



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,
AND OF THE SON,
AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
Amen!

What or Who is the Trinity?



WHO IS GOD?

What words would you use to describe the Christian understanding of who or how God is?



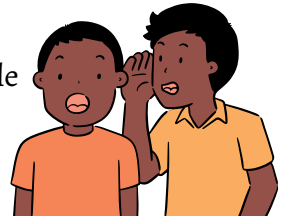
Fill in the blanks: "God so _____ the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life." (John 3:16)

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His _____ endures forever." 1 Chronicles 16:34

We are used to hearing the idea that God loves us. But God is so much more than that, God IS Love!

EVER HAD A SECRET TO SHARE?

Can you think of a time when you were just bursting to share a secret with someone? Who did you decide to tell? Why did you choose that person? How did it feel to be able to share something so personal with someone else? What are the risks of telling someone a secret?



WATCH FR JOHN PARKS EXPLAIN: WHAT IS THE TRINITY? IN THIS LIFETEEN VIDEO



GOD'S INNERMOST SECRET



Paragraph 221 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "God's very being is love. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, **God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange.**"

God's innermost secret is that God is a Trinity, but this secret isn't like a mystery God is trying to hide. We call the Trinity a **mystery** because unless God had revealed it, we would never have known it... and He WANTS us to know it, because God wants to be known as God really is. Unless we know God, we can't love Him.



Think of something that was like a mystery to you until someone explained it to you.

Now, think about the people you love, and the people you want to love you. Do you want them to love a version of you they make up, or do you want to be known and loved for who you really are? God wants to be known and loved for who God is... and so has revealed his Trinitarian nature to us, inviting us into that communion of love too!



God knows me and loves me. God wants to be known by me and loved by me.

Who or what is the Trinity?

1+1+1=?

1 = 3 and 3 = 1?? One God = Three Persons? Sounds like bad Maths! We're not talking about mathematical equations here however, but supernatural realities. We need to try to understand the mystery of the Trinity, rather than just dismiss it because it doesn't seem logical. We often say that humans are mind and matter, body and soul. God is three distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but all fully possess the divine substance, or simply said, all are entirely God.



Remember how St Patrick used a shamrock to explain the Trinity to the people of Ireland? Each leaf is distinct with the full substance of the shamrock, yet all three make up one shamrock plant. It's important too to not get too tied up in analogies. They are limited and can only bring us so far in understanding the concept of the Trinity.

HOW CAN I HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TRINITY?

- Throughout the Old Testament, **God** reveals Himself as the One True God who created all things and called His people to Himself. Jesus revealed to us that God is our Father, and asked us to pray to Him in the "Our Father". Jesus called God "Abba", which actually translates as Daddy. **God the Father** loves us and wants us to come to Him as His children and experience His Fatherly love and presence.
- **Jesus** is the only Person of the Trinity who had a human form - we call that the mystery of the Incarnation. Jesus was born as a tiny baby, grew up, ate, slept, drank, worked, had friends, knew joy, betrayal, pain - He felt all this in his human nature, although fully divine also. His death and resurrection opened the way to Heaven for us. We can think of Jesus as our Brother.
- When Jesus ascended to the Father, He promised His disciples that He would send them the Paraclete, the **Holy Spirit**, to be their helper and guide. The Holy Spirit didn't just make an appearance at this time in history however! From the very beginning of creation, the Spirit was moving over the earth, breathing life into all creatures. The Holy Spirit is still active in the Church, in creation and in our own hearts today, drawing us into a relationship with God the Father, into the communion of the Trinity.
- Simply put, **God is like a Family**: God is Father, Jesus is our Brother, the Holy Spirit is the Love that unites us.

GOD IS LOVE



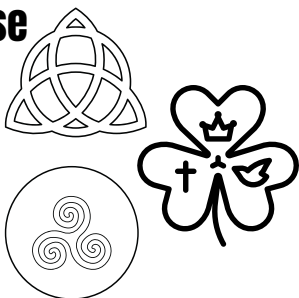
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In order for love to exist, you need 3 parts: the One who loves (lover), the Beloved and the Love. God the Father loves the Son, the Son loves the Father, and the love between them is so great, the Spirit proceeds from their love. The Father loves the Son and gives Him everything, the Son receives that love and gives everything back to the Father, and that Love in itself IS the third Person of the Trinity, the Spirit.

In the Nicene Creed we pray: **"I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, ... begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father"**. Jesus is of the same substance as the Father, eternally begotten, He always existed. The Spirit **"proceeds from the Father and the Son"**: the Spirit IS the love between the Father and the Son, so strong that the Love is another Person.

How do these symbols attempt to explain the Trinity?



- Reflect on your understanding of each Person of the Trinity. Spend some time praying from your heart to each distinct Person of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, the Holy Spirit. The songs below might help you to do this.
- Make a conscious effort each time you bless yourself in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

TIME TO REFLECT



WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIVINE PERSONS IN THESE SONGS?

Chris Tomlin: Good Good Father **Housefires: Jesus what a Saviour** **Audrey Assad: Spirit of the Living God**