

### What is the Trinity

**Intro:** The Trinity is commonly called a “mystery.” Mysteries are those thoughts and beliefs that we can’t wrap our heads around. The teaching of the Trinity is relatively simple. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is one in three and three in one. Except that it doesn’t make any rational sense. So for millennia people of the faith have been trying to explain it in terms we can understand. H<sub>2</sub>O is water in three forms: ice, liquid, and gas. All are water, all are different, all are the same.

But understanding it is just one of the problems. The word “Trinity” isn’t found in the Bible. Though the concept is taught there, it is never taught as a single doctrine or truth. Instead, it is simply referred to in a number of forms. This caused no little consternation in the early years of the church. Bishop Arius taught that Jesus was not God, but the unique Son of God. At the Council of Nicea in AD 325, a gathering of over 300 bishops discussed the matter, prayed over it, studied the Scriptures, and discerned that the Trinity is a divine reality. One of the champions of this doctrine was Bishop Athanasius. He wrote the following Creed, or statement of belief, on the subject (abridged, but retaining some of the archaic language). After reading it, and studying the selected Scriptures, you will have the opportunity to articulate for yourself what you believe about the Trinity.

*“... We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is all One, the Glory Equal, the Majesty Co-Eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. ...The Father Incomprehensible, the Son Incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost Incomprehensible. The Father Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Ghost Eternal and yet they are not Three Eternals but One Eternal.*”

*“...So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not Three Gods, but One God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not Three Lords but One Lord. For, like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the [faith] to say, there be Three Gods or Three Lords. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.*”

*“So there is One Father, not Three Fathers; one Son, not Three Sons; One Holy Ghost, not Three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore or after Other, None is greater or less than Another, but the whole Three Persons are Co-eternal together, and Co-equal.”*

**What the Bible Teaches:** Break into Groups of Four, read the following Bible verses, and discuss the questions. You may want to jot down notes and thoughts on the back of this page.

**Genesis 1:26; Genesis 3:22; Psalm 51:10-11.** How does the Old Testament foreshadow the Trinity?

**1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Matthew 3:16-17; John 14:16-20; Matthew 11:27.** The Trinity is simultaneously a paradox and a mystery. How do these verses add to the confusion and/or to the support of the Trinity?

**Luke 1:35; Matthew 28:19; Jude 1:20-21; John 15:26.** How do these verses support the doctrine of the Trinity?

**What I Believe:** Take ten minutes for silent reflection and thought. Ask yourself what you believe about the Trinity. Use the back of this page to formulate a response to the question:

**“What is the Trinity”**

Write your final response here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Articulations:** Pair up with one other person and share your response with one another. Take five minutes each. Try to *not* look at your written statement; instead, try to tell your beliefs from your heart. This will prepare you to share whenever you are asked about what you believe.

**Therefore:** Jesus said His followers should Go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). One of the first steps in making disciples is being ready and able to share the reason for the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15), in other words, knowing what we believe, why, and then being able to share it. Sharing your faith is important. This week, find someone—it can be *anyone*—and articulate your belief about this issue. If you have an unchurched/unreached friend whom you can share with, all the better (you can always say you have a homework assignment from church and you’d like to share it with them). Be ready to talk about your experience next week over the meal at your House Church.