

Lesson 3 – The Unity and Trinity of God

Grades 6-8

Lesson Preparation:

Read Lesson 3 in the Baltimore Catechism. You will need to make sure to have a few Bibles on hand for this session. Also, make copies of the activity sheet for the students.

Opening Prayer:

Scripture: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth” John 14:15-17

Leader: God, as we learn about the mystery of the Trinity today, open our minds to understand, and give us the humility to know that while we can not fully understand, You call us to enter into a deeper relationship with You every day. Amen.

Together: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Opening:

Remind students that in the last session, we learned that although God does not oppose our human reason, He is above it. And His nature goes beyond what our reason can comprehend. This session is going to open with a story that tells how one of our most brilliant saints, St. Augustine, learned this lesson. Read the following story:

One day St. Augustine was walking on the beach contemplating the mystery of the Trinity. Then he saw a boy in front of him who had dug a hole in the sand and was going out to the sea again and again and bringing some water to pour into the hole. St. Augustine asked him, “What are you doing?” “I’m going to pour the entire ocean into this hole.” “That is impossible, the whole ocean will not fit in the hole you have made,” said St. Augustine. The boy replied, “It would be easier for

me to fit the entire ocean in this little hole than for you to fit the Trinity in your little brain.” Then the boy, who had really been an angel, vanished.

Explain to the students that the Trinity is a mystery and not even the brilliant St. Augustine could fit it entirely in his mind. You should define for them what is meant by a religious mystery. **A mystery is not something we can know nothing about; it is something we can not know everything about.** There are natural mysteries – mysteries of science. In a very real sense, every person is a mystery. Regardless of how well we know someone, we never know everything about another person. God, being above us, must be a mystery. We should not expect to be able to contain God in our limited minds. But mystery is beautiful. Because God is a mystery, we can always know more. Our relationship with Him is never stagnant. No matter how much we know, or how much we love, we will always be able to go deeper.

Watch the Lesson 3 Video on Catholic Brain

Comprehension Questions: *Note: These questions are asked after the video, just to check student comprehension. They are not discussion questions, but be sure students understand the answers to these questions before moving on*

1) How many Gods do we believe in?

One

2) How many Persons are there in God?

Three – the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit

3) Are all three Persons equally God?

Yes, they are

4) What is this mystery called?

The Blessed Trinity

Discussion Questions: *Note: These questions are for student discussion. The students should consider these questions and comment on them. There are some key points included in this lesson, after each question, that you can use to help guide their discussion toward truth. It’s important that the students think about and discuss these things, but that they don’t leave the discussion with false impressions about what is true.*

Before getting to the first discussion question, it is important to go over the following information:

Explain to the students that to understand the Trinity, we need to understand the distinction between a “nature” and a “person.” Everything has a nature. It answers the question, “What is that?” You are a human, so you have a human nature. Find some things in the classroom, and ask what the natures of them are. Examples: What nature does that chair have? Chair nature. What nature does your dog have? Dog nature.

So what nature does God have? Divine nature.

“Person” answers the question, “Who is that?” Just because something has a nature, does not mean it is a person. You are a person, but the chair, although it has a nature, is not a person.

God is three Persons: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. However, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, although they are three Persons, have one Divine Nature.

1) Why can we not fully understand the Trinity?

This is very difficult for us to relate to because we each have our own human nature. Each person has a separate human nature. But each Divine Person has the same Divine Nature, which is why there is only one God. If this is hard to comprehend, it should be; remember St. Augustine in our story. Human beings just aren't made this way. But remember, we should not expect God to have the same limitations that we do. There is no reason God can not be three Persons, yet only one Divine Nature.

2) What are some other natural or supernatural mysteries?

Answers may vary

Go Deeper:

Break the students into three groups. Make sure each group has a Bible. Give each group one of the following Bible passages. They should look up the passage and discuss in their small groups how each passage reveals the Trinity. After 5-7 minutes, each of the three groups should read their passage aloud and share what they discussed – how it reveals the Trinity. Fill in any gaps yourself.

- 1) Matthew 28:18-20 – *In this passage, as Jesus sends His Apostles, He tells them to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Not only does He mention the three Persons of the Trinity, notice they are to baptize in the “name,” singular, of the three Persons, showing their unity of nature.*
- 2) Matthew 3:13-17 – *At Jesus’s baptism, we see all three Persons of the Trinity: the Son, Jesus being baptized; the Spirit, coming in the form of a dove; the Father, whose Voice comes from Heaven.*
- 3) John 14:6-10 – *In this passage, Jesus demonstrates the distinctness of Him and the Father, yet also the profound unity.*

Activity:

The students can fill in the classic diagram of the Trinity. They should use the example in the catechism. When they finish, they can color it. As a challenge, ask them to go home and explain the diagram to a parent or sibling.

Closing Prayer:

Leader: God, in your very nature, as a Trinity, You are love. We thank You for revealing yourself to us, and for inviting us to share in your love. Amen.

Together: 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.