

### **QUESTION 3:**

## **HOW MANY PERSONS ARE THERE IN GOD?**

**ANSWER :** THERE ARE THREE PERSONS IN THE ONE TRUE AND LIVING GOD: THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEY ARE THE SAME IN SUBSTANCE, EQUAL IN POWER AND GLORY.

#### **50 minute Lesson Outline:**

- Catechism Recap (5 mins)
- Introduction to Question (5 mins)
- Teaching Outline (15 mins)
- Discussion and Question Time (20 mins)
- Virtue Vision (5 mins)

**Bible Passage:** 2 Corinthians 13:5-14

**Memory Verse:** 2 Corinthians 13:14

**Big Idea:** A correct understanding of the Trinity is essential to the right worship of God.

**Aim:** To help us understand that God is three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that each person is fully God and that there is only one God.

**Virtue:** Awe

#### **LEADER'S NOTES:**

It is worth acknowledging that the concept of the doctrine of the Trinity is hard to understand for adults as well as children! Engaging the doctrine of the Trinity will expand our knowledge and understanding of who God is and what He is like. We are exposed to pantheistic religions (**a doctrine which identifies God with the universe, or regards the universe as a manifestation of God.**) through various everyday encounters: at school, with friends, and via the media. It is important to understand that the God of the Bible is one and that Christianity is a monotheistic faith. The examination of the doctrine of

the Trinity will help us understand that God is one, but also three distinct persons.

**This lesson aims to increase our understanding of the beauty and diversity in the Godhead. It is worth noting that the Trinity is often described as a mystery for a reason; be as clear and concise as you can in this lesson, but do not expect to grasp the doctrine fully.**

**Things to remember:**

- Some of us have heard illustrations that have attempted to teach the doctrine of the Trinity incorrectly (For example: water, steam, ice; a shamrock; an egg). Be prepared to graciously correct any misunderstanding and explain that most of the illustrations people use don't actually teach the doctrine well.
- This is a difficult concept to understand for adults and children alike. Explain that in our humanness it is sometimes difficult to fully grasp the greatness of God.

**CATECHISM RECAP:**

What was question 2?

**What is God?**

What was the answer to question 2?

**God is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything. he is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable in his power and perfection, goodness and glory, wisdom, justice and truth. Nothing happens except through him and by his will.**

What was the memory verse for question 2?

**PSALM 86:8-10, 15**

**8 There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.**

**9 All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name.**

**10 For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.**

**15 But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.**

## INTRODUCTION TO QUESTION 3:

### Pop Quiz - Trinity True or False

Ask the group to identify whether the following statements are true or false.

1. The word Trinity is found in the Bible. (**False**)
2. There is one God. (**True**)
3. The Father is fully God. (**True**)
4. God has always existed as three persons. (**True**)
5. God the Son only came into existence when Mary became pregnant. (**False**)
6. The Son is not the Father. (**True**)
7. The persons of the Trinity each have distinct roles. (**True**)
8. God the Father died on the cross for our sin. (**False**)

## TEACHING OUTLINE

### QUESTION 3: HOW MANY PERSONS ARE THERE IN GOD?

*Explain:* The word Trinity means “Tri-Unity”—Tri means three, and Unity means one. The word acknowledges what the Bible reveals to us about God, that God is three persons who all have the same essence of God.

Highlight these key things we need to understand about God:

1. There is only one God. (Deut. 6:4)
2. God is three persons. (2 Cor. 13:14)
3. Each person is fully God. The Bible speaks of the Father as God (Phil. 1:2), Jesus as God (Titus 2:13), and the Holy Spirit as God (Acts 5:3-4). **Emphasize that each person is fully God, not one-third of God.**
4. Each person of the Trinity is different from the others. Because the Father sent the Son into the world (John 3:16), the Father cannot be the same person as the Son. Likewise, after the Son returned to the Father (John 16:10), the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit into the world (John 14:26; Acts 2:33). Therefore, the Holy Spirit must be distinct from the Father and the Son.
5. The three persons of the Trinity relate eternally as Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

## 2 Corinthians 13

*Explain:* Paul is writing to the Corinthians in preparation for a visit he is planning to make to them. There are lots of problems in the Corinthian church that Paul wants to address and he's concerned that when he arrives in Corinth, the Christians will be arguing and fighting. In these ten verses, Paul is really challenging the Christians in Corinth to live obedient lives for God's glory. Paul ends this letter with a verse that has become very well-known and is often said as a prayer in church: "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

### Pay close attention to verses 14

*Paul identifies the Trinity.*

### READ: 2 Corinthians 13:5-14

5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

6 I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test.

7 But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed.

8 For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.

9 For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for.

10 For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

13 All the saints greet you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

*Explain:* In this prayer, Paul is trying to show the Corinthians how important God is for their lives and relationships with one another. Here we see some of the distinct roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Paul first identifies Jesus, God the Son, as the one who displays God's grace clearly in his life and death. Grace is kindness shown to someone who does not deserve it. Jesus Christ is the person of the Trinity who reveals God's grace to us. God shows sinners great grace by allowing the Lord Jesus to take the punishment for sin that was due to them. Those who've experienced such grace should show grace to others.

Paul then prays that the Corinthians would know the love of God the Father. Paul is describing the love of a Father that is known by those who have been brought into a relationship with him through the sacrificial death of Jesus. Those who know the great love of God as Father and those who are made in his image, should be characterized by love.

Finally, Paul prays that the Corinthians would know the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit. The Spirit brings sinners into friendship with God and into friendship with one another.

The experience of grace, love, and friendship is the result of being in a relationship with God. The triune God exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each one demonstrates for us a certain characteristic in this verse. Jesus shows us the grace of God. The Father shows us love. The Holy Spirit draws us into fellowship. These three are one.

## **REVIEW**

Question 3:

How many persons are there in God?

Answer : There are three persons in the one true and living God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. they are the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

## SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Activity: Have each member of your group complete the Trinity Diagram.

Remember:

- There is only one God.*
- The Father is God.*
- The Son is God.*
- The Holy Spirit is God.*
- The Father is not the Son.*
- The Son is not the Holy Spirit.*
- The Holy Spirit is not the Father.*

## SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Activity: Take a closer look at some the attributes that the each person of the Trinity gives us: "The **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ and the **love** of God and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (verse 14)

Take a few minutes and complete this next section individually and then share your responses with your group.

**Grace** - "kindness shown to someone who does not deserve it."

Identify some people that you are actively demonstrating grace to on a regular basis.

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Does this come easily to you? What needs to happen to improve in this area?

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**Love** - "God's love defines us and is meant to be on display on His image-bearers."

How do you demonstrate God's love to everyone around you?

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**Fellowship** - "God's Spirit brings us closer to Him and to each other."

How would you rate the overall health of your friendships?

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## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(Allow for several answers within your group before reading the provided response.)

**1. Why do we believe this doctrine if the word Trinity isn't used in the Bible?**

The nature of the triune God is very clearly shown in the Bible. Although the word isn't used, the doctrine is present throughout Scripture.

**2. This is really hard to understand. If I don't understand it, am I not a**

**Christian?** The Trinity is hard to understand and that many adults can't fully comprehend what the Trinity is. This is because we're not God, and he is hard for us to comprehend. Our lack of understanding does not mean that we are not Christians.

**3. What does it mean that the persons of the Trinity are related eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?**

God wasn't created like us. God always existed and always will exist. So God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit always are related to each other in unity and love. Use this opportunity to think about your own life and how this catechism question and answer affects you personally. Think about what it means to be made in the image of God when we understand that God is three persons in one.

### VIRTUE: AWE (A Closer look)

To be filled with awe is to be amazed and filled with wonder. Take a closer look at how God inspires awe in our lives by writing descriptive words for God using only words beginning with A, W, or E

**A** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**W** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**E** \_\_\_\_\_

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### MEMORIZE 2 Corinthians 13:14

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.