**PREPARATION**

**OBJECTIVES and KEY CONCEPTS**

1. To understand that there are 3 Divine Persons in the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
2. To understand that the 3 are distinct in their Person, but the same in their substance – and that all 3 together are one God.
3. To understand that that “God is love”. The Trinity is a communion of 3 Persons in an eternal exchange of giving and receiving perfect love.
4. To understand that each Person of the Trinity is fully God, but each fulfills a distinct role in how they manifest love to creation.
5. To understand that God loves His creation, and throughout history, He has shown us that love by revealing Himself in all 3 Persons. Through the incarnation, Christ took on a human nature, suffered, died, and rose again to prove that love to humankind.

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| **KEY TERMS** | **SCRIPTURE** | **CATECHISM** | **CHURCH DOCUMENTS** |
| Consubstantial | Exodus 20:3-6 | #’s 232-249 |  |
|  | Matthew 11:27 | #’s 252-254 |  |
|  | Luke 3:21-22 | # 422 |  |
|  | John 14:9-21 | #’s 457-460 |  |
|  | 2 Corinthians 13:13 | #’s 687-690 |  |
|  | 1 John 4:8 |  |  |

**OPENING DISCUSSION – (***10 minutes)*

1. Do you find it challenging to accept that God is a mystery? Why?
2. How is the mystery of God different from other “mysteries” we have in our world?

**LESSON CONTENT – THE MOST HOLY TRINITY**

**INTRODUCTION - A WORLD OF MYSTERY**

Our world is full of mysteries. There are places humans have never explored, and questions about ancient cultures that don’t have answers. If all the mysteries of the world weren’t enough, there are many television shows that revolve around solving mysteries, and even more movies that follow similar plot lines.

We love a good mystery, but we also want our mysteries to be solved. We may not know what lies deep below the ocean, but we hope that someday we will know. Understand the mysteries of the universe, but we are confident “people are working on it.”

This quest for knowledge drives many people. Even in our personal lives, we hope that by the end of the story the riddle will be solved and the crime figured out.

The desire to “solve mysteries” has led many people to try to solve the mystery of God and produce a definitive definition for or against God’s existence.

This search has left many people frustrated because God is a mystery, but not the kind of mystery that is meant to be solved and not the kind of mystery that is impossible to know.

**KNOWING GOD THROUGH REVELATION**

God is beyond all human ways of knowing and thinking (Isaiah 55:8). God is also above our language; we lack the proper words to describe God’s mystery. Our language is only capable of grasping what God is not and describing other beings in relationship to God (e.g. God is our creator, because He came before us. We are not eternal, so we are not God).

What we know about God, He has revealed fully through His So Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. We can know God with certainty because of this revelation.

So how do Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit fit into God? Well, they are God. Part of the mystery of God is the Holy Trinity – that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**THE BIG MYSTERY**

The Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith. Every other mystery about God is wrapped up into this mystery. We know that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit because it has been revealed to us through Jesus Christ.

Without Jesus teaching us about God as Father, revealing God the Son, and promising the Holy Spirit, we could not know the Holy Trinity. Our human reason isn’t enough for this mystery.

When we talk about the Trinity, it is enough to make your head hurt. We worship one God, in three persons. These three persons are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are all consubstantial, or of the same substance (God).

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are entirely God. They are equal, but distinct. In each one, God is wholly found. Each person is distinct in their origin. The Father generates, the Son is begotten, and the Holy Spirit proceeds. Don’t let this confuse you into thinking the Father came first. Each person is eternal (remember, each is God entirely).

Confused yet? This mystery is challenging and is very difficult to talk about. Remember, our human understanding and language is limited; we don’t know anything that is three things all at once and still one thing. But, God is God. God is beyond our understanding.

Just because the Holy Trinity may seem confusing and is above our human reason, it doesn’t mean we can’t know God. It’s the opposite: by embracing the mystery we will come to know God more.

**EMBRACING THE MYSTERY**

We can know God because of Jesus Christ – the Son – who reveals God to us. Jesus points us toward the Father and promises the Holy Spirit.

We can have a relationship with the Holy Trinity. Like any relationship, it doesn’t grow first based solely on what we know about a person, it grows based on our experience with that person. It would be kind of creepy if someone knew everything about you, but never talked to you personally or spent time with you. The same is true for God – the more we spend time embracing His mystery in prayer and in the sacraments, the more we will come to know about God and understand.

This knowledge and understanding are divine gifts of the Holy Spirit. The saints had them, and by virtue of our baptism and confirmation, we have them, too. We can know each part of the Trinity in a unique way; each one strengthens our relationship with God.

**GOD THE FATHER**

We know the Father through the Son. As we read in the Gospels, Jesus reveals the Father to us. He does this through parables (like the parable of the Lost Son), and through His prayer.

The Father is revealed throughout the Old Testament. The prophets show us God’s fidelity, justice, and mercy. God the Father fights for us and protects us as his adopted sons and daughters.

**GOD THE SON**

Jesus is the full revelation of God. We know Christ when we read the Gospels. The words of Christ speak directly to us. We can get close to Jesus through the Eucharist because it is Jesus’ Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. When we receive the Eucharist, it is the closest we come to heaven. Jesus’ sacrifice has redeemed us. When we meditate on this mystery, we grow close to Christ in an intimate way.

**GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit has spoken through the prophets, inspired Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and inspires the teaching body of the Church. The Holy Spirit is known by His movements. When we pray, we pray through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is what allows us to understand that Jesus Christ is God. The Holy Spirit brings us to conversion. It is through the Holy Spirit that we are justified.

**LIVING THE MYSTERY**

The Holy Trinity is the central mystery of our Christian faith, but it isn’t the kind of mystery we solve. It is the kind of mystery we participate in. Through grace, God invites us into this relationship, which is relationship of love. God the Father loves the Son for all eternity and the Son loves the Father for all eternity. From this love the Holy Spirit proceeds. This relationship is God, who is love.

We are invited into this love through the sacraments, the Mass, and with one another as a Church. Even though the Trinity is difficult to understand, we aren’t called to solve it. We are called to live it every day.

**ACTIVITY – Witness Talk and Group Discussion**

1. *Give a 5 to 10-minute Witness Talk about your relationship with the Holy Trinity.*
2. *Follow the Witness Talk with a group discussion:*
   1. Which person of the Holy Trinity do you pray to the most often? Why? Which is the easiest for you to understand?
   2. The Holy Trinity is a relationship of love; what can the Holy Trinity teach us about our relationships? Are our current relationships with our family and friends a reflection of God’s love? Why or why not?
   3. Why is it important that we understand God as Father?
   4. Why was it important for the Son to become human?
   5. Why is the Holy Spirit important for our Church?
   6. In your own words describe the Holy Trinity. How would you explain it to someone who was not a Christian?

**SUMMARY REMARKS**

*Give brief recap of the main points from the night:*

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* There are three persons in the Blessed Trinity. All three are distinct in their person, but the same in their substance and in their divinity. All three together are one God, and each fulfills a distinct role in how God reveals Himself to creation.
* “God is love.” In reality, the Trinity is a community of three persons connected by the eternal giving and receiving of perfect love. God created us to experience and share that love with Him.
* Each of the three persons shows us the love of God in a unique way, and we can see the story of this love throughout Scripture and in our own lives.

**CLOSING PRAYER - Guided Trinity Prayer (***10 minutes)*

*Instruct the students to take out a sheet of paper and a writing instrument. The catechist should explain that we can have a unique relationship with each person of the Trinity, and that they will take some time to reflect upon and pray to each person of the Trinity to close the Life Night.*

*The catechist will read a scripture passage that talks about each person of the Holy Trinity, and then will read a brief reflection. The students will have an opportunity to reflect on their relationship with that person of the Trinity and have an opportunity to pray silently to that Person. The catechist will then read the next scripture passage to repeat this prayer.*

*At the end of the prayer, encourage the students to continue to pray to the persons of the Trinity during the week, particularly a person of the Trinity they may not pray to often (e.g. if they often address prayers to God the Father, to address them to Jesus Christ, the Son).*

**God the Father**

*Read Psalm 34:15-23*

**Reflection:** As a Father God fights for us, consoles us, comforts us, and protects us. The title of God as Father can be challenging, especially if we struggle with our earthly father. It is for this reason all the more necessary, though. Even when our earthly fathers fall short, God our Father never forgets us and never lets us go.

**Prayer:**

Heavenly Father,

Protect us as your children. Comfort us as the true Father, our unwavering parent and guardian. When we stumble, give us the grace and courage to run back to your arms. Protect us from those who hurt us, and bless them, too, as they are your children. Guide us to be united as a family through your Church and in your Son. Amen.

**God the Son**

*Read Romans 8:28-39*

**Reflection:** Nothing can separate us from Christ’s love. Even when we may feel the most unwanted or unloved, Christ’s love is there reminding us of how much we are worth. Jesus gave His life for us; we need only to accept His love into our lives. Nothing we could ever do could make Him love us less or leave us – we are worth the price of His blood.

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus Christ,

You are our savior and king. Though we are sinners, you still chose to give your life for us. Even though we turn our back on you, you never walk away from us. Give us your grace today that we may love you in return and give our whole selves back to you. We cannot save ourselves. Lord, in your mercy hear us and save us. Amen.

**God the Holy Spirit**

*Read Isaiah 11:2-3a*

**Reflection:** The Holy Spirit empowers us to preach the Gospel and live every day for Christ. We received the Holy Spirit at our Baptism, and for those of us who have been confirmed, that Spirit was strengthened at our Confirmation. The Holy Spirit makes us bold witnesses in the world. We receive seven gifts from the Holy Spirit – knowledge, understanding, counsel, wisdom, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord. These gifts empower us to live as disciples in a world that can sometimes be challenging to our relationship with Christ. The Holy Spirit casts out the fear we have in living for Jesus and replaces it with the courage to be a faithful witness.

**Prayer:**

Come, Holy Spirit.

Fill us with your gifts and help us to boldly bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Where we are fearful, bring us courage. Just as you came down on the Apostles at Pentecost, descend on us a well. Make us missionaries in our schools, homes, and with our friends, in Jesus’ name, Amen.

**RESOURCES:**

* Life Teen, Inc. 6105 Blue Stone Road, STE B Atlanta, GA 30328
* Journey of Faith For Students, Ligoria Publications
* tmrcia – Doctrinal Sessions, Mary Birmingham
* Catechism of the Catholic Church