

The Trinity: One God in Three Persons

Quarter 1 | Lesson 1 | Spiritual Formation

1. **Connecting:** Examine clues about the Trinity.
2. **Teaching:** Read and discuss the stories of Jesus' baptism and the creation story (Matthew 3:13–17; Genesis 1:26).
3. **Responding:** Have the opportunity to respond to God's invitation.

SUPPLIES

- Bibles

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse poster
- Paper
- Pencils
- Board or large paper and markers
- *The Action Bible* image of Jesus' baptism
- Student Pages

Teacher Devotion

*Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness."
Genesis 1:26*

The first time we see the Trinity is at creation. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work together to create the physical world and every living thing. Many Christians believe that the first conversation between the Three Persons of the Trinity is recorded in Genesis 1:26: "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness." Throughout the Old Testament, God tells His people that He is One God (Deuteronomy 6:4). And, yet, mysteriously, He is also Three.

You and your students are invited into something incredible—a relationship that existed before time began! As you present this invitation to your students, help them to see how each Person of the Trinity is different from the others and also how each ministers to believers.

Think of the last time God the Father, who is the perfect Parent, lovingly guided or gently disciplined you. Remember the last time Jesus, the sympathetic High Priest and King, showed you He was your Friend and Brother. And let the Holy Spirit remind you of the last time He worked in your life as an ever-present Comforter and Guide. Each Person of the Trinity offers something we desperately need—an eternal relationship with the Triune God. Thank Him for this precious gift.

Teacher Tip: In many countries, young people have grown up with the idea of either many gods or no god at all. Sometimes aspects of nature are worshipped and feared as gods. When students hear

about a loving Jesus, they may simply accept Him and add Him to their list of gods. The same holds true for God the Father and the Holy Spirit. We do not want this to happen. We are wrestling with this big issue to help students start answering questions about what they believe. Though the Trinity is a very fundamental Christian belief, it is also very abstract. Do not be discouraged if your students do not understand it at first, and be sure to encourage them if they are having trouble understanding. Even great theologians wrestle with the mystery of the Trinity because God is completely beyond our comprehension. It may even help to let your students know that you have questions about the Trinity as well. This will begin to establish a relationship of open sharing and let them know that you are on the journey of discovery with them.

Lesson Time

1. Connecting: Examine clues about the Trinity.

Before class, prepare a few “Who Am I?” riddles using leaders or public figures your students would know. Use the “Who Am I?” riddle below to help you write your own riddles. Share the riddles with the students, and invite them to try to guess the people the clues are describing.

Optional:

Give each student a pencil and a piece of paper. Have them write their names on 1 side of the paper and 5 clues about themselves on the other side. Some clues can be basic, such as “I am a boy,” while others can be more specific, such as “I have 1 sister.” When the students have finished writing their clues, shuffle their papers, and hang them on the wall with the clues facing forward. Let students read each other’s clues and try to guess whose name is on the back of each paper.

End of Option

After the students have made their guesses, reveal which person is behind each set of clues. Tell them that you are now going to read one more “Who Am I?” Read these clues:

Who Am I?

1. I am One.
2. I am also Three.
3. I live in heaven.
4. I also live in humans.
5. I invite humans to have a relationship with Me.

Teacher Tip: You may write these clues on a piece of paper and write the answer on the reverse side. Show the clues to the students so they can make their guesses. Then reveal the answer by turning the paper over.

- **Does anyone know who these clues are describing?**

The Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

- **Have you heard about the Trinity before? What do you know about the Trinity?**

Allow students to share their thoughts. If they express ideas that aren’t correct, you will have an opportunity to correct them during the lesson.

Let’s talk about these clues. “I am One.” God tells us in the Bible that He is One God. Some religions say there are many gods, but the Bible says there is only one God—and He wants us to be in relationship with Him.

The next clue says, “I am also Three.” We just learned that God is One. This may seem confusing, but the Bible also tells us that God is three Persons—God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit—all of whom, as One, are inviting you into a loving relationship.

How can this God be three Persons at the same time? That fact can be difficult to understand. Each Person of the Trinity has a different role, but they are still one God. Though God is bigger than anything we can possibly comprehend, here is a very simple way to explain how three can be one. There are 3 different aspects of time—the past, the present, and the future. Each is different, but they are all still time. Of course, this example is very limited. Time can only exist in one form at each moment, but God is always Three in One. And He is greater than we can ever imagine!

Optional: If possible, show students the image of Jesus’ baptism from *The Action Bible*.

The third clue is: “I live in heaven.” God the Father and Jesus live in heaven. The fourth clue is: “I also live in humans.”

- Which Person of the Trinity do you think could live inside of a human being?

The Holy Spirit

And the fifth and most amazing clue says: “I invite humans to have a relationship with Me.” It is incredible that a powerful heavenly Father, a loving Son, and a comforting Holy Spirit would want to be with us. But it is true!

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, have the students fill in the diagram.

Show the students the Trinity diagram that is included with this lesson. If possible, draw it on the board or a large paper for the class.

Through the three Persons of the Trinity, God relates to us in 3 different ways. God the Father loves us fully—more than a human father ever could. He guides and disciplines us to help us because He loves us. Jesus, God the Son, became one of us so He could pay for our wrongs. When we go through difficult times, Jesus understands what it is like, because He suffered as a human being too. And the Holy Spirit is God living inside of Christians, reminding us of God’s truth and guiding us to do good things. God is always one God as these three Persons.

2. Teaching: Read and discuss the stories of Jesus’ baptism and the creation story (Matthew 3:13–17; Genesis 1:26).

When Jesus was about 30 years old he began traveling around with His disciples and teaching people about the kingdom of God. At that same time, His cousin John the Baptist was in the desert, telling people to repent of their sins because God’s kingdom was near. People came to John to be baptised. He told them some exciting news: a special person was coming! John told the people, “After me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.”

- Who do you think John was talking about?
- What is baptism?

Allow students to share what they know. Baptism is an outward sign that lets others know about the changes that happen inside us when we join God’s family.

You may be wondering what all of this has to do with the Trinity. Let’s read the next part of the story to find out!

Teacher Tip: Whenever possible, have students read the verses aloud directly from the Bible. This

gives them more experience with Scripture and helps them to understand that the lessons you are teaching are directly from God's Word.

Have a student read Matthew 3:13–17 aloud from the Bible.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Matthew 3:13–17

- **Why do you think John did not want to baptise Jesus?**

John did not feel worthy to baptise Jesus because John knew that Jesus was more important than he was.

- **Where do you see each Person of the Trinity in this story?**

Jesus was baptised. The Holy Spirit, like a dove, came to rest on Jesus. God spoke from heaven about His Son.

Jesus did not have to be forgiven for sins because He never committed even 1 sin. But by being baptised, He showed His obedience to the Father and set an example that believers should follow. All three Persons of the Trinity were involved in Jesus' baptism.

This is 1 of the places in Scripture where all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned together. Let's look at another verse:

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Genesis 1:26

- **Do you know what special event this verse is talking about?**

The creation of humankind.

- **How does this verse tell you that God is more than One Person?**

It says "let us make" and "in our likeness."

The Hebrew word for "Let us make" that is used in this verse means more than 2, which tells us that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were all present when the world was created. Together, they made Adam and Eve—the first man and woman—in the likeness of God.

- **Why do you think God created people?**

In love and unity, the three Persons of the Trinity created humans. Together, they invited us into a special relationship with God. Think of this—the Creator of the whole world wants to have a relationship with you! How does that make you feel? Isn't it amazing? We can know God the Father, accept His Son as our Saviour, and have the Holy Spirit living inside of us. God has had plans for the world since before the beginning of time. The greatest part of that plan was to invite people from every part of the world to have a relationship with God through Jesus. And that includes you!

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, invite the students to write what they have learned about the three Persons of the Trinity on the page.

3. Responding: Have the opportunity to respond to God's invitation.

- In the Bible there is a special invitation from God. Have you ever received a special invitation?
- What were you invited to do?

This invitation is even more special!

Try to build excitement about the invitation. Show the Memory Verse poster if you are using it.

*He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.
Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God.*

John 1:11–12

- **What is this invitation for?**

It is an invitation to become a child of God.

- **Who is invited?**

Everyone who believes in the name of Jesus.

- **Think quietly to yourself: how will you respond to God's invitation?**

Allow students to think, but do not require them to answer.

How exciting that God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—wants to have a relationship with you! God created you in His image. You are invited to become a child of the Living God.

When you receive an invitation, what do you do? You usually send a response to the person who invited you. Right now, think of how you want to respond to God's invitation.

You may be thinking, "I am so excited to have a relationship with You, God! Thank You for inviting me!" Or you may be thinking, "I want to accept Your invitation and have a relationship with You, but I still have questions. Help me to believe." Maybe you already believe in Jesus, and you are thinking, "I want to know You better, God!" You might even be thinking, "I am not interested in your invitation, God."

All of these responses are fine for now. God loves you. If you have questions about who He is or are unsure about having a relationship with Him, you can ask Him to reveal Himself to you. If you have questions, you can talk with me today or anytime. If you have decided to accept this invitation today, please come talk with me after class so I can pray with you and rejoice with you.

Give the students an opportunity to think about their responses. Let them know they will not be required to share their responses with anyone. If some students would like to share their responses, give them the opportunity to do so. Remind the students that you are available if they want to talk about how to have a relationship with God.

Teacher Tip: An important part of deepening your relationships with your students is ending your class time by praying a blessing over them. These are biblically based statements or prayers, which you will pray over the students. They speak God's favour, declare who He is, and invite the fulfilment of His purpose into the students' lives.

As you pray scriptural blessings over these young people who truly need caring adults in their lives, remember that you are providing hope to many who may be struggling with difficult situations. This experience of sharing God's love may be as much of a blessing for you as it is for your students.

Close your time with a blessing over your students based on 2 Corinthians 13:14.

Blessing: May you accept God's great invitation, and may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Family Connection: Encourage the students to share the Trinity Diagram and the "Who Am I?" riddle with their families. (They are both on the Student Page for this lesson.) Let the students know that you are available to speak to them or to their family members if they need more information or would like you to pray with or for them.

If you have time, share this song with your students to celebrate how great God is! Use this as your worship theme this quarter.

How Great Is Our God
<https://youtu.be/vg5qDljEw7Q>

