

PUZZLED

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

CATECHISM

232-246
249
252-254
422
457-460
687-690

YOUCAT

35-39
164
360

KEY TERMS

Consubstantial

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 20:3-6
Matthew 11:27

Luke 3:21-22
John 14:9-21
2 Corinthians 13:13
1 John 4:8

KEY CONCEPTS

- There are three persons in the divine Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three are distinct in their person but the same in their substance. All three together are one God.
- “God is love.” The Trinity is a community of three persons connected by the eternal giving and receiving of perfect love.

- Each person of the Trinity is fully God, but each fulfills a distinct role in how they manifest love to creation.
- God loves His creation, and throughout history, He has shown us that love by revealing himself in all three persons. By the Incarnation, Christ took on a Human Nature, while remaining fully God, suffered, died and rose again to prove that love to man.

GOAL

The goal of this night is to introduce teens to the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. This night will explain the Church’s understanding of the Trinity that has been given to us through Divine Revelation. Finally, it will provide teens with an opportunity to pray and meditate on who God is and what He does in our personal lives as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

ABOUT THIS NIGHT

This Life Night begins with a game that will challenge partners to decipher the item inside a “mystery box” using teamwork. This image

of “solving a mystery” will be expanded upon during the Proclaim. The teaching discusses the mystery of the Holy Trinity as a relationship to be experienced rather than a puzzle that needs to be solved. The Break allows teens to discuss the different Persons of the Trinity, and the Send is a time of prayer with each Person of the Trinity.

PARENTAL NOTICE

This week at Life Night we broke open the deepest mystery of the Christian faith: the Holy Trinity. It is important for every Christian to understand that we cannot know everything about the Trinity because we weren’t created to do so. At the same time, we can know who the persons of the Trinity

are and what they individually do as God in our lives. All three are fully God, but are distinct persons just like you and your children are. The distinction is that these three persons are one individual being united in love. We discussed how we talk about the mystery of the Trinity by comparing it to what we can know. Such analogies give us vocabulary to speak about this wonderful truth of our faith.

- One of the most beautiful ways that the Trinity is revealed is in the model of the human family. How does the relationship between Jesus and His Father compare to the relationship between you and your children?
- How does an understanding of the Father help us to better understand fatherhood? How does Jesus's obedience to the Father affect our understanding of being a "child of God," as well as a child of our human parents? How do we see the effects of the Holy Spirit's work among our daily interactions with the people in our family?
- How does our Baptism "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" shape our

relationship with each other, knowing that we each share the same adopted "sonship"?

- God is a community of three persons that make up one God, and God is love itself. How can we love one another better by modeling our lives after the relationship of perfect love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

ENVIRONMENT

The theme for the night is about things that seem "impossible" or "mysteries." Create a giant rubix cube using several cardboard boxes and put it at the front of the room. This can be created by finding 54 boxes roughly the same size and shape and building them into a cube. After all of the boxes have been glued together, paint the outside boxes different colors. To achieve a realistic effect, you will need to have six different paint colors. Paint nine boxes each color and using different sides (so it looks like an unsolved rubix cube). As teens enter, give them challenging word puzzles or Sudoku sheets to solve while they wait for the Life Night to begin.

GATHER

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

(5 min)

The youth minister should gather all the teens together, welcome them to Life Night and lead an opening prayer. He or she should introduce any teens at Life Night for the first time.

MYSTERY IN A BOX

(5 min)

You will need eight teens to play this game. Prior to the night set up four boxes with a "mystery" item inside. The item inside of the box should be something challenging to identify, and (if you want to be funny) something messy. Use your imagination and creativity. Things like a whole

fish, a tennis shoe filled with whipped topping, or dried chicken bones in raspberry jelly would work well. Avoid putting any living creatures in the box. Place the object inside of each box and then cut a hole in each side so the teens can fit their hands into the box, but not see the object.

Have the eight teens get into pairs, and then stand back to back. One person should be facing the audience, and that person will be the one who will be putting his or her hands into the "mystery box." This teen will need to use their sense of touch to help determine what the object is. Here is the catch: They cannot solve the mystery, but need to describe the object to their teammate who is standing behind them. They are only allowed to use adjectives to describe the object, e.g. "It is slimy, it feels leathery, it doesn't feel solid," to their teammate.

Give the teens 60 seconds to solve each mystery; have a prize for the first pair to solve their mystery object.

PROCLAIM

“PUZZLED” TEACHING

(15 min)

The teaching for this night explains the Church’s teaching about the Holy Trinity by leading teens into the mystery through analogy and example. We cannot fully explain the Trinity – it is the greatest mystery of our faith – but what we understand has been revealed to us by God Himself through the Scriptures and has been passed on to us by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The teaching for this night is on pages 29 to 32.

OR

VIDEO TEACHING: THE TRINITY

(5 min)

Use the video teaching found on Video Support: Person of Christ to present the teaching on the Trinity to the teenagers. This video can also be used in the context of the teaching provided with the Life Night.

BREAK

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(30 min)

The youth minister should break the teens into small groups of six to eight with one Core Member leading each small group. The small group leader should lead an opening prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to give each group member the gift of understanding as they discuss the Most Holy Trinity. He or she can then use the following questions to begin a discussion with the teens:

- Do you find it challenging to accept that God is a mystery? Why? How is the mystery of God

different from other “mysteries” we have in our world?

- Which person of the Holy Trinity do you pray to the most often? Why? Which is the easiest for you to understand?
- 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?
- Why is it important that we understand God as Father?
- Why was it important for the Son to become human?
- Why is the Holy Spirit important for our Church?
- In your own words describe the Holy Trinity. How would you explain it to someone who was not a Christian?

SEND

NIGHT RECAP

(5 min)

Recap the key points of the night before transitioning into the Send:

- 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.

GUIDED TRINITY PRAYER

(10 min)

The Core Team should pass out pens and paper to the teens for a time of guided reflection. The youth minister should explain that we can have a unique relationship with each person of the Trinity, and that the teens will take some time to reflect upon and pray to each person of the Trinity to close the Life Night.

He or she will read a scripture passage that talks about each person of the Holy Trinity, and then will read a brief reflection. The teens 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 youth minister will then read the next scripture passage to repeat this prayer.

At the end of the prayer, encourage the teens 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 the to Jesus Christ, the Son).

God the Father

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

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

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 as well. Make us missionaries in our schools, homes, and with our friends, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Close the Night by praying the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

- Break the teenagers into three large groups based on the Person of the Trinity that they pray to the least or know the least about. Have a large group discussion and teaching about that Person of the Trinity, and close with a time of prayer to that Person of the Trinity.
- If you have a smaller group, have a large puzzle for them to put together, but withhold several pieces from the puzzle and do not provide a picture for the teens to work from. Challenge your group to put the puzzle together in under ten minutes. After time is up, ask teens what was difficult and use this as a starting point for the teaching. We cannot know the puzzle of God, except by what God reveals (the missing pieces and the picture).

- Alternative Small Group Questions — *Use the following small group questions for teenagers who want to dive more deeply into the topic:*
 - How do your relationships reflect the relationship of the Trinity? Where do your relationships need to more fully conform to the Trinity?
 - In what ways do you see the working of the Holy Spirit in your life? How do you live your life as a disciple of Christ, the Son? Does the truth that we are all adopted sons and daughters of God the Father change your perspective of other people? How?

PUZZLED

TEACHING

KEY TERM DEFINITIONS

- Consubstantial – Of the same substance; the Father is consubstantial with the Son; they share the same nature or substance, but are distinct.

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

Isaiah 55:8-9
CCC 40

- 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).

CCC 41-42

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

**CCC 50
CCC 237**

- 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.

CCC 234

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

CCC 236-237

- 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).

**CCC 253
Key Word**

- 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).

CCC 254-255

- 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 actually 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.

CCC 422
CCC 2789

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.

CCC 2780
1 John 3:1-3

- God the Father fights for us and protects us as his adopted sons and daughters.

CCC 51
CCC 125-126

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.

CCC 1374

- 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.

CCC 616

- Jesus' sacrifice has redeemed us. When we meditate on this mystery, we grow close to Christ in an intimate way.

CCC 243

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.

CCC 2670-2672

- 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.

CCC 1987-1989

- 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 a 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.

CCC 246
CCC 253, 255

LIFE NIGHT CHECKLIST

CORE PLANNING TEAM:

DATE OF LIFE NIGHT:

ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE NIGHT:

- ☐ Give copies of the Life Night to each of the members of the planning team. Each person should read the Scripture and Catechism references as well as review the planning guide before the brainstorming meeting.
- ☐ Get the planning team together for a brainstorming meeting (this should last no longer than 1 hour). The team prays and discusses where the teens are in their faith journey in relation to this topic. Then using this planning guide as a starting point, the team adapts the Life Night to meet the needs of the teens and the parish. Create a detailed outline with any changes and/or adjustments.
- ☐ Assign the person responsible for each part of the Life Night:

Environment _____

Game: Mystery In A Box _____

Small Group Discussion _____

Guided Trinity Prayer _____

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT:

- ☐ Turn in a detailed outline of the Life Night to the youth minister. Allow the youth minister to give feedback and make any necessary changes.
- ☐ Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person to be responsible for collecting and/or purchasing the materials needed.
- ☐ Decide the people that will be doing the following things. Make sure they have a copy of the script and/or teaching outline. Inform them of any practices and/or deadlines.

Teaching _____

WEEK OF THE LIFE NIGHT:

- ☐ Written outline of the teaching is given to the youth minister and practiced.
- ☐ Run a dress rehearsal of the Life Night. Youth minister gives feedback.
- ☐ Create environment and collect needed supplies.
- ☐ E-mail entire Core Team an overview of the night and small group questions.

DAY OF THE LIFE NIGHT:

- ☐ Set up the environment. Make sure the room is clean and presentable.
- ☐ Set up audio and video. Test the video clips to make sure both picture and sound work.
- ☐ Walk the entire Core Team through the Life Night. Make sure all transitions are ready and everyone knows their roles.
- ☐ Pray! Pray for the teens attending the Life Night. Pray for God's will to be done through the night. Pray over those involved.

LIFE NIGHT EVALUATION

INSTRUCTIONS:

Use the following questions to discuss and evaluate your Life Night.

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Life Night accomplish the goal we set? Explain.

2. What was the strongest aspect of this Life Night?

3. What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Life Night?

4. What can we improve for future Life Nights? How can we accomplish this?

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Notes

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dashed lines.