

Building Blocks of Faith

Episode #1 - The Trinity

1. Talking about the Trinity can be tricky, but it involves a shared essence while maintaining distinct persons. The earliest of the Creeds was the Apostles's Creed (look up online if you are not familiar with it). Notice by the third century how much more detail is included in the Nicene Creed, trying to both clarify how the persons of the trinity relate, as well as the relationship of the humanity and divinity of Jesus.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic* and apostolic church. *universal

We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

2. Many analogies have been used to discuss the relationship of the Trinity (three-leaf clover, egg, the three stages of water). What other analogies have you heard? Perhaps the most theologically sound division is Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. How does this help divide the roles of the persons of the Trinity? In what places do these roles overlap considering John 1 and Genesis 1:26?

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3. The Baptism of Jesus is recorded in Matthew 3: 13-16, Mark 1: 9-12, Luke 3: 21-22, John 1: 32-34. What is similar in each of these? What is different?
4. Matthew 17: 1-8 is the story of the Transfiguration. Which two persons of the Trinity are paired in this passage? What about in John 1: 1-14?
5. Acts 2: 1-14 and John 14: 15-31 both describe the coming of the Holy Spirit. How are these different in their portrayal of the Holy Spirit? How are they similar?
6. What lessons can we learn in how the three persons of the Trinity work together? How might it be a relief to Christ-followers to know that they don't have to do everything or care for everyone, just the role God has given them? What role has God given you? How do you rely on other members of the "team" to also do their called role? How is it comforting to know that we do not have to do life alone?
7. Eastern Orthodoxy often refers to the Holy Spirit as the Divine Energies of God. Where have you seen the Divine energies at work in our life this week?