

ARTICLES OF FAITH 1

The Triune God

Session Target
To understand how and why the Trinity is one of the most foundational beliefs in Christianity.

LEADER'S NOTES

Article I: The Triune God

Focus Scriptures: Matthew 28:19-20; John 3:16; 14:6-27; Romans 11:33-36; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:4-6; 1 John 4:9-10

Connecting to Life

Option 1: To start this session, ask your group the following questions:

- **Can you think of something in the Bible that is mystifying or hard to explain?**
- **How would you explain a hard-to-understand concept from the Bible to someone else, possibly to a nonbeliever?**
- **Do you think we need to be able to explain and understand something completely in order to believe it? Why, or why not?**
- **How do we believe in something that we may not fully understand?**

Option 2: Bring an egg to class. Hold up the egg so that everyone in the group can see it. Say, **There are three parts to this egg.** (Consider cracking open the egg into a bowl for more effect as you talk.) **It has three parts; a shell, yoke, and white. Each has their parts and purpose; yet, they exist as one—an egg. Many have used the egg to explain the Trinity. That is, God existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

Then ask,

- **Do you think this is an accurate way to explain God? Why, or why not?**
- **Is there a better way to explain God?**
- **Do we need to be able to explain God?**
- **Do we need to fully comprehend who God is in order to believe in Him?**

(Other Trinity illustrations might include: water exists as H₂O; or a person being a son, father, and grandfather and still existing as a man.)

Transition: The Trinity is one of our foundational beliefs in Christianity. Today we will discuss why it is so important.

Connecting to the Word

Option 1: Divide your class into three groups. On a 3" x 5" card, write the Group number (1, 2, or 3), passage, and questions for that particular group. Distribute each group's card. Then, instruct each group to read their passage and answer the questions.

Group 1—Read Romans 11:33-36.

- What does this passage say about God?
- What do you think “for from him and through him and to him are all things” means (v. 36)?

Group 2—Read John 3:16 and 1 John 4:9-10.

- What do these passages say about Jesus?
- Why did Jesus come to earth?

Group 3—Read John 14:15-21, 25-27.

- What do these passages say about the Holy Spirit?
- What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit?

When everyone has finished, bring the groups together. Then ask each group to share their findings. Say, **We believe that God exists as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We call this the Trinity.** Read Article I and Galatians 4:4-6. Then ask:

- Before today, have you ever heard anyone talk about the Trinity? If so, how was it explained to you?
- Do you have a hard time believing the concept of the Trinity? Why, or why not?
- According to Galatians 4:4-6, how does the Trinity function? (You may also want to refer back to the passages used in the group study.)

Option 2: Say, **We believe that God exists as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We call this the Trinity.** Then read Article I and Matthew 28:19-20. Ask,

- How does this passage relate to the Trinity?

Read John 14:6-27.

- How does this passage describe the function of the Trinity?

Read 2 Corinthians 13:14.

- What does Paul say in this passage that would reinforce our belief in the Trinity?

Read Galatians 4:4-6.

- What are the functions of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Transition: God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This belief is important to our everyday lives.

Connecting to Our World

Say, **God exists as three Persons, yet one in nature. Deuteronomy 6:4 says that “The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” God works and moves as one, yet in three separate ways to express himself; Father (Creator), Son (Redeemer), and Holy Spirit (Counselor). Each is distinct, but undividable from one another.**

Why is this belief important?

Say, **We do not worship three gods, but one God. However, each Person of the Trinity acts and moves with distinction. It is hard to comprehend with our human minds, yet is a crucial belief for us to hold. Why?**

- It helps us have the proper belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. H. Orton Wiley explains it like this, “*God the Father sent His Son into the world to redeem us; God the Son became incarnate in order to save us; and the Holy Spirit applies the redemptive work to our souls*”*
- It helps us in our expression of worship and prayer.
 1. We praise and thank the Father for sending His Son.
 2. We praise and thank the Son for His redeeming work on the Cross.
 3. We praise and thank the Holy Spirit for His presence and working in our lives.
 4. It helps us understand how God works in the lives of people. All three are active in the world and in the lives of God’s followers.

Read the verses to the hymn *Come, Thou Almighty King (Sing to the Lord, No. 3)* as a closing prayer.

Further Reading

Moore, Frank. *Coffee Shop Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1998), 31-35.

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988), 208-33.

REMEMBER: A PowerPoint presentation of this lesson can be downloaded at SundayTeacher.com.

* H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology*, Vol. I (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1940), 394.