

Goal for the Life Night

This is an easy one – explain the mystery of the Trinity. The night will seek to explain why would God choose to reveal Himself in terms of a relationship. It will give the teens an opportunity to relate to each person of the Trinity as distinct, yet each revealing the one, true God.

Life Night at a Glance

The Trinity is always a difficult topic to tackle. Most teens know that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but do not know how to relate to each Divine Person and why God would chose to reveal Himself in three natures. Everything in this night points to three-in-one. The night begins with a three-legged race. After a short teaching on the Trinity, teens will have a chance to talk about why it is important we know all three persons in the Trinity. The night will end with a reflection allowing teens to relate to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and receive a Holy Trinity prayer card.

Environment

The idea for the night is everything in threes. On the floor, mark off a triangle big enough for the whole group to sit inside. At each point of the triangle, have symbols and images that represent one person of the Trinity. Place objects around the room that come in a group of three like the three little pigs, DNA, three-legged stool, tricycle, or clover. Create a PowerPoint loop displaying pictures of objects or people that represent three, like three wheel spokes, the corner where walls and the ceiling come together, *Snickers*, a picture of the *Three Stooges*, triplets, Trinity from the *Matrix*, *Star Wars* or *Lord of the Rings*. Be as creative as you can with these images. The Core can make a three-headed Core Member by sewing t-shirts together. Have them walk around putting teens into groups of only three.

GATHER 15 Minutes

Welcome and Introduction (5 min)

Welcome all the teens to Life Night and introduce teens at Life Night for the first time. When introducing them, ask them questions in sets of three, for example: What's your name? Where do you go to school? Who is your favorite superhero?

Three-Legged Race (10 min)

Pick six people of all different sizes to compete in a three-legged race. Tie the inside legs of two people together. Each team has to race as fast as they can around the triangle taped on the floor. At each point, the team has to complete a different task like eat saltines and whistle, break dance, and sing, "I'm a Little Teapot." The first team to get all the way around the triangle and complete all three tasks wins.

PROCLAIM *15 minutes*

Teaching (15 min)

Teaching on the Trinity is challenging. We will never be able to fully and logically explain the mystery of the Trinity. To begin the teaching, ask the teens for some analogies they have heard used to describe the Trinity.

See teaching on page 24

BREAK 30 minutes

Small Group (30 min)

Break the teens up into groups of three. Start the small group in prayer. Ask each teen to pick the role of Father, Son or Holy Spirit. For the first question, have the teen answer like he/she was that person of the Trinity. The rest of the questions can be answered normally. Use the questions below to guide the conversation:

1. Who are you? What do you do?
2. Who are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to you?
3. Why is it important we know all three persons of God?
4. Which person of the Trinity do you relate to the easiest?
Which one do you have the most trouble relating to and why?

CATECHISM REFERENCES:

267
234
240
253-255

SCRIPTURES:

John 14:9
Matthew 11:27
John 14:17, 26
John 16:13

SEND *15 Minutes*

Wrap-Up (3 min)

Gather all the teens back together from small groups. The youth minister can give a short recap of the night. Remind the teens that although the Trinity can seem like a complicated doctrine to understand, God is still inviting us into communion with Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The deeper we are in relationship with Him, the better we will understand the Trinity.

Trinity Reflection (10 min)

Set an atmosphere of prayer before beginning the reflection. Before the Life Night, ask three teens to write a short prayer to one person of the Trinity. These prayers should be personal and help the teens relate to that person of the Trinity. At the beginning of the Send, have these three teens come forward. Starting with the prayer to the Father, have each of the three teens read their prayers. Play a worship song in between each prayer. Below are song suggestions for this time of prayer:

Father

Song: "Abba, Father" by Shawn Groves

Son

Song: "Jesus, My Everything" by Matt Maher

Holy Spirit

Song: "Consuming Fire" by Tim Hughes

Closing Prayer & Prayer Card (2 min)

Before the Life Night make copies of the Holy Trinity prayer card found on page 27. Make the copies on card stock and cut them out for each teen to place in their wallet or Bible. At the end of the night, pass out a prayer card to each teen. Close the night with the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

Prayer to the Holy Trinity

Glory be to the Father,
Who by His almighty power and love created me,
making me in the image and likeness of God.

Glory be to the Son,
Who by His Precious Blood delivered me from hell,
and opened for me the gates of heaven.

Glory be to the Holy Spirit,
Who has sanctified me in the sacrament of Baptism,
and continues to sanctify me
by the graces I receive daily from His bounty.

Glory be to the Three adorable Persons of the Holy Trinity,
now and forever. Amen.

Community Connection

- Invite parents to create a menu for this Life Night, serving only foods that come in threes.
- After the Life Night, follow up with emails and/or Facebook messages to the teens. Include different Scriptures and Saint quotes about the Trinity.

Making It Work

- If your meeting space is too small for the three-legged race to happen inside, move the group outside for the Gather of the night.
- Have the Send of the night in the Sanctuary rather in the regular meeting space.
- If small groups of three teens without a Core member will not work for your group, have normal sized small groups but create ways for them to relate and identify with the three persons of the Trinity.



Since God created us, it is pretty easy to assume that God is beyond our understanding in the same way that a picture cannot totally understand the artist who painted it. It would seem odd if the Mona Lisa suddenly knew everything about Leonardo da Vinci.

When we say that God has three persons that act on one nature, it is difficult to grasp, not because it is impossible, but because it is impossible for us. We find it hard enough to understand our own nature. How could we understand the nature of the person we know best in such a way that we actually share the same nature? We would have to be the same person! But what if two people were acting out the impulse of one nature?

Think about it. Close your eyes and think about the depth of what makes you who you are. All of your experiences. Each moment that passes you change and grow and develop. Your nature pushes your person to react to what I am saying and participate, or you may be thinking about something you have to do this week. Now ask yourself why. Why are you thinking what you are thinking? You could continue to ask why into infinity and still not reach the bottom of who you are.

Yet the Trinity of Persons that is God understands the nature of God perfectly! They act on that nature perfectly in a perfect relationship!

Do you have a headache yet? If you do, then you are on the right track! Now who are these three Persons that act on the Nature of God?

First is the Father. The Father of Jesus and our Father. Jesus tells us that the Father is loving, caring, healing and forgiving. Jesus tells us that the Father is just, true, and that his love is faithful and eternal. The Father is the source of all that is, both visible to the human eye and invisible. The Father “begets” the Son from all eternity. “Begets” means to produce something like ourselves. Except that the Father never changes so the Son always existed since He is always begotten of the Father. We even say it in the Creed at Mass!

CCC #232-237, 426

CCC #240-242, 290, 441-445, 454

Hebrews 1:3

The Second Person of the Trinity is the Son whose name is Jesus Christ. While He is referred to as the “Son of God” He was always God and we refer to him as “consubstantial” with the Father, meaning that They always existed together. At a certain point in human history, the Son became the son of Mary. He was truly a man. He was and is the savior and redeemer of the world.

CCC #464-467, 469

The Third Person in the Trinity is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has always proceeded or come forth from the Father and the Son as a product of Their love. Since Their love has always existed, there was never a time the Holy Spirit did not exist. The Holy Spirit was fully revealed by Jesus to save and guide the Church and her members.

CCC #291-292, 683-690, 742-743

It may be difficult to understand how the Father, the Son and the Spirit can all exist at the same time. After all, if there is a Father, shouldn't the Father come before the Son?

Galatians 4:6

Remember that God is bigger than our understanding. To borrow the example of C. S. Lewis, what if you came into a room and saw a cup on top of a book on top of a table? All of them are there but you would assume that the table was there first immediately. If I then told you that the cup was there for all eternity, you would immediately assume that the book and the table were there as well. The Trinity is kind of like that.

“Mere Christianity” by C.S. Lewis

The persons of the Trinity depend on each other in the same way that they act individually. Their shared nature of God acts so that we truly have one God who acts, but at the same time it is three different persons who are acting without beginning or end.

I said at the beginning that this would be difficult to understand. We could probably talk about this all year and never get to the bottom of it. Let's take what we have right now and break it down.

"O my God, Trinity whom I adore... grant my soul peace; make it your heaven, your beloved dwelling, and the place of your rest. May I never abandon you there, but may I be there, whole and entire, completely vigilant in my faith, entirely adoring, and wholly given over to your creative action."

– Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity

Prayer to the Holy Trinity

Glory be to the Father,
Who by His almighty power and love
created me, making me in the image
and likeness of God.

Glory be to the Son, Who by His Precious
Blood delivered me from hell,
and opened for me the gates of heaven.

Glory be to the Holy Spirit, Who has
sanctified me in the sacrament of Baptism,
and continues to sanctify me by the
graces I receive daily from His bounty.

Glory be to the Three adorable Persons of
the Holy Trinity, now and forever.
Amen.



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