

Trinity Sunday Intergenerational Program "Divine Love"

Learning Objectives

The Trinity Sunday learning session guides learners of all ages to...

Understand and experience the Trinity as an outpouring of divine love (know what).

Participate in the Trinity Sunday liturgy with a renewed awareness of the mystery of the Trinity and how that mystery calls communities, families and individuals to love universally (know how).

Appreciate the importance of reaching out in love to others, especially the outcast and marginalized, so that humanity will be transformed into the likeness of the Triune God (know why).

Catechism Connection

232-260, 2204, 1082, 1077-1109

Background Readings

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Washington, DC: USCC Publishing, 1997.

Catholic Updates

The Trinity: The Mystery at the Heart of Life, Leonard Foley, O.F.M., CU0788

Are Our Images of God Growing?, Pat McCloskey, O.F.M., C0691

Who Is Jesus?, Leonard Foley, O.F.M., C0985

Who Is the Holy Spirit?, Elizabeth Johnson, C0695

Books

The Trinity by Karl Rahner, Seabury Press, 1974.

God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life by Catherine LaCugna, Harper Collins, 1991.

Altogether Gift: A Trinitarian Spirituality by Michael Downey, Orbis Books, 2000.

Trinity by Anne Hunt, Orbis Books, 2005.

The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity by Gerald O'Collins, S.J., Paulist Press, 1999

Potential Uses

Preparation for Trinity Sunday Year A, Year B or Year C

(Thank you to Paula Ekis from St. Michael Parish in Canfield, Ohio for helping to develop this learning experience as well as inspiring other ideas for this session.)

Session Resources

Before the Session

Environment

Set up a tall table in the front of the large gathering room with one large candle that has three wicks. If you cannot find this kind of candle you may use three identical large candles.

Place a shorter table in front of the tall table. The shorter table should be large enough to hold a globe, a Bible and a model or picture of a church.

The globe, the Bible and the model or picture of a church should be out of sight and in the rear of the room as the participants arrive.

Home Kit

Home Activities at Generations of Faith Online

1. Table Prayer – Year A
2. Table Prayer – Year B
3. Table Prayer – Year C
4. Three-in-One God
5. Trinitarian Tube Art

Prayer Resources

Haas, David. *Increase Our Faith – Parish Prayer Services for Whole Community Catechesis.*

(Three Volumes: Year A, B, C) Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, 2005, 2006

McCann, Deborah. *Let Us Gather – Prayer Services for Catholic Schools and Assemblies.*

Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002.

Materials for the Session

Gathering

Name tags

Community building activities

All Ages Opening Learning Experience

Opening Prayer Service

Bible

In-Depth Learning Experience

- Knives for peeling and cutting apples (one per table group)
- Red apples (one per table group)
- Bible

- The following magazine pictures: an old person in a nursing home, a popular local professional sports team, a very popular female talk-show host, an average-looking child, a popular celebrity, an average-looking man, a physically attractive man, an average-looking woman, a physically attractive woman, a person in a wheelchair, a popular Olympic gold medalist, a garbage collector, and a famous businessman or businesswoman.

Handout: *Picture Preference Tally* (one per table/group)

Year A

Large bowl (one per table)

Medium-sized container with plastic lid such as a coffee container (one per table)

Ping pong balls (four per table)

Permanent marker

Large cups or water bottles with lids (six per table)

Handout *Family: A Sign of the Trinity* (one per table)

Handout *Families Are...* (one per family)

Scissors (one per table)

Pencils (several per table)

Plain paper (several per table)

Poster board (one per family)

Poster-making supplies such as crayons, glue, glitter, construction paper, magazines, etc.

Year B

- Individually-wrapped pieces of candy (one per person)
- Small bowls (one per table)
- Handout *Trinity Gospel Year B* (one for every other person)

Year C

Bowls of water with a pine branch or a leafy branch (one per adult participant who does not have children in the program)

Handout *The Trinity in John* (two per table)

Paper and pencil to make one telephone phrase per table

Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application

Closing

- Closing Prayer Service

Session at a Glance

Part One: Gathering (45 minutes)

Part Two: All Ages Learning Experience (20 minutes)

Trinitarian Creed

Part Three: In-Depth Learning Experience (90 minutes)

Choose a Learning Group Format

- Whole Group Format
- Age Group Format

Learning Plan

Apples and Oranges
Who is the Trinity?
God Loves the World - Year A
Trinitarian Gospel - Year B
The Trinity According to John - Year C

Part Four: Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application
(15 minutes)

Part Five: Closing Prayer Service (10 minutes)

Part 1

Gathering (45 minutes)

1. Registration and Hospitality

- Welcome people and ask them to sign in for the program.
- Ask people to make a nametag. (See below for instructions.)
- Distribute the Home Kit, including any handouts participants will need for the session. (You can also distribute handouts for the In-Depth Learning program at the beginning of the activity.)
- Invite people to share a meal; depending on time of day, the program may end with a meal instead.

Welcome

Welcome the participants to the program and introduce the theme of the session.

2. Group Formation

In the Whole Group Format, organize people into intergenerational small groups of approximately eight people OR organize table groups of families with children, adolescents, and adults. If you organize into intergenerational groups, participants will remain with their group for the entire program. Ask all members of the same family to sit together in these intergenerational groups. Each group should have as many of the following categories as possible: family (parents, children, teens), young adults, adults without children, and older adults. If members of the same family are intergenerational – children, teens, parents, and grandparents – keep them together in one group.

3. Opening Prayer Service

Materials

Three-wick candle
Two tables of differing heights
Globe
Bible
Model or picture of a church building

Preparation

- Set up the prayer table according to the instructions above.
- Prepare three persons to carry in the globe, the Bible and the church picture or model.
- Choose appropriate music for an opening song.

Opening Song

Leader: Opening Prayer

Let us pray to our one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Father, you sent your Word to bring us truth and your Spirit to make us holy. Through them we come to know the mystery of life. Help us to worship you, one God in three Persons, by proclaiming and living our faith in you. Amen.

(Adapted from the liturgy for Trinity Sunday)

Light the first wick on the candle.

Reader One

(Read slowly as the globe is processed forward and placed on the shorter table near the wick that is burning.)

We honor God as Father and Creator of all that is, all that is seen and unseen. All things come into being as an outpouring of the abundant love that the Father shares with the Son and the Spirit. Creation is a gift from the love of the Father. Please respond: Glory to the Father!

All

Glory to the Father!

Light the second wick on the candle.

Reader Two

(Read slowly as the Bible is processed forward and placed on the shorter table near the second wick that is burning.) *We honor God as Son who is the Word of God made flesh. Christ is more than words on pages; rather, Christ is the living Word of God spoken eternally from the heart of God and through all the ages. The Bible is a gift inspired by the Son who is the living Word of God. Please respond: Glory to the Son!*

All

Glory to the Son!

Light the third wick on the candle.

Reader Three

(Read slowly as the church model or picture is processed forward and placed on the shorter table near the third wick that is burning.)

We honor God as Holy Spirit who lives in the Church and builds us up into the body of Christ. A church of brick and mortar is only a sign of the true Church made of living stones. We are those living stones that become the Church – the body of Christ – by the power of the Holy Spirit. The living Church is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit who is working to transform all of creation into the image of God. Please respond: Glory to the Holy Spirit!

All

Glory to the Holy Spirit!

Scripture Reading

Year A: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Year B: Romans 8:14-17

Year C: Romans 5:1-5

Responsive Prayer

All

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

Leader

We thank you, Father, for giving us love and life. We ask you to inspire us with a loving concern for all of creation. We pray to the Lord.

All

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

Leader

We thank you, Son of God, for speaking words of truth with your life. We ask you to cleanse our mouths and our actions, so that all we say and do will be good and holy. We pray to the Lord.

All

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

Leader

We thank you, Holy Spirit, for living in our Church community. We ask you to make us a community of love, so that all who witness our love for each other will be inspired to love you. We pray to the Lord.

All

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

Leader

Three in One God, we offer our lives to you every day in the same way that we close this prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Part 2

All Ages Learning Experience: Trinitarian Creed (20 minutes)

Preparation

Photocopy the handout *Nicene Creed* (one for every other person).

Activity Plan

1. [spoken text] Introduce this learning experience with these or similar words: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that the Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and that it is the source of all other Christian mysteries. When we talk about the basics of our faith, the Trinity is the foundation of them all. The Nicene Creed, which we profess at our Sunday liturgy, expresses our core beliefs about the Trinitarian God.*
2. Pass out copies of the handout *Nicene Creed*.
3. Invite participants to break into pairs and work on memorizing the creed for about five minutes. Encourage younger children to work with the pairs by creating actions to go with the words.
4. Ask one person from each table to collect all of the copies of the creed and place them face down on the table.
5. Divide each table group into three smaller groups. Challenge each small group to recite the creed (and share the actions) to the other groups by memory. The other groups may look at the handout to see how well the group does.
6. The table leader selects the group that most successfully recited the creed.
7. If there are not too many table groups in your program, you can extend this activity by matching the best groups from all of the tables against each other. Record the names of the top two or three groups at the end of the competition. They will receive their dinners last at the next GOF session because "the last will be first, and the first will be last."
8. Draw everyone's attention to the handout *Nicene Creed*.
9. Give the participants a few minutes at their table to identify the Trinitarian structure of the creed.
10. Conclude by saying that we believe in one God (draw attention to the first words of the creed) who is three divine persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Close by making the sign of the cross.

Part 3

In-Depth Learning Experiences (90 minutes)

Whole Group Format

This format guides the entire assembly through each of the learning experiences.

You might choose this format if you have:

- a large physical space with good acoustics/sound system and furniture to comfortably accommodate the learners
- a competent large group facilitator/master of ceremonies able to provide clear directions and to manage the dynamics and energy of a large group
- a group of catechists who feel comfortable moving through the assembly offering assistance, or a large enough team of table leader catechists to have one catechist work with each table group
- a learning topic that lends itself to everyone learning the same thing at the same time, but in different ways, in the same space

Facilitation Tips for This Format

Guide small groups through each of the activities at the same time.

- Organize people into table groups based on age groupings: families with children (grades 1-5), middle school adolescents, high school adolescents, young adults, and adults.
- The lead facilitator guides the entire group through each of the learning experiences. All presentations and activity instructions are given to the whole group.
- The age-appropriate learning activities within each learning experience are conducted in table groups.
- Where needed, catechists and small group leaders facilitate the work of the table groups.

Whole Group Format Outline (90 minutes)

Learning Plan Outline

Learning Experience One

Apples and Oranges (Families with children) 30 minutes

Who is the Trinity? (Adults and Adolescents) 30 minutes

Learning Experience Two

God Loves the World - Year A (All ages) 60 minutes

Or

Trinitarian Gospel - Year B (All ages) 60 minutes

Or

The Trinity According to John - Year C (All ages) 60 minutes

Age Group Format

This format provides for three separate parallel learning programs. Though age groups are separated, each one is focusing on the same topic.

You might choose this format if you have:

- an adequate number of meeting spaces for the various groups to gather
- an adequate number of competent facilitators and catechists to work with each group
- a topic that is best explored through age-specific learning

Facilitation Tips for This Format

- Organize participants into three or more parallel learning groups: families with children (grades 1-5), adolescents (grades 6-12), and adults.
- If there is a large number of adolescents, divide them into two groups: middle school and high school.

Organize separate groups for young adults, adults, and older adults. Or you can give the adults their own choice for forming small groups.

- Direct the adolescents and adults into small groups. Give them all the handouts and learning materials needed for the learning experiences.
- Guide the families with children into table groups of two or more families. Give each table all the handouts and learning materials necessary for the learning experiences.
- A facilitator must guide all of the families through each learning experience, while catechists move from table to table assisting.

Age Group Format Outline

The In-Depth Learning Plan can be utilized for break-out groups of families with children, adolescents, and adults.

Families with Children

You can organize the learning activities in two ways. The lesson plan is designed for table groups of two or more families (you can organize individual family groups). Make sure each table has the supplies, instructions, and learning materials necessary to do the activities. A facilitator guides the families through each activity. Catechists move from table to table, assisting families.

Learning Plan Outline

Learning Experience One ***Apples and Oranges (30 minutes)***

Learning Experience Two
God Loves the World - Year A (60 minutes)
Or
Trinitarian Gospel - Year B (60 minutes)
Or
The Trinity According to John - Year C (60 minutes)

Adolescents

Learning Plan Outline

Learning Experience One
Who is the Trinity? (30 minutes)

Learning Experience Two
God Loves the World - Year A (60 minutes)
Or
Trinitarian Gospel - Year B (60 minutes)
Or
The Trinity According to John - Year C (60 minutes)

Young Adults and Adults

Learning Plan Outline

Learning Experience One
Who is the Trinity? (30 minutes)

Learning Experience Two
God Loves the World - Year A (60 minutes)
Or
Trinitarian Gospel - Year B (60 minutes)
Or
The Trinity According to John - Year C (60 minutes)

Learning Experience: Apples and Oranges (30 minutes)

Whole Group: Families with children

Age Group: Families with children

Materials

- Knives for peeling and cutting apples (one per table group)
- Red apples (one per table group)
- Bible

Preparation

- This learning experience requires cutting up an apple. It is important that the knives for this activity are only used by the table leaders and are collected and put away immediately after the activity is complete.

Activity Plan

1. [spoken text] Introduce this learning experience with these or similar words: *Do we believe that there is one God or three gods? (Pause for responses.) We believe that there is one God. Then what do we mean when we speak of the Trinity? Trinity means three of something – what is the three in the Trinity? (Pause for responses.) The three refers to the three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who are the one God. We believe in one God who is three persons. This is a great mystery, but God did not reveal it to us for nothing. God wants to teach us something about ourselves by teaching us something about the Trinity. Before we talk about ourselves, let's explore this three in one idea a little more.*

God reveals the Trinity to us in many ways. Some of the ways are very natural and are right under our noses every day. We simply have to look with the eyes of faith to see God in them.

2. Hold up the apple and ask, "What is this?" Ask, "Who created it?" Continue with these or similar words: *Apples are part of God's creation, and all of God's creation reveals to us something about the Trinity. This is more than an apple; it is a small expression of God. All of creation is in some way an expression of Trinitarian love.*
3. Cut the apple into three parts: the skin, the flesh, and the core (expose the seeds in the core). Invite participants to identify the parts of the apple.

[spoken text] Do you see one apple or three apples? How do you see one apple when there are three things in front of us? (Allow some discussion.)

4. [spoken text] Introduce this discussion with these or similar words: *Much of the Bible reveals God the Father as a creator. Invite a participant to read Deuteronomy 32:6. The Father is a creator.*

Look at the three parts of the apple. Which part would you identify as the creative part? (Allow some discussion.) While there could be creativity in all three parts, and certainly the Son and the Holy Spirit participate in the creativity of the Father, I think the core of the apple is most like the creative Father. In every seed, there is the potential for the creation of a new apple tree with bushels and bushels of apples that will be created year after year. Seeds have much creative power.

The Bible reveals God the Son as a gift from the Father. Invite a participant to read John 3:16. The Son is a gift for us.

Look again at the three parts of the apple. When you pick up an apple to eat, what is the part that you really want? (Pause for responses.) The flesh is the sweet part that most of us want. It is the gift part of the apple, and that makes it most like the Son who is the gift of the Father.

God the Holy Spirit is revealed as one who moves us to accept the gift as a grateful response to the Father who gave it to us. Invite a participant to read John 16:12-13. The Holy Spirit guides us to Jesus who is the truth.

Look again at the three parts of the apple. If we identified the flesh of the apple as the part that is most like Jesus, the Son of God, then which part guides us to the flesh of the apple? (Pause for responses.) The beautiful red skin moves us to pick up the apple and take a bite. Red, by the way, is the symbolic color of the Holy Spirit. The skin is most like the Holy Spirit who guides us to Jesus the Son.

While apples, and all fruit, can teach us something about God, they are not exactly like God. For example, would you say that the skin of the apple is a complete apple? (Pause for responses.) No, it is only one part of an apple. Unlike an apple, we believe that the Father is completely God, not just part of God; and the Son is also completely God, not just part of God; and the Holy Spirit is also completely God, not just part of God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy are perfectly united as one God.

Can anyone think of anything else that might be a sign of the Trinity? (Pause for responses.) How about a family? How is a family like the Trinity? (Allow for discussion) A father, a mother, and a child are three distinct persons who are bonded together in love as a single family. The desire that families have to be together in peace is somewhat like the Trinity. The Catholic Church calls families a sign of the Trinity. God is a Trinity. This teaches us that God desires to be in relationships of love. That is why human beings want relationships. We are created in the image of a God who is a loving relationship of three persons. The more we are committed to our relationships, the more we are like God, and the happier we are.

5. Take a moment to review the apple analogy, the family analogy, and any other analogies that may have been discussed.
6. Cut up the flesh of the apple and give everyone a piece to eat.
7. Closing: *We thank you God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for generously sharing your love and life with us in so many ways. Amen.*

Learning Experience: Who Is the Trinity? (30 Minutes)

Whole Group: Adolescents and Adults

Age Group: Adolescents and Adults

Materials

- The following pictures are needed: An old person in a nursing home, an exciting picture of the most popular local professional sports team, an average-looking child, a popular celebrity, an average-looking man, a physically attractive man, an average-looking woman, a physically attractive woman, a person in a wheelchair, a popular Olympic gold medalist, a garbage collector, and a famous businessman or businesswoman.
- Handout: *Picture Preference Tally*

Preparation

- You will need to plan early for this learning experience so that you can gather all the pictures needed for your teen and adult table groups.

Activity Plan

1. [spoken text] Introduce this learning experience with these or similar words: *As we mentioned earlier, the Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith. For many people, the Trinity is a mystery too confounding to think about. Too many of us say we believe in the Trinity without reflecting on how that belief challenges us to transform our lives and our relationships each day. One thing is certain: God would not give us a mystery that is central to who we are as people of God without giving us the ability to understand how that mystery calls us to live. While we will never fully understand God in this life, there are very specific things we can say about the Trinity that help us to understand more about what it means to be human. Let us first review the traditional doctrine of the Trinity.*
2. Ask the following questions and solicit responses from the participants.
 - Is the Father, the person to whom Jesus offered his prayers, God?
 - Is the Son, revealed to us in Jesus, God?
 - Is the Holy Spirit God?
 - How many Gods are there?
 - If there is only one God, then how are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit God?

[spoken text] Continue the discussion with these or similar words. *These questions and their answers are the mysterious part of the Trinity that will drive you crazy if you think about them too much. The important thing for us is that the Bible and the tradition of the Church have revealed to us that there is one God who is three distinct, divine persons who are perfectly united in love. You might say that God is a perfectly diverse unity. We will come back to this idea of God later, but first let us consider the current situation of humanity in our culture while keeping in mind that humanity is the image of the Trinitarian God. I'm*

going to show you some pictures, two at a time, and I want you to rank your level of interest on a scale of one to ten. One = I'm not very interested in what I see in the picture. Ten = I'm extremely interested in what I see in the picture.

The table leader should keep track of the rankings on the handout: *Picture Preference Tally*. Each individual's ranking is not as important as the total tally of rankings by the group for each set of pictures.

3. Show the person in the nursing home beside the professional sports team. Record the scores on the handout.
4. Show the average-looking child beside the popular celebrity. Record the scores.
5. Show the average-looking man beside the physically attractive man. You may want to record only the female scores for this one.
6. Show the average-looking woman beside the physically attractive woman. You may want to record only the male scores for this one.
7. Show the person in the wheelchair beside the Olympic gold medalist. Record the score.
8. Show the garbage collector beside the famous businessman or businesswoman.
9. Discuss the results of the tally. Here are a few thoughts for you as you facilitate the discussion:
 - Our culture values some people more than others. We express that by the money we pay to these people, by the attention we give to them, by the items we buy to support them and express our support for them, and by the way we incorporate their ideals and values as our own. If we are honest, most of us would probably choose to have lunch with an exciting, successful, funny, interesting, good-looking person rather than go to a nursing home to have lunch with an older person. We need not feel too guilty about having that desire; our culture has taught us to desire that.
 - But we probably should feel guilty if we discover that tendency in ourselves, and we recognize the divisiveness it causes, and choose to do nothing to correct it.
 - There is great diversity in our culture, and we often feel like we have to make decisions to value certain people more than others. These pictures give us a small glimpse of the great diversity that exists in our culture.

[spoken text] Recall earlier that you identified God as three distinct, divine persons united perfectly as one God. This perfect unity means that one divine person is no more Godly than either of the other two. God the Father is no more valuable than God the Son or God the Holy Spirit. The diversity of persons in God does not create division or hierarchy of value. The three distinct persons of the Trinity extend themselves out to each other in perfect love and

respect. That love is so abundant that it spills beyond God to all of creation. Creation is the result of the abundance of God's love.

Human beings are created in the image of this abundantly-loving, diversely-unified Trinitarian God. We can only be happy when we express the image of God that we are. That means we need to be abundantly loving toward each other, and we need to be unified in our diversity.

10. Place all of the pictures of the popular, high-powered people on one side of the table and the other pictures on the other side of the table.

[spoken text] Introduce this discussion with these or similar words: *If all human beings are created in the image of God, where do you see the image of God among these pictures? The image of God is present in every picture. The diversity of the people in the pictures reflects the diversity of the persons of the Trinity. Just as all of the persons of the trinity are equal in divinity, so too are all the diverse people of the world equal in dignity and value. What happens to the image of God in humanity when we value these persons (point to the pictures of popular people) more than these persons (point to the other pictures)?*

We fail to see part of God in our world when we fail to value all people equally. This is not to say that the lowly, the outcast, the ugly, the disabled, and the forgotten ones of the world are more valuable than the pretty and popular people. They deserve our special attention only because they have been forgotten in the hectic rush to praise and elevate the high-achieving people. We need to find ways to value and appreciate all people equally.

What would we have to do, and what is being done, to rearrange our society to value all people equally?

11. Closing [spoken text]: Close this discussion with these or similar words: *The Trinity is a mystery with a practical message. The Trinity calls us to value and respect all people equally in the same way that the diverse, divine persons of the Trinity share in the unifying love that is God. Let us pray. God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it is your purpose to reach out in love to others. Created in your image, give us all the courage to reach out in love and concern for each other, especially for the people we tend not to value as highly as others. Amen.*

Learning Experience: God Loves the World – Year A (60 minutes)

Whole Group: Families with children, Adults, Adolescents

Age Group: Families with children, Adults, Adolescents

Materials

- Large bowl (one per table)
- Medium-sized opaque container with plastic lid such as a coffee container (one per table)
- Ping pong balls (four per table)
- Permanent marker
- Large cups or water bottles with lids (six per table)
- Handout *Family: A Sign of the Trinity* (one per adult and teen group)
- Handout *Families Are...* (one per family)
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Plain paper
- Poster board (one per family)
- Poster-making supplies such as crayons, glue, glitter, construction paper, magazines, etc.

Preparation

- For each table, fill six large cups (use six sport water bottles with lids if you're concerned about spills) with water. Write each of the following six phrases on one of the cups: I am the Father and I love the Son; I am the Father and I love the Holy Spirit; I am the Son and I love the Father; I am the Son and I love the Holy Spirit; I am the Holy Spirit and I love the Father; I am the Holy Spirit and I love the Son.
- Place a large bowl in the center of each table.
- Place a medium-sized container with a plastic lid in each bowl on each table. The container should be large enough to hold most of the water in the cups/water bottles. When the last of the water is poured into the container, you want it to overflow into the bowl. The container should also be opaque.
- Cut a hole in the center of the lid. The hole should be about 1 ½ times the diameter of a ping pong ball.
- Place four labeled ping-pong balls in the container. Label ball #1 *God*; label ball #2 *Loves*; label ball #3 *The*; and label ball #4 *World*. Use permanent ink and do not use balls that have holes in them. They need to be able to float in the water. Put the lid on the container.
- Gather poster making supplies.
- Photocopy handouts.

Activity Plan

1. [spoken text] Introduce this learning experience with these or similar words: *Have you ever loved someone so much that you just had to do something to show it? Offer an example from your own life and allow others to do the same. Love is designed to overflow into action. Love is not supposed to just stay in our hearts; love is meant to be shared with those we love. We share love by showing our love in loving actions.*

We can learn about God's love in so many ways, but one of the most important ways is through the Bible. On Trinity Sunday we will hear a Bible reading from the Gospel according to John that describes God's love for the world. Let's begin by listening to that reading.

2. Read John 3:16-18, or invite a participant to read it to your table group.
3. Discuss, using these or similar words:

What does this reading teach us about God and the world? (Pause for responses.) This reading teaches us that God cares deeply about the world and wishes the world no harm.

When you hear in this reading that God loves the world and doesn't want to condemn it, what do you think is meant by the world? (Pause for responses.) The emphasis in this particular reading seems to be on human beings in the world, but the scriptures in general suggest that God loves all of creation. The goodness of creation is affirmed in the first chapter of Genesis, and Romans 1:20 and 8:19-23 teach us that salvation is for all of creation, not just human beings. God loves the world and everything and everyone in it.

Why do you think God loves the world and everything in it? (Pause for responses.) There can be a wide variety of responses to this question. Help participants to recall that God is love, God is triune, and God is the creator. This suggests to us that creation is an expression of the love of God. God's love – the love shared among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – is superabundant love. The love that each person of the Trinity gives to the other two persons is too much to contain. It spills out beyond the Trinity and that is where creation comes from. It is an expression of God's overflowing love. It is a part of God's love. That is why God loves everything and does not want to condemn anything.

4. Introduce the water activity with these or similar words: *I'd like to invite each of you to take turns pretending to be one of the persons of the Trinity expressing your love for one of the other persons of the Trinity. We'll take turns picking up one of the six cups on the table, reading what is written on the cup, and then pouring about 1/3 of the cup's contents into the hole on the lid of the container in the center of the table. We will keep doing this until all the water is in the container. The container may then have something important to show us and to tell us.*
5. One by one, invite participants to select a cup, read the cup, and pour 1/3 of the cup's contents into the hole on the lid of the container. When the container is nearly full, the ping-pong balls will begin to emerge in the hole. Pull them out when they

appear and let them fall into the large bowl. The water will eventually overflow into the large bowl with all four ping-pong balls floating in the bowl. IMPORTANT NOTE: You may have to shake the container with the lid a little bit to get some of the ping-pong balls to move toward the hole.

6. Discuss:
 - *How does this demonstration remind us of God's love for the world? How is the Trinity the source of that love?*
 - *What do the six cups represent? (The three distinct persons of the Trinity)*
 - *What does the water represent? (The love shared within the Trinity)*
 - *What does the container with the lid represent? (The perfect unity of the one God who is three divine persons)*
 - *What does the overflowing water represent? (The love of God for the world)*
 - *What do the ping-pong balls represent? (God's word that tells us that God loves the world)*
 - *What does the large bowl represent? (The world that is filled with and created from God's love - all life comes from love, which means that love is even greater than life itself!)*

7. [spoken text] Close this discussion with these or similar words: *This water presentation is a mechanical sign of the Trinitarian love of God. As we saw earlier with the apple, there are also living signs of the Trinity in the world. One of the most beautiful signs of the Trinity is your family. The love that parents have for each other, even if it is not perfect love, spills over into their children. The love of God fills the hearts of parents and spills out into children. Even if the parents don't really love each other, the love of God still spills over into the beautiful creation of children. Love is a powerful mystery.*

Discussion for Adult and Teen Table Groups

Adults and Teens can engage in this discussion while families with children do the activity below.

1. Cut out the six phrases on the handout *Family: A Sign of the Trinity*. Place them face down on the table.
2. [spoken text] Introduce this discussion with these or similar words: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2205) states that the Christian family is a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. The family is an image of the Trinity. There are phrases from the Catechism of the Catholic Church written on the papers on our table. Each phrase suggests one way that the family is a sign of the Trinity.*
3. Divide participants at your table into two groups.
4. Invite each group to select three slips of paper from the table.

5. Give each group two or three pieces of plain paper, to record their discussion notes, and a pencil. Suggest that the groups read the papers one at a time, and then discuss how the phrase reveals the family as a sign of the Trinity. Groups should also relate what they've discovered to the water demonstration done earlier. Give each group approximately ten minutes for discussion.
6. Invite each group to share their results with the other group. Here are some thoughts to consider as you facilitate the discussion:
 - The equal dignity of family members means that none is more worthy of love than any of the others – all members are equally lovable. This reflects the equal share of the three persons of the Trinity in the one God. None is more or less God than the others.
 - A single Christian family is a communion of persons just as the one God is a communion of three divine persons. The communion of persons is based upon the love that each member has and expresses for the others. Family communion is strengthened when, like the Trinity, love is poured out and given to the others. Selfishness harms communion in families.
 - Families are the basic social unit. The love shared within families is the basis of harmonious relationships in society. There can be no peace in society without peace-loving families. There can be no justice in society without families who value sharing. Just as the love of God spills out to the world, the love of families spills out to society.
 - Families have an evangelizing and missionary task. Families are not self-centered just as God is not self-centered. A true community of persons always seeks to share its blessings with those beyond the community. While it is true that families must protect themselves from negative outside influences, especially when children are young, families must avoid the temptation to shut out the outside world in extreme ways. Participation in community life beyond the family is essential for God's love to spill beyond the family into the community.
 - While individual expression and diversity are essential to personal fulfillment, there must also be a unity of mind and heart in families on core values. Parents especially need to find common ground on important issues such as religion and spirituality, discipline, mealtime practices, finances, recreation, and time management . This unity of mind provides a stable environment in which authentic diversity can flourish. This mysterious blend of unity and diversity reflects the mysterious diversity of persons in the perfectly unified God.
 - The Trinity and creation are closely related. Creation is the result of the abundant, generous outpouring of love shared within the Trinity. The fullness of this outpouring is expressed in God actually pouring out into creation as the person of Jesus born of Mary. Parents reflect this creative work of the Father when they bear children as a sign of their love for one another and continue to pour their love into the lives of their children through Christian education.

7. Close this discussion by praying together: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Activity for Families with Children

Families with children can do this activity while the adults and teens engage in the discussion above.

1. [spoken text] Introduce this discussion with these or similar words: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2205) states that the Christian family is a sign of the Trinity. That means that when you look at a family, you should be able to learn something about God if that family is truly living like a family is supposed to live. I would like to share with you several things that the Catholic Church believes about families. You will then discuss these things and create posters that show the meaning of these things that we believe about families. Your poster needs to include at least one image of each of the things we believe.*
2. Distribute handout *Families are...*
3. Distribute poster board, crayons, magazines, and glue to each family. TIP: Poster making can be a lot more interesting if you provide extra materials such as glitter, buttons, construction paper, strips of cloth, craft sticks, etc.
4. Give families plenty of time to finish their posters, and then invite them to share their posters with other families who are seated near them. As families share their posters, encourage them to find ways to make connections to the water demonstration done earlier.
5. Close this discussion by praying together: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Learning Experience: Trinitarian Gospel – Year B (60 minutes)

Whole Group: Families with children, Adults, Adolescents

Age Group: Families with children, Adults, Adolescents

Materials

- Individually-wrapped pieces of candy (one per person) which identify the type of candy on the wrap
- Small bowls (one per table)
- Handout *Trinity Gospel Year B* (one for every other person)

Preparation

- You will need to place bowls of individually wrapped pieces of candy on each table. It is best not to put the bowls on the tables until you are ready to do the candy activity. It is important that the wrapper identifies and describes the candy. For example, the wrapper should say something like “chocolate covered raisins.”
- Photocopy handout.

Activity Plan

1. [spoken text] Introduce this learning experience with these or similar words: *The gospel reading for the upcoming Trinity Sunday expresses the Trinity in two different ways. I'm going to begin by reading the gospel for Trinity Sunday. Listen for a reference to the Trinity in this reading. When you hear a reference to the Trinity, raise your hand. I will finish the reading, and then I will ask someone to tell me where that reference to the Trinity was in the reading.*
2. Read Matthew 28:16-20. After the reading, invite one of the younger children to tell you where they heard the reference to the Trinity.
3. The reference to the Trinity in Matthew 28:16-20 that most people will hear is the baptismal formula in verse 19. Affirm that verse 19 is certainly a Trinitarian reference, but the reading makes reference to the Trinity in another way. [spoken text] *Before we study the reading in more detail, I have some candy that might help us learn something.*
4. Pass out the bowls of candy. Invite each person at each table to take one piece of candy.
5. Ask if anyone knows what kind of candy is inside their wrapper.
6. Invite the participants to open the wrappers, to eat the candy, and to verify if the candy is, in fact, what the wrapper said it would be.

7. Invite participants to discuss briefly at their tables the relationship between the wrapper and the candy.
8. Invite participants to briefly share the comments they heard at their tables with the large group.
9. [spoken text] Use these or similar words to explore the meaning of this activity: *The candy and the wrapper have a connected relationship. The wrapper explains what the candy is, and the candy is what the wrapper says it is. The outside explains what is on the inside, and what is on the inside is what is expressed on the outside. Our church is somewhat like that. You can tell what happens inside this building by looking at the outside of the building. Can anyone name some things on the outside of our church building that help people to know what happens on the inside of the building?*
10. Invite participants to name a few other examples of how the outside and the inside of something are related. For example, a smile on the outside tells us how a person is feeling on the inside while the feeling produces the smile. A book cover explains what we should expect to find in the book, and the content of the book inspires the cover art and title.
11. [spoken text] Pass out handout *Trinity Gospel Year B*. Use these or similar words to introduce this handout: *There are many places in the Bible that use an inside/outside technique to express truth about God. Bible scholars call this inclusio. It means that some words are included within a group of other words, and the words on the outside have a particular relationship to the words on the inside and vice versa. If you look at the handout, you will see the inclusio. Verse 19 is the inside of the inclusio. It is like the candy we ate earlier. Verses 18 and 20 are the outside of the inclusio. They are like the wrapper. Here is your challenge. Divide the table group into pairs. Each pair of participants can take some time to try to identify how the outside (verses 18 and 20) express the Trinity, which is named on the inside (verse 19). In other words, where do you detect the Father and the Holy Spirit in the words of the Son in verses 18 and 20?*
12. Give participants time to explore the verses on the handout. Adults will have to work with children and catechists may have to offer clues that will help participants to identify that Jesus receives his authority from the Father (verse 18), and his teachings and his presence continue on in the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit (verse 20).
13. Invite participants to share at their tables what they discovered in verses 18 and 20.
14. [spoken text] Use these or similar words to conclude this discussion about the gospel reading: *The Father is the one who sends the Son with authority to bring salvation to the world. The Holy Spirit is the one who carries on the mission of the Son in the Church. The Holy Spirit keeps the presence of Christ with us "until the end of the world." Perhaps children can understand it this way. When your mother or father tells you to clean your room or feed one of your pets, it's like they are giving you authority to do it. Don't think of your chores as a boring task; rather, think of your chores as a participation in the authority of your parents. So, like Jesus, you can say, "Full authority has been given to me in this house to*

clean my room!" I think that makes it sound more interesting. Then, when you are actually cleaning the room, isn't it true that the spirit of your parents is with you even if they are not in the room? You are cleaning by their authority, and it is your awareness of their presence that motivates you to complete the job. Even if they leave the house, your cleaning activity shows that they are still with you in spirit. There is much in family life that can teach us about the Trinity as we will see in our next activity. One of the most beautiful signs of the Trinity is your family. The love that parents have for each other, even if it is not perfect love, spills over to their children. The love of God fills the hearts of parents and spills out to children. Even if the parents don't really love each other, the love of God still spills over into the beautiful creation of children. Love is a powerful mystery.

Discussion for Adult and Teen Table Groups (Same as for Year A Learning Experience)

Adults and Teens can engage in this discussion while families with children do the activity below.

1. Cut out the six phrases on handout *Family: A Sign of the Trinity*. Place them face down on the table.
2. Introduce this discussion with these or similar words: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2205) states that the Christian family is a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. The family is an image of the Trinity. There are phrases from the Catechism of the Catholic Church written on the papers on our table. Each phrase suggests one way that the family is a sign of the Trinity.*
3. Divide participants at your table into two groups. Invite each group to select three slips of paper from the table.
4. Give each group two or three pieces of plain paper and a pencil to record their discussion notes. Suggest that the groups read the papers one at a time, and then discuss how the phrase reveals the family as a sign of the Trinity. Give each group approximately ten minutes for discussion.
5. Invite each group to share their results with the other group.
6. Here are some thoughts to consider as you facilitate the discussion:
 - The equal dignity of family members means that none is more worthy of love than any of the others – all members are equally lovable. This reflects the equal share of the three persons of the Trinity in the one God. None is more or less God than the others.
 - A single Christian family is a communion of persons just as the one God is a communion of three divine persons. The communion of persons is based upon the love that each member has and expresses for the others. Family communion is strengthened when, like the Trinity, love is poured out and given to the others. Selfishness harms communion in families.

- Families are the basic social unit. The love shared within families is the basis of harmonious relationships in society. There can be no peace in society without peace-loving families. There can be no justice in society without families who value sharing. Just as the love of God spills out to the world, the love of a family spills out to society.
 - Families have an evangelizing and missionary task. Families are not self-centered just as God is not self-centered. A true community of persons always seeks to share its blessings with those beyond the community. While it is true that families must protect themselves from negative outside influences, in a particular way when children are young, families must avoid the temptation to shut out the outside world in extreme ways. Participation in community life beyond the family is essential for God's love to spill beyond the family into the community.
 - While individual expression and diversity are essential to personal fulfillment, there must also be a unity of mind and heart in families on core values. Parents especially need to find common ground on important issues such as religion and spirituality, discipline, mealtime practices, finances, recreation, and time management. This unity of mind provides a stable environment in which authentic diversity can flourish. This mysterious blend of unity and diversity reflects the mysterious diversity of persons in the perfectly unified God.
 - The Trinity and creation are closely related. Creation is the result of the abundant, generous outpouring of love shared within the Trinity. The fullness of this outpouring is expressed in God actually pouring out into creation as the person of Jesus born of Mary. Parents reflect this creative work of the Father when they bear children as a sign of their love for one another and continue to pour their love into the lives of their children through Christian education.
7. Close this discussion by praying together: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Activity for Families with Children (Same as for Year A Learning Experience)

Families with children can do this activity while the adults and teens engage in the discussion above.

1. Introduce this discussion with these or similar words: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2205) states that the Christian family is a sign of the Trinity. That means that when you look at a family, you should be able to learn something about God if that family is truly living like a family is supposed to live. I would like to share with you several things that the Catholic Church believes about families. You will then discuss these things and create posters that show the meaning of these things that we believe about families. Your poster needs to include at least one image of each of the things we believe.*
2. Distribute the handout *Families are...*

3. Distribute poster board, crayons, magazines, and glue to each family. TIP: Poster making can be a lot more interesting if you provide extra materials such as glitter, buttons, construction paper, strips of cloth, craft sticks, etc.
4. Give families plenty of time to finish their posters, and then invite them to share their posters with other families who are seated near them.
5. Close this discussion by praying together: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Learning Experience: – The Trinity According to John – Year C (60 minutes)

Whole Group: Families with children, Adults, Adolescents

Age Group: Families with children, Adults, Adolescents

Materials

- Bowls of water with a pine branch or a leafy branch (one per adult participant who does not have children in the program)
- Handout *The Trinity in John* (two per table)
- Paper and pencil to make one telephone phrase per table

Preparation

- Write the following phrases on individual pieces of newsprint or poster board:
 - The Son is close to the Father's heart.
 - Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.
 - The Holy Spirit flows like a river from Jesus to believers and from believers to the world.
 - The Holy Spirit hears the Father and speaks to us through the Son.
 - The Son breathes the Spirit of peace upon us all.
- Give a bowl of water and a branch to every adult who does not have a child in the program. Tell them that they will be asked to sprinkle the water on all of the other participants at a specified time during the learning experience.
- Telephone Phrase – Write the following phrase on a piece of paper for each table:
When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth

Activity Plan

1. [spoken text] Use these or similar words to introduce this learning experience: *The Gospel According to John offers many rich reflections on the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. John also teaches us much about our relationship with God the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. This year, the gospel proclamation on Trinity Sunday comes from John; therefore, it is fitting for us to take some time to explore our belief in the Trinity as it is expressed in seminal form in the Gospel According to John.*

I have some short activities for all of us to do that will help to illustrate some of the truths about the Trinity that we learn from John. I'm going to display those truths one at a time on the wall.

2. Tape the first statement (The Son is close to the Father's heart) on the wall.
Say, I'm going to ask the children and their parents to illustrate this while the rest of us watch and enjoy. John teaches us that the Son is close to the Father's heart. One way to show that a child's heart is close to the heart of a parent is for the child and the parent to hug each other.

3. Invite all the children in the room to give their parents a hug. If you're working with a fun-loving group of adults, you could challenge each adult table to come up with a song that has the word heart in it. They can take turns serenading the huggers with their heart songs.
4. [spoken text] Repeat the phrase: *The Son is close to the Father's heart. Children and their parents are united in many ways. On a purely physical level, the genes that developed the heart of a parent are passed on to their children. My heart is literally always close to the heart of my parents because I have the family blood running through my veins. More important than that, though, is the unity of heart on a spiritual level. I carry the faith that my parents gave me, or I may have to work to develop the inadequate faith that my parents gave me. Either way, my heart remains close to the heart of my parents. Jesus has the heart of God and shows us God in human form.*
5. Tape the second statement (Whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise) on the wall.
6. [spoken text] *Once again, I'm going to ask the children and their parents to demonstrate this one while the rest of us watch and enjoy. John teaches us that whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. There is a game called the mirror game. In that game, one person stands in front of another person or a group of people. The lead person moves his/her body spontaneously while the follower(s) mimic the movements as closely as possible.*
7. Repeat the phrase: *Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.* Invite parents to stand face to face with their child(ren). Challenge the children to mirror any movements the parent makes. Let them play this game for a minute or two.

[spoken text] *Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. It is not easy to move, or speak, or act according to the will of another person. Jesus lived his life according to the will of the Father perfectly. Everything that Jesus did and said was rooted in the mind of the Father. Jesus did not act on his own. This was not easy for Jesus just as the mirror game was not easy for you, but his perfect love for the Father gave him a spirit of strength to do everything according to the Father's will.*

8. Tape the third statement (The Holy Spirit flows like a river from Jesus to believers and from believers to the world) on the wall.

[spoken text] *This time I am going to ask all of the adults who are present without children to demonstrate this truth for us. John teaches us that the Holy Spirit flows like a river from Jesus to believers and from believers to the world. Water is something that is common to all living things. There is no life without water, and water is a great symbol of God's cleansing, refreshing and renewing presence.*

9. [spoken text] Repeat the phrase: *The Holy Spirit flows like a river from Jesus to believers and from believers to the world. Somehow Jesus provided these Spirit-filled bowls of water to some of our adults. And now that they are so full of the Spirit of Christ, they can't help but share that faith with others. I believe that the Holy Spirit is now going to flow like a river upon all of us who believe.*

10. Invite the adults to walk around the room and sprinkle the other participants. The non-sprinkling participants may be invited to sing a verse or two of *Love is Flowing like a River*.

[spoken text] *The Holy Spirit flows like a river from Jesus to believers and from believers to the world. As we each drink from the heart of God in the spirit of baptism, we are challenged to shower the gifts we have received from God upon everyone we meet in our daily lives. The river of baptism is the presence of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit flowing from this community and transforming the community around us.*

11. Tape the fourth statement (The Holy Spirit hears the Father and speaks to us through the Son) on the wall.

[spoken text] *This time we will all participate in illustrating this truth. John teaches us that the Holy Spirit hears the Father and speaks to us through the Son. There is a game called the telephone game. One person whispers a phrase in the ear of the person sitting next to him/her. That person then whispers the same phrase into the ear of the next person. This continues until the phrase is shared around the table and returns to the original person. I will give the phrase to one person at each table. The person who receives the phrase from me is the only person who is allowed to look at the phrase on the paper. See if your table can accurately pass the phrase around the table by whispering into each other's ear.*

12. Pass out the telephone phrase to each table and give them time to play the game until all tables are finished.
13. Ask each table to report the phrase in the form that it was given to the last person. Then ask all of the table leaders to read in unison the correct phrase.

[spoken text] *The Holy Spirit hears the Father and speaks to us through the Son. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of truth. What we have learned from Christ is truthfully the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit is the one who protects and transmits the truth of God to us through Christ. If the truth gets distorted, it's our fault as our game illustrated. Christ always presented the truth of God accurately and completely to us because of the power of the Holy Spirit who was fully present in the heart of Christ.*

14. Tape the fifth statement (The Son breathes the Spirit of peace upon us all) on the wall.

[spoken text] *We can all demonstrate this truth. John teaches us that the Son breathes the Spirit of peace upon us all. It was so wise of God to inspire us to use breath as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. As long as we are alive breath is always with us. Every breath we take is a reminder that God's Holy Spirit is moving into our beings and is coming out of our beings. It is something that we take from each other and from the natural world around us, and it is something that we give back to the world. All of creation is connected by breathing. And so let us all take a deep cleansing breath... hold it... and let it out as we relax and sense the peace of Christ filling our hearts and the hearts of those around us. Pause for a brief moment of silence to acknowledge the gift of peace that God is giving.*

Now that we have explored some of the truths about the Trinity as they are revealed in the Gospel According to John, let's take some time to pull it all together into one cohesive visual expression. I will give you several passages from the Gospel According to John. Each passage teaches us something about the relationship between two or three of the persons of the Trinity. We will divide each table into two groups (no more than four to a group). Each group will explore the readings, consider the imagery that we illustrated from the truths that are taped to the walls, and develop a clay sculpture that shows the relationship between the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and us. Each sculpture will look different depending upon which images your group would like to emphasize. Be prepared to explain your sculpture to the other group at your table.

15. Give each table two copies of the handout *The Trinity in John*. You may want to provide scissors so the table groups can cut out the readings and pass them around for easier viewing.
16. Divide the tables into two or more groups with no more than four persons per group.
17. Give each group a large lump of clay and plenty of time to brainstorm and create their sculpture. Remind them about the instructions:
 - Explore the meaning of the readings. Focus on the way the readings express the relationships between the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and us.
 - Discuss the visual illustrations that everyone did earlier as we explored the truths that are taped to the walls.
 - Create a clay sculpture that captures the meaning of the Trinity and how we are included in the Trinitarian relationship.
18. Invite participants to share their sculptures with the other groups around them.

Discussion for Adult and Teen Table Groups (Same as for Year A Learning Experience)

Adults and Teens can engage in this discussion while families with children do the activity below.

1. Cut out the six phrases on the handout *Family: A Sign of the Trinity*. Place them face down on the table.
2. Introduce this discussion with these or similar words: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2205) states that the Christian family is a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. The family is an image of the Trinity. There are phrases from the Catechism of the Catholic Church written on the papers on our table. Each phrase suggests one way that the family is a sign of the Trinity.*
3. Divide participants at your table into two groups. Invite each group to select three slips of paper from the table.

4. Give each group two or three pieces of plain paper and a pencil to record their discussion notes. Suggest that the groups read the papers one at a time, and then discuss how the phrase reveals the family as a sign of the Trinity. Give each group approximately ten minutes for discussion.
5. Invite each group to share their results with the other group.
6. Here are some thoughts to consider as you facilitate the discussion:
 - The equal dignity of family members means that none is more worthy of love than any of the others – all members are equally lovable. This reflects the equal share of the three persons of the Trinity in the one God. None is more or less God than the others.
 - A single Christian family is a communion of persons just as the one God is a communion of three divine persons. The communion of persons is based upon the love that each member has and expresses for the others. Family communion is strengthened when, like the Trinity, love is poured out and given to the others. Selfishness harms communion in families.
 - Families are the basic social unit. The love shared within families is the basis of harmonious relationships in society. There can be no peace in society without peace-loving families. There can be no justice in society without families who value sharing. Just as the love of God spills out to the world, the love of a family spills out to society.
 - Families have an evangelizing and missionary task. Families are not self-centered just as God is not self-centered. A true community of persons always seeks to share its blessings with those beyond the community. While it is true that families must protect themselves from negative outside influences, in a particular way when children are young, families must avoid the temptation to shut out the outside world in extreme ways. Participation in community life beyond the family is essential for God's love to spill beyond the family into the community.
 - While individual expression and diversity are essential to personal fulfillment, there must also be a unity of mind and heart in families on core values. Parents especially need to find common ground on important issues such as religion and spirituality, discipline, mealtime practices, finances, recreation, and time management. This unity of mind provides a stable environment in which authentic diversity can flourish. This mysterious blend of unity and diversity reflects the mysterious diversity of persons in the perfectly unified God.
 - The Trinity and creation are closely related. The creation is the result of the abundant, generous outpouring of love shared within the Trinity. The fullness of this outpouring is expressed in God actually pouring out into creation as the person of Jesus born of Mary. Parents reflect this creative work of the Father when they bear children as a sign of their love for one another and continue to pour their love into the lives of their children through Christian education.
7. Close this discussion by praying together: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Activity for Families with Children (Same as for Year A Learning Experience)

Families with children can do this activity while the adults and teens engage in the discussion above.

1. Introduce this discussion with these or similar words: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2205) states that the Christian family is a sign of the Trinity. That means that when you look at a family, you should be able to learn something about God if that family is truly living like a family is supposed to live. I would like to share with you several things that the Catholic Church believes about families. You will then discuss these things and create posters that show the meaning of these things that we believe about families. Your poster needs to include at least one image of each of the things we believe.*
2. Distribute handout *Families are...*
3. Distribute poster board, crayons, magazines, and glue to each family. TIP: Poster making can be a lot more interesting if you provide extra materials such as glitter, buttons, construction paper, strips of cloth, craft sticks, etc.
4. Give families plenty of time to finish their posters, and then invite them to share their posters with other families who are seated near them.
5. Close this discussion by praying together: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Part 4

Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application (15 minutes)

Advanced Preparation

- Determine what each group will bring back to the large group or to their small group to share as a result of their learning.
- Determine how each group will share their reports or projects so that they “teach” the other groups about the event and theme.

Home Kit

Develop a Trinity Home Kit that *extends* and *expands* the learning that has taken place through the intergenerational learning program. It should *engage* families and individuals in living their faith at home through traditions and celebrations, rituals, symbols, prayers, service projects, learning activities, and enrichment activities. Include specific activities on the event that you have selected as a focus for the session. These additional activities can include learning activities about the event, Scripture readings, table rituals, prayers, and so on.

Use a variety of design formats for your activities, such as a prayer card, stand-up card, poster, placemat, newsletter, booklet, magnet, bookmark, or artwork.

Included with this session are the following home activities:

1. Table Prayer – Year A
2. Table Prayer – Year B
3. Table Prayer – Year C
4. Three-in-One God
5. Trinitarian Tube Art

1. Whole Group Sharing and Reflection

The whole group sharing experience provides an opportunity for each age group to share something they have learned with the entire group. If the session was conducted in intergenerational groups ask participants to remain with their group. If the session was conducted in the age group format, ask people to rejoin their intergenerational groups from the All Ages Learning Experience OR ask family members to rejoin their own family and individual adolescent and adult participants to stay with their age groups from the In-Depth Learning Experience.

Ask the participants to share what they learned in a small group setting or by inviting participants or groups, representing families, teens, and adults, to share projects or reflections with the entire group.

[spoken text] Then present the following information using the words below or your own words:

Think of everything we have done in this session to learn about the Trinity. Take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned in this session:

What is one thing you learned about the Trinity that you did not know before?

What do you look forward to experiencing during the celebration of Trinity Sunday this year?

Why do you think the Trinity is so important for us as Catholics?

Review the Home Kit for the event containing prayers, rituals, service projects, family enrichment, and learning activities. Guide everyone in developing an individual or family action plan for living at home using the Home Kit and planning for participation in the sacrament.

2. Reflection—Application Strategies

Prepare strategies and activities to guide individuals and families in *reflecting* on the meaning of their learning and their participation in the Church event and in *applying* their learning to daily living as Catholics. The goal is to help people apply the beliefs and practices to their daily life, and report or “publish” their learning with others in the parish community.

Reflection and application activities and strategies can be included with the Home Kit. You can also include a time for feedback in your next intergenerational learning program.

There are a variety of formats for reflection – application activities. Reflection tools include unfinished sentences, reflection questions, learning journals, and structured reflection activities. Application tools include action plans, practice plans, “to do” lists, and resolutions.

Art and media strategies can also be used to express reflection and application. Consider activities such as bumper stickers, picture collages, “recipe for living” cards, posters, photos, and projects that participants can create and bring back to Sunday Mass or the next intergenerational learning program.

Example: Reflection on Participating in Trinity Sunday

What did you see at the liturgy of Trinity Sunday?

What did you hear at the liturgy?

- Think of the songs you sang. What was their message?
- Think of the Scripture readings. What was their message? What is Trinity Sunday teaching you?

How did you pray during the celebration of Trinity Sunday?

- Think of the prayers and the petitions at the liturgy. What are the prayers teaching us?

How did you live the Trinity at home and in the parish?

- How did you live the Trinity at home – prayer, rituals, service to others, etc.?
- What is one thing you learned about the Trinity this year? How did you grow closer to Jesus Christ during the celebration?

Part 5

Closing Prayer Service (10 minutes)

Preparation

- Light the candle in the front of the room.

Leader

God, who is Father, Son and Spirit, draw us close to you so that we can share in your love. Be near to us who are formed in your Trinitarian image. Remind us each day that we are called to love each other, and that there is no other way to happiness except the way of Love. We ask this, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, true and living, forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Proclamation

Year A: John 3:16-18

Year B: Matthew 28:16-20

Year C: John 16:12-16

Leader

The Trinity, the central mystery of our faith, is unity in diversity. We are called to be the image of the Trinity. We are called to unity with each other no matter how different we are from each other. We are the image of God when we unify across the generations. We are the image of God when we unify across racial differences. We are the image of God when we share our wealth to create economic unity. We are the image of God when persons with disabilities are welcomed among us. We only fail to be the image of God when we are exclusive, when we try to keep company only with those who are like us. God of unified diversity, deliver us from uniformity.

Please stand.

We close our prayer to the Father (invite participants to reach their hands to the sky) who is the creator of the universe; to the Son (invite participants to touch the floor) who was sent to Earth to be one of us; and to the Holy Spirit (invite participants to reach out and grasp the hands of those on either side of them) who bonds us together as a Church of love. Amen.