



## On your marks

Christians describe the fullness of God using the formula: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This understanding of God is drawn from the teachings of the Bible and the life and words of Jesus in particular. Although this is not an easy concept for adults, let alone children – and of course for many outside the Christian faith, it can be a stumbling block – Christians believe that God works in three distinct ways. They believe that the hidden face of God the Father was made visible on earth as Jesus, and that the life of God the Son is experienced in Christians as the Holy Spirit, who is the invisible God living inside people.

## Get set

A key verse from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians contains the idea of the Trinity and this has become a common way for Christians to bless each other at the end of a service or meeting:

*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

2 Corinthians 13:14 (NIRV)

## Go!

### A welcome warm-up

Welcome everyone to this special feast day and introduce the theme of 'one in three and three in one' with some simple number-related warm-up exercises, such as:

- Get ready for a sprint race, using different poses for 'on your marks', 'get set' and 'go' as your 3-2-1 action positions.
- Do some finger exercises, counting 1, 2 and 3 as you put up one finger after another and then down again, counting in reverse. Now do it with both hands at the same time – try going faster and faster.
- Involve everyone in other workout exercises involving three different actions put together such as: stretching, bending and jumping; touching heads, then shoulders, then knees; putting both feet together and, jumping up and down three times only, turning a complete circle.
- Organise a treasure hunt, in which groups of three have to find three matching objects. These could be real items or pictures on cards. You could include: three paper plates; three plastics spoons; three paper cups; three pieces of ribbon of the same colour; three post-it notes of the same design and colour. All the items suggested here can then be slipped into or over each other to give the impression that they are not three but one.

### Teach a chant

Use the following rhythmical chant to capture the theme of the service/session by clapping and

calling out the simple poem:

1, 2, 3 - Discover a mystery  
3, 2, 1 - Of Father Spirit Son  
1, 2, 3 - Is all of God for me  
3, 2, 1 - God is three in one

Whenever Christians want to pray for each other, they often use these three ways of describing God. They speak or bless people in the name of 'God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit'. These may be three names, but there is only one God.

Teach some simple actions to go with these three different ways of describing God. For example:

- God the Father who made the world - *describe a circle with both hands*
- God the Son, who rescued the world - *make the sign of the cross*
- God the Spirit, who gives power to the people of God - *link your hands by the thumbs and put them splayed over your heart*. The hands linked by the thumbs mean that you could easily turn this into an action for a bird, like a dove. This is another helpful way of describing the Holy Spirit.

## Games

Here is a selection of games that you could play on the theme of Trinity.

*Three-in-one clothes:* Divide the group into three teams. Provide each team with the same set of three items of clothing - a soft hat, a jacket and a wrap. At a given signal, one member of the team must put on these three items of clothing as quickly as possible. However, with each new turn, each person in the team must wear the items in a different way. How many ways can each team think up of wearing the three items as one set of clothes?

*Three-in-one challenge:* Pass around various items among your group. As individuals or as teams, people should try to come up with three different ways the same object could be used. Encourage people to use their imagination as vividly as possible. Objects could include: a cardboard tube; a piece of hose; a plain piece of cloth; a coloured square of plastic; a twig from a shrub; a juggling ball; a ball of cotton wool; a jam jar; a piece a bamboo cane; a free CD disc, and so on.

*Three illustrates one:* In teams of three, play a game of group charades, in which three people have to mime the following phrases or words, which are all linked to three in some way. Can the others guess what they are miming? Blind mice; French hens; musketeers; a hat-trick; wishes; guesses; little pigs; Goldilocks' bears, and so on.

## Group drama

Here are some ideas for group drama.

Teams of three should work out some synchronised movements that they can do together (moving as one) to go from one side of a room to the other. They must move as a single unit and try to include as many different types of movement as possible.

Continuing in threes, get each group to become the three parts of an integrated machine that produces a single product. Help them to decide on a product - for example, a packet of crisps; a football; an ice cream; a newspaper, and so on. They should each keep their product a secret! The groups should then work on the connected actions they need to perform as a machine to produce their items. Can the others guess what 'one thing from three' is being produced?

Now give out a short synopsis of one or two of the following Bible stories, all of which involve threes in some way. Set the group or the groups the challenge of trying to act out (in under a minute) the story with or without words. Here are the stories, which in their own way are also clues to the Trinity:

- The three visitors to Abraham (Genesis 18:1-15)
- Daniel's three friends in the furnace (Daniel 3:1-30)
- Peter, James and John go up the mountain with Jesus (Matthew 17:1-13)
- Three gifts brought by wise men to Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12)

What clues to the Trinity does each story give?

### **A musical activity**

Another useful analogy of the three-in-oneness of the Trinity has a musical connection. Every piece of music can be thought of as being made up of three parts: there is the composer who created it in the first place; the instrument(s) that produce the (invisible) sounds; and the performer who plays the notes. In a similar way, God the creator is the great composer; Jesus is the human performer we see who played God's tune perfectly for us to hear; and the music itself is the Holy Spirit who mysteriously touches and inspires us beyond words.

Sing some simple songs about the Trinity, such as:

- 'Father, we adore you' (Mission Praise 139)
- 'Father, we love you' (Mission Praise 142)
- 'There is a redeemer' (Mission Praise 673)

Two of these songs can be sung as rounds, which is another way of musically illustrating the Trinity, as different tunes blend together as one. Once the group becomes familiar with the words and tune, they might like to work on some movements to the music to illustrate 'three working together as one'. Try some counting songs, such as '1 2 3 Jesus loves me' (Junior Praise:189), or use a familiar tune such as 'London's burning, London's burning' to try these words about the Trinity:

*God the Father, God the Father  
Made the world, made the world*



*Sing praise, sing praise.  
Let us thank him, let us thank him.*

*God the Son, God the Son  
Died to save us, died to save us  
Sing to Jesus, sing to Jesus  
He won't leave us, he won't leave us.*

*God the Spirit, God the Spirit  
Comes to help us, comes to help us  
Sing praise, sing praise  
He is with us, He is with us.*

### **A time for reflection**

For this part of the service/session, get everyone to be from groups in a triangle formation with equal sides. For example, a group of nine could sit with one person at each of the three corners and then two people in between these on the three sides.

Into the centre of each of these triangles, the 'triangle leader' should set out three circles of white felt, each overlapping the other to create another triangle. As these are put down, say these words:

*Today we have discovered that God is three but also one.*

Now, as the leader says each of the following lines, place the described visual on each of the three white circles.

*There is God the Creator, who made us.*

Put down a picture of a small globe or a picture printed from the computer or cut from an old atlas.

*There is God the Redeemer, who rescues us.*

Put down a small cross.

*There is God the Sustainer, who strengthens us.*

Put down a picture of a flame and of a dove.

Next, use the following wondering questions to prompt everyone to think of what the Trinity might mean for them.

- I wonder which part of God you like the best.
- I wonder which part of God is the most important.
- I wonder if we can leave out any part of God and still have all of the God we need.
- I wonder why Christians describe God in three parts.



- I wonder which part of God you feel closest to at the moment.

After a short silence, end this section with the chant from the beginning of the service/session, while the leader carefully collects up the focal items from the centre of the triangle.

### **Actions for The Grace**

Teach the following actions for the words of 2 Corinthians 13:14:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ - *hold out your hands as if expecting a present*

And the love of God - *put your hands on your heart*

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit - *all hold hands*

Be with us all now and forever. Amen! - *raise hands together on the word Amen*