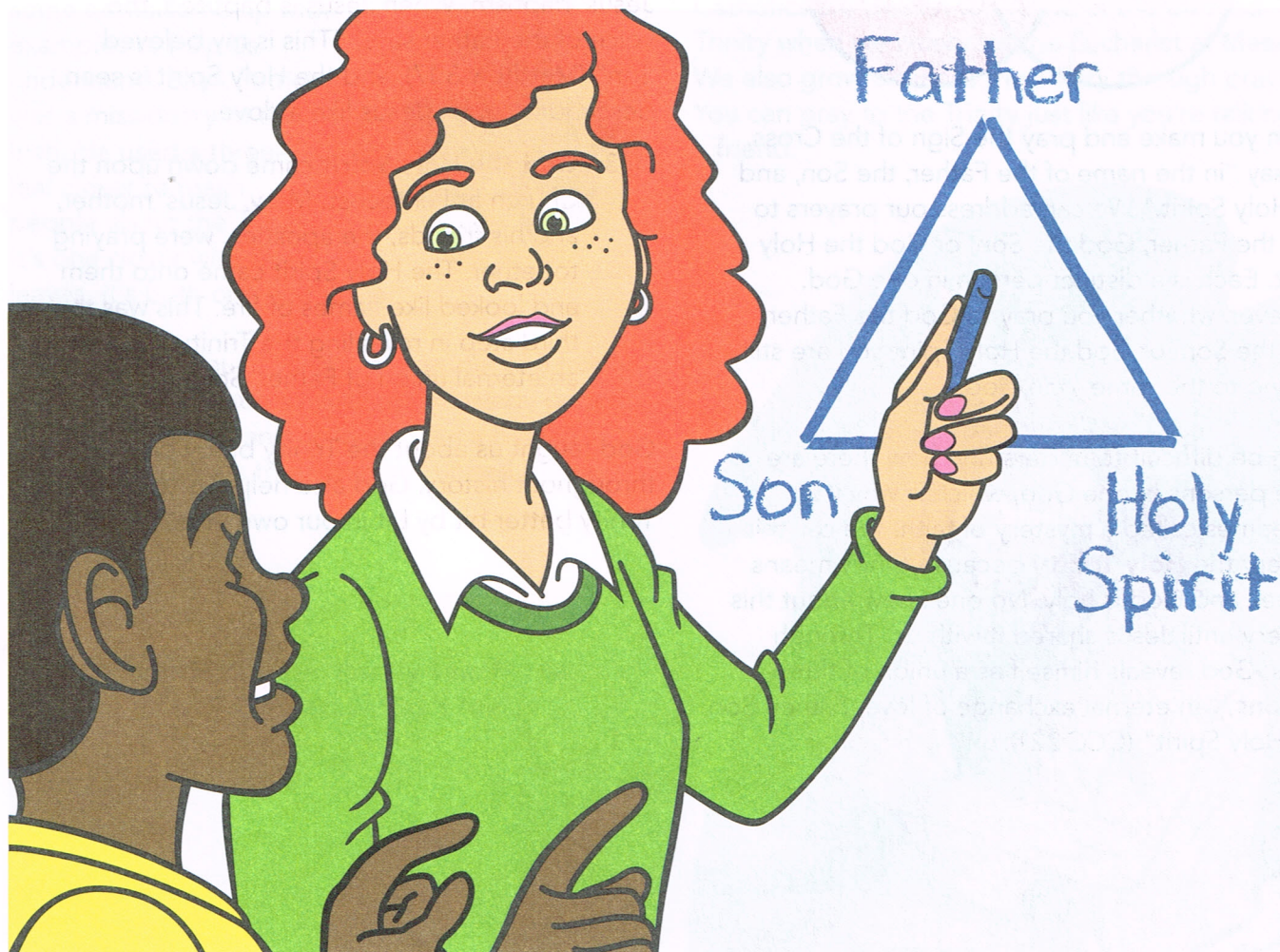


Trinity: Three in One

"I still don't get it," Terrence said, shaking his head. "Me and my dad are part of the same family. But we're not the same person. So how can Jesus and God both be the same? Jesus is the Son and God's the Father. Right?"

Mrs. Evans nodded and said, "It is confusing. That's why it's called a mystery of faith. Let's check Scripture and the *Catechism* for clues that might help us understand."



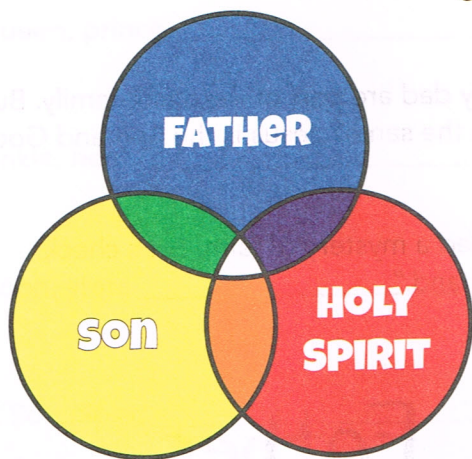


How do you think there can be just one God when we believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

God's Name

"Christians are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: not in their names."

CCC 233



When you make and pray the Sign of the Cross, you say "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." We can address our prayers to God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit. Each is a distinct person in one God. However, whether you pray to God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit you are still praying to the same, one God.

It can be difficult to understand how there are three persons in one God, which is why it is sometimes called a mystery of faith. We call this mystery the **Holy Trinity** because *trinity* means "three" and God is holy. No one knew about this mystery until Jesus shared it with us. Through Jesus, God reveals himself as a union of three **persons**, "an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (CCC 221).

Revealing the Trinity

God has been a trinity of persons forever! But we only learned about the Father, Son, and Spirit bit by bit, one at a time. God revealed this secret in three steps:

1. **God the Father** revealed himself to Abraham, Moses, David, and all the people of ancient Israel in the Old Testament. At the time, they worshiped many gods, but none of these gods was real. So God taught them that there is only one true God.
2. Much later, Jesus, **God the Son**, became a man. He had a group of friends he named the apostles. The apostles learned from Jesus that he was more than just another man. He was divine. Not only that, but Jesus was God! Jesus told them, "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30).

All three persons of the Trinity are revealed at Jesus' baptism. When Jesus is baptized, the voice of the Father says, "This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17), and the Holy Spirit is seen descending upon Jesus like a dove.

3. **God the Holy Spirit** came down upon the Church at Pentecost. Mary, Jesus' mother, and his friends, the apostles, were praying together. The Holy Spirit came onto them and looked like flames of fire. This was the third step in revealing the Trinity. God is an eternal union of Father, Son, and Spirit.

God taught us about the Trinity bit by bit throughout history. God also helps us to know the Trinity better bit by bit in our own lives.

ACTIVITY

List one or two things you've learned about each person of the Trinity next to that person's name.

God the Father	
Jesus, God the Son	
God the Holy Spirit	

Symbols of the Trinity

It takes a long time to understand the mysteries of faith. Fortunately for us, some saints came up with examples to help us understand. Saint Patrick was a missionary to the Irish. He used a three-leaf clover to teach people about the Trinity. It's one clover with three leaves. It's both one *and* three.



Pope St. John Paul II used the example of a family. A family is one, but it's made up of several people: a mother, a father, and children. Like a human family, the Trinity is three persons united in love.

Responding to Love

"By the grace of Baptism...we are called to share in the life of the blessed Trinity" (CCC 265). Catholics are closest to the life of the Blessed Trinity when we celebrate the Eucharist at Mass. We also grow closer to the Trinity through prayer. You can pray to the Trinity just like you're talking to a friend.



How does your family teach you about God and God's love?





HOW ARE THEY SIMILAR?

What does each group below have in common?

* Pitcher, outfielder, shortstop _____

* Teacher, principal, student _____

* King, queen, prince _____

* Toes, ankle, heel _____

* Sun, moon, stars _____

* Father, Son, Spirit _____

In Short



- The Trinity is the term Christians use to signify the three persons in one God.
- The Trinity is revealed in Scripture.
- You can have a friendship with each person of the Trinity.

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