

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Fourth Sunday of Easter • Year B • April 21, 2024



*O God,
you take the
stuff of our lives
and build us into a temple
not made by human hands,
a work of glory
that resounds
to your credit.
In this season of joy,
send your Spirit upon us.
Make us holy.
Amen.*

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Sunday Word

Acts 4:8–12

Psalm 118:1, 8–9, 21–23, 26, 28, 29

1 John 3:1–2

John 10:11–18

In His Name

Peter explains a healing miracle to the people. It was done through the name of Jesus Christ. His is the only name by which all men and women receive Salvation. His name is therefore holy and exalted; from his name alone comes healing and newness of life.

God's Children

God loves us so much that in Christ he has adopted us as his very own children. Thus we have a blessed hope, an inheritance, that outshines any earthly treasure—communion on high with God.

In Accord with the Father

The Lord Jesus saves and protects his flock. He is the Good Shepherd, who leads us into pastures of life and wholeness. He does this in conformity with the will of his heavenly Father, with whom he shares a depth of “knowing” that makes them one.

Church Teaching: The Oneness of God

Total Union

Jesus explains to his disciples that the closeness experienced between him and his heavenly Father is unique. He “knows” the Father. It is a total knowing, a union that goes beyond mental facility to the very depth and breadth of his being. Indeed, Jesus claims that the Father and he are one (see John 10:30). The Church expresses this mystery of oneness as the Most Holy Trinity: Three Divine Persons in one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

They are not three gods but One God in Three Divine Persons. They are equally divine, one in being. But the way in which they manifest themselves to us is distinct, because each has a particular mission in the plan of Salvation. The Father sends the Son, Jesus Christ, to dwell among us and embody the love of the

Trinity in flesh and blood. The Holy Spirit has been sent from the Father and the Son to be our Advocate and Guide. In spite of how we experience them in this distinctiveness, the Persons of the Blessed Trinity are totally one.

Drawn Up into Love

Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to be drawn into the life and the love of the Holy Trinity. Through him we get a glimpse of the “knowing” between the Father and the Son.

The intimate and total union between the Father and the Son in the Blessed Trinity grounds the Apostles’ confession that Jesus Christ is the eternal Word. Christ is the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). The Word has brought to eyes of faith a new and radiant vision of God’s glory. In Christ believers see God made visible—and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see.

To encounter Christ in faith opens for believers the very mystery of God the Father. We do not believe that this opening is relegated to the past. For beyond the historical event of Jesus, the promised Holy Spirit makes available to us the presence of Christ, today and in the future. This is why we profess in the Creed that the Holy Spirit is also “the Lord, the giver of life.”

In other words, the love shared between the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity flows outward to humanity. By the sheer gratuitous initiative of God, we are invited into divine love so that we might “have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

Jesus reveals that as the Good Shepherd, he gives his life for us. The Father’s loving plan seeks to adopt us as children in Christ through the Spirit. This plan unfolds for us in various ways: in the work of creation, in the whole history of Salvation after the Fall, and in the mission of the Son and the Spirit continued in the Church. Our whole Christian life is a communion with the Blessed Trinity. The believer who glorifies the Father does so through the Son in the Spirit. Likewise, the believer who follows Christ does so because the Father draws us into this discipleship and the Spirit animates us in this following.

Key Terms

GOD THE FATHER

First Person of the Blessed Trinity, revealed by Jesus as our Creator by right of the everlasting relationship between him and Christ (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 240).

GOD THE SON

Jesus Christ, Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who is the Son of God in relationship to the eternal Father (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 441).

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, also called the Paraclete, Advocate, Guide, and Spirit of Truth (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 243).

Voices of Faith

We say the Son and the Father “are one,” not to blend their individuality. . . . Rather, [they] are two unique persons, and we regard the two together in one identical essence, knowing that they possess one . . . divine essence . . . seen without variation in both.

— Saint Cyril of Alexandria

God has made himself visible: in Jesus we are able to see the Father (cf. Jn 14:9). . . . The Lord . . . encounters us ever anew, in the men and women who reflect his presence, in his word, in the sacraments, and especially in the Eucharist. In the Church’s liturgy, in her prayer, in the living community of believers . . . we perceive his presence, and we thus learn to recognize that presence in our daily lives.

— Pope Benedict XVI

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

233 (the singular name of God), 239 (the terminology of “Father”), 242 (the Only Begotten Son), 244 (the Spirit revealed)

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:

Chapter 5 (I Believe in God), especially the section entitled “God Is the Trinity,” pages 51–53

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:

44 (Trinity as central mystery of faith), 45 (Revelation of Trinity by Jesus), 48 (Church’s expression of Trinitarian faith)