesus Christ, God the Son, died. His death and resurrection save us from the binding and destructive power of sin. In making the Sign of the Cross, we place ourselves under the power and protection of his Cross that saves us.
- The Sign of the Cross reminds us that we are Christians, that we are filled with God the Holy Spirit. It is the sign of all who believe in Jesus Christ and have been baptised 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. When we make the Sign of the Cross using holy water, we are reminded of our baptism. God has made us his children.

Activity 2

Name the different times we make the Sign of the Cross when we go to Mass.

The Sign of the Cross is made in the *name* of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, not in their *names*, 'for there is only one God, the almighty Father, his only Son and the Holy Spirit: the Most Holy Trinity' (CCC 233).

When we mark the Sign of the Cross on our body

- we proclaim our faith in the Holy Trinity
- we acknowledge the saving Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- we remind ourselves that we belong to God and are members of the Church through our Baptism.

- God is a communion of Persons and yet he is one
- God has created us freely out of love
- We have been made in the image and likeness of God

Because God has made us like himself, we are persons. We are able to know and to love each other, and we are able to know and to love God. If God is a communion of Persons, and he has made us in his image and likeness, what are we made for?

From the moment of our conception, every second of our life, God is calling us to himself, to accept and share his life of happiness and love. This is why we have been created, why we exist. This is the **vocation** - the call - of every single human person. We respond to this call of God by loving him with all our heart, all our soul and all our might, and by our faith in Jesus Christ. We respond to his love with love. Each time we go to Mass, we are responding to the invitation of God to receive his life. The life of God in us enables us to love others as we love ourselves.





4. Praying with the Church

Think and Pray

- Reflect on God's love for you in creating you
- In the strength of the holy Spirit, entrust your life to him – he knows you through and through
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be a vehicle of God's love to your loved ones.

Read and Pray

*Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ.
Thus he chose us in Christ
before the world was made
to be holy and faultless before him in love,
Marking us out for himself beforehand,
to be adopted sons,
through Jesus Christ.*

(Ephesians 1:3-5)

Prayer

Pray together the Our Father.

This is a prayer given to us by God the Son, Jesus Christ.

We can pray it because God the Holy Spirit cries 'Abba, Father' in our heart.

*Help us to worship you,
One God in Three Persons,
By proclaiming and living our faith in you.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Anchoring your Family in the Faith

Make sure your children know **how** to make the Sign of the Cross, saying 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.

Teach them **when** to make the Sign of the Cross.

Explain to them the **meaning** of the Sign of the Cross.

Tell your children that they have a dignity given by God that can never be taken away; that they are willed and loved by God and that God has an amazing purpose for them: he is calling them to share his own life.

Teach your children to pray the *Glory Be* and the *Our Father* and make them your daily family prayers.

For further reading and prayer

Bible: Genesis 1-2; Matthew 17:1-7; John 17.

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: 37; 43; 44; 46-49; 66; 67; 358.