

THE TRINITY

Ellerslie
Discipleship
Curriculum

The early church father Augustine is often attributed with the phrase “If you deny the Trinity, you’ll lose your soul. If you try to explain the trinity, you’ll lose your mind”. That paints quite the picture of both the complexity and importance of the trinity. There’s no great analogy that fully explains the trinity. An egg, as yolk, white and shell; or a person who is a father, a son, and husband. Each of these helps to explain that something can have three interconnected or multifaceted parts, but they fall short of explaining God’s Nature. Complicating things further, the term Trinity isn’t even in the bible. However, in the Bible, Jesus, who was identified as God would talk to and relate to The Father, and referenced the Holy Spirit coming. (John 14:16-17). So where does this idea of the trinity come from? **Let’s look at Matthew 3:13-17.**

In this passage, we clearly see each member, or person, of the trinity at work. Jesus in human form is being baptized. God the Father speaks as a loud voice from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove. Each of the members of the trinity is shown together but also is distinct from one another. The Nicene Creed speaks of each person of the trinity being of the same substance, or more informally, “God is one what, and three who’s”. For us, we need to think not of God as three persons in different forms, but as an eternal relationship. God’s defining attribute is the eternal inner relationship that he has with himself. And out of the character of that relationship, God calls us to be in a relationship with him. As we picture the Trinity and seek to know and understand God more, we are exploring deeper the relationship of God, and the relationship that the Gospel brings us into.

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES AND RESOURCES

- John 1:1-5
- John 14:6-21
- Acts 2
- [The Bible Project: God](#)
- [Knowing and Loving the Trinity Reading Plan](#)
- Experiencing the Trinity by Darrell Johnson
- The Nicene Creed

The God who has claimed us for himself is Father, Son and Holy Spirit; not just Father, not just Son, not just Spirit. God is God FOR US – Father. God is God WITH US – Son. God is God IN US – Spirit

**DARRELL W.
JOHNSON**

QUESTIONS

1. What was your initial understanding of the trinity?
2. Do you relate or identify most with a certain member of the trinity?
3. What struggles do you still have with the idea of the trinity? Anything you still need to understand?
4. How does the reality of the trinity shape how you live your life?
5. Does the Trinity remind you of the Gospel? In what ways does it shape your understanding?

TAKE TIME TO PRAY TOGETHER