

## Doctrinal Themes: The Trinity

### Introduction

This segment is meant to help you reflect on the mystery of the Trinity, which is the second doctrinal theme in the text. It will also point out how to approach the mystery of the Holy Trinity with your class. Just follow the outline. Begin by reflecting on or journaling the first question. Watch the video *Theological Foundations: Trinity* and note how the explanation sheds light on the topic for your own understanding. Then read the article “Trinity” and answer the reflection questions.

### First Question

What is the best explanation of Trinity you have heard?

### Video

Watch the *Theological Foundations: Trinity* video and respond to these questions:

1. What insight did you get from the story *Amy and the Baby*?
2. How is the Trinity a model for us today?
3. Why do you think belief in the Holy Trinity is important?
4. What new learning did you get from the video?

## Article: The Trinity Is Mystery

Read the following article and respond to the questions:

Left to our own devices, we never would have discovered that God is one God in three Persons. It took Jesus and the Church to help us see that. Even now, we cannot imagine what the inner life of the Holy Trinity is really like. It is a mystery “infinitely beyond all that we can humanly understand.” (See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 251).

What we do know is that God is about loving relationships. The love among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is what unites the three Divine Persons. Each of us is baptized using the words “Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. We are invited into that community of love. The communion of love that exists among the three Persons of the Holy Trinity is the model we are called to imitate in our relationships with each other. Following Jesus’ command to love one another unites us with a God who is love.

The experience of God as Trinity has since the beginning of the Church, always been expressed. As the Church grew, it became necessary to clarify what three Divine Persons and One God mean and the doctrine of the Trinity was articulated. When teaching the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, keep the following Church teachings in mind:

- The Trinity is One. The three Persons of the Trinity are not each one-third of God but each of them is God.
- Each Divine Person is distinct, but in full communion with the others.
- “We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the

substance' (Athanasian Creed)" (CCC, 266).

It is impossible to put the fullness of this mystery into words. This is why presentation of the Trinity for any age level, should include images and analogies. The image of the Trinity as a communion of love is the one that all ages can appropriate. The historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity can be introduced in grades 7 and 8. When conducting analysis with young adolescents keep the three statements above as a guide for discussion.

As a religion teacher, what practical implications does this have for your classes? The first three sessions in *Alive In Christ* (K-8) are sessions based on the doctrinal theme Revelation.

### Reflection Questions

- Which of the three Persons of the Trinity do you most communicate with?
- What images or analogies do you think would help your students understand what the Church believes about the Trinity?