The Blessed Trinity

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT

The one God is three divine Persons, each having the fullness of the divine nature, who live in a perfect communion of love. This is the central mystery of our faith.

Keeping the above statement in mind, read and meditate on the following passages:

SCRIPTURE (IN ORDER BY BOOK)

Gn 1:26	God is revealed as a community of Persons
Ps 51:11	Holy Spirit as a loose concept in the Old Testament; as a sign of God's presence and mercy
Mt 3:13-17	The Trinity is revealed at Jesus' Baptism
Mt 28:19	The Trinitarian formula for Baptism reveals coequality of the three Persons
Lk 1:30-35	The Trinity is revealed at Jesus' conception
Jn 8:58	Jesus claims divinity by claiming God's name: "I AM"
Jn 10:30	Unity of Jesus with the Father
Jn 14:16-17	The Father will give another Advocate to be with us always, the Spirit of truth
Jn 15:26	The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father
Acts 5:1-11	Lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God
2 Cor 13:14	Trinitarian blessing
1 Jn 4:8-16	God is love, and in his love he sent his Son for our sins and his Spirit to abide with us

CATECHISM (IN ORDER BY PARAGRAPH NUMBER)

42, 239	God is transcendent and at the same time immanent
202	Belief in the Trinity is belief in the one, undivided God
232-237	Salvation history is the history of the revelation of the Trinitarian God and how he reconciles to himself those who repent of sin and seek holiness
245-256	Creedal expressions of faith in the Trinity and statements of Trinitarian dogma
258-259	The Trinity works together to accomplish the plan for our salvation, yet each divine Person has a unique role, or work
260	God's ultimate plan is to bring us into unity with him
261	The Trinity is the central mystery of our faith

KEY TERMS

Attribution:	Speaking of the activities of all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity as the activity of only one Person (for example, God the Father as Creator)
First Cause:	The beginning cause of all things that is itself uncaused; God
Immanent:	God is intimately close to us; distinct from but present to us
Mystery:	1) A truth of faith that we could not know unless God revealed it; once it is known, it is understandable and reasonable, but is never fully comprehensible; 2) truths that surpass reason's powers and can only be shown to be non-contradictory
Nature:	The essence of a being considered as the source of activities
Person:	Who a being is (divine, angelic, or human); a rational nature that is responsible for actions
Property:	Something that belongs to one Person of the Blessed Trinity alone; for example, only the Son is generated
Transcendent:	God is beyond all of creation; all ideas and speech about God cannot fully understand or describe him

SUGGESTED HYMNS AND SONGS FOR CATECHETICAL SESSION

All Hail, Adored Trinity
All Praise and Glad Thanksgiving
Alle, Alle, Alleluia
Come Now, Almighty King
Glorify Thy Name
God, Whose Almighty Word
Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty
Holy God, We Praise Thy Name
O God, Almighty Father
Praise the God of All Creation
Shine, Jesus, Shine
Sing of the Lord's Goodness
Sing Praise to Our Creator

The Blessed Trinity

PREPARATION – LITURGY OF THE WORD

If beginning with a hymn or song, see previous page for suggestions
First Reading: 1 Jn 4:6-16
Response: Ps 103:2-5, 8-14, 17-22 (Ps 103B in *Participant's Book*)
Gospel: Jn 14:1-26

PROCLAMATION

The one God is three divine Persons, each having the fullness of the divine nature, who live in a perfect communion of love. This is the central mystery of our faith.

EXPLANATION

The mystery of God (see 1 Jn 3:2)

- God is beyond all his creation and cannot be completely comprehended (he is transcendent)
- He is not an impersonal "force"
- The are three divine Persons, that is, three "who," and one divine nature, that is, one "what"
- Since divinity is indivisible, there is one God, not three Gods (see Dt 6:4)
- Without God's direct revelation of the Trinity, this central mystery of the faith is unknowable

The Father, the first Person of the Blessed Trinity: the Creator (see Mal 2:10)

- The Father is an uncreated Being who created all things from nothing; he is the first cause
- He is a loving Father who continually cares for his people, drawing them to himself in mercy

The Son, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity: the Redeemer (see Jn 1:1-4)

- In his perfect knowledge of himself, the Father begot his one Word, the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity
- The Son is not *created* by the Father, but *begotten*; he is the uncreated image of the Father
- The Son is completely divine and coequal with the Father, and nothing was made without him
- He became Jesus Christ, taking on a complete human nature while remaining completely divine
- His sacrifice of his Passion and Death are the fullest sign of the total self-giving nature of God's love

The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity: the Sanctifier (see Rom 5:5)

- In their perfect love for each other, the Father and the Son spirated the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit is not *created* by the Father and the Son, but proceeds from them as an uncreated divine Person (we can think of this as a divine "sigh of love")
- The Holy Spirit is completely divine and coequal with the Father and the Son
- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God that moved over the waters at creation; he brings about a new creation in each soul through the grace of the sacraments of the Church

God is love (see 1 Jn 4:8-16)

- The three Persons live in a perfect communion of self-giving love; they are a family
- God's nature determines his actions; that is, who God is determines what God does
- God's actions are completely good and everything he does is from love
- God, in his love for us, acts in our lives: he is always close to us (he is immanent), yet remains distinct

Each of the three Persons has a work, or role (see Jn 14:23-26)

- Every work of God, including the work of salvation, is the common work of the three Persons
- The common work is attributed to each divine Person according to his specific role in the Father's plan for us

Every mystery of the faith flows from and is connected to the mystery of the Blessed Trinity (see 2 Cor 5:15)

- We were created for love; we live to respond to and then grow in that love; we die to self so that we may be resurrected to enter that love forever at the end of our earthly life (see Rom 14:7-9)

APPLICATION – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why does it matter that God's nature is that of a community, or family?
2. How might faith in the Trinity allow for a personal knowledge of God?
3. How does God's nature (a community of Persons whose life is love) determine what he does?
4. Why is God being both transcendent and immanent essential to believing in what he does?

CELEBRATION – SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSING PRAYER

1. Pray to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, asking each Person of the Trinity to act in our lives.
2. Hymn or song (see previous page for suggestions)
3. Pray the Doxology ("Glory Be") (see handout on Well-Known Catholic Prayers from *Participant's Book*)