

First Sunday after Pentecost/Trinity Sunday

Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit

Old Testament: Isaiah 42:1-4 (NRSV)

The Servant, a Light to the Nations

¹ Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ² He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; ³ a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴ He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

New Testament: Matthew 28:19 (NRSV)

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NRSV)

⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

General Concept: As Jesus Christ ascended to the Father, the Holy Spirit was sent forth from the Father and the Son.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

N/K/YE: **God is always with us.**

ME/OE: **Through the Holy Spirit, we can always experience the presence of God.**

Y: **The presence of God can be experienced as our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.**

A: **We confess our faith in a God that reveals God's self as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The text in Isaiah talks of the servant of the Lord (ebedh yahweh) chosen by God. Servants in Israel normally would not be object of delight by the master. They are simply sent to work on some assigned tasks either in the household or in the farm of the owners-masters. They are considered as supplying the main work and productive force of the rich masters and landowners. They are valuable and worthy only in the eyes of their owners as providers of productive labor that makes their own lives more convenient and less burdened with tasks and chores they themselves would have to undertake without their servants-slaves. They are considered good only for menial, rough, dirty and hard work.

Yet, this particular servant was chosen or called into being by God not for any menial, less honorable task. He was commissioned by God for a very noble mission, and that is, to work to establish justice among the nations of the earth. In the face of this enormous task that has very strong political and social implications which will certainly spark a lot of resistance and controversy among nations and governments to be affected, the Lord declared that He will bestow His spirit upon this servant to empower him to carry out this seemingly enormously difficult task. This is indeed the nature and work of the Spirit that is sent and given by God to those whom he calls and send to carry out God's will on the whole earth. The work of the spirit is to empower those seemingly powerless servants of the Lord so that they can be able to carry out such a radically critical task of reversing the patterns of wrongs and injustices taking places in various parts of the world. To be filled with God's spirit is to be emboldened to speak and work and advocate for what is just and good in accordance with the righteous will of our God.

This radical prophetic proclamation becomes affirmed in the text of Matthew 28:19. Now, the very nature, identity and source of the holy spirit is revealed by the gospel writer. It was sent and comes from the Father and Jesus the Son. Jesus joins the Father in heaven and becomes one with him and the work of the holy spirit now becomes the very work of God as revealed by the Father, actualized by Jesus and now is being continued by the holy spirit. Still, the mission to make disciples of all nations remains as a mission to make a company of the followers of the Lord who will all be committed to carry out the mission of God in the world, which is for the establishment of justice in all the earth. Now, the work for doing and upholding justice on earth becomes the essential identity of being a disciple of Jesus, a role inherited right from the tradition of the servant. The servant who carries out the work for justice is the true disciple of the God of justice and is the one that is truly endowed with the spirit of the Lord.

This task of advancing, and upholding justice on earth as a disciple now becomes the one element that will also contribute to the unity and oneness of the church in the performance of his mission. The unity of the church is ensured by the gift of the one spirit that binds together the body into one faith that has one essential mission under the guidance of only one Father who was revealed through the son Jesus and whose continuing presence and lordship is now being revealed through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

The doctrine of the Trinity is the most comprehensive and appropriate way of rendering the mystery of God into rational thought and language. Since human thought and language are bound to concrete experience and rational extrapolation, God's mystery is never diminished by human effort. Yet, for our sake, God seeks to be understood under human terms by sending the Son to us and the Spirit to prepare us to receive him. By this act, God disclosed the divine being not in its mystery but in a form that is proportionate to our faculties and useful for worship and practice. The Trinitarian understanding of God, therefore, is not a presentation of divine mystery but a reflection of it as the moon is reflected on a body of water. As a reflection of the divine mystery it is true and a trustworthy subject of rational inquiry and contemplation. But it does not enable the human mind to pierce through the veil of the mystery of God.

As contemplated by the Church Fathers, the Trinitarian understanding of God aims to give a rational account of the Scriptures' witness to the acts of the Father, the Son and the Spirit in the divine economy of salvation, in which account the unity of the divine being is preserved. The ancient church which delineated the contours of the doctrine in the 3rd to the 5th centuries AD/CE employed the symbol of the Father to refer to God as the creative source of all things; the symbol of the Son for Jesus who spoke of God as the Father; and the symbol of the Spirit who communicates God's presence in creation and in Jesus Christ. The Son executes the Father's rule over creation while the Spirit embeds one's self in creation by which it is enabled to respond to the Father's rule through Christ. The three centers of being/acting are distinguishable (Three Persons) yet inseparable and united in essence and operation (One God). The ancient church found the formulation appropriate and reasonable.

The idea may not be self-evident to the modern mind. It's an intellectual problem about which the church has sought to address in various ways with very limited success. To modern believers, going through the classical doctrine of God is indeed crossing an alien terrain. In order not to get lost in the exploration, they must always check their bearings vis-à-vis the North Star – the classical doctrine of the Trinity. A new viable version is one that proves consistent to the classical formulation and agreeable to the intellectual culture of the times.

What may be an appropriate doctrine of the Trinity for the church today whose witness in the world calls for participation in the struggle for economic justice, social equity and peace among various peoples? The proposed version ought to motivate and embolden the members to take the side of those seeking change opposite the forces of the status quo: God, the Father is the author of change; God, the Son is the unknown companion of those who struggle for change; God, the Spirit enlightens the mind to discern the truth and inspire all to work together for change. For a long time, the gospel has been hijacked by the oppressive forces of the status quo. It's time for the liberation of the gospel that the church may preach the good news to the poor as Jesus and the prophets before him did.

Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. continue to describe the importance of the coming of the Holy Spirit;
2. claim the promise that God will always be with us; and
3. make a simple commitment to do what pleases God through the help of the Holy Spirit.

II. **Concept:** God is always with us.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), song chart, crayons, name tags, a smooth stone, patchwork, yarn

III. Learning Experiences

A. *Opening Worship*

1. Welcome time: Welcome the children warmly. Encourage everyone to greet each other. Acknowledge the presence of each child and thank them for coming to Sunday school.
2. Opening prayer: "Dear God we thank you that we are here again in Sunday school to have fellowship with one another and with you. Be present in our class. This is our prayer in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "O God in Heaven" (HFJ # 50)

B. *Getting Ready*

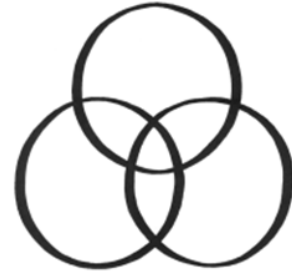
Provide the children materials for a headband and a cut-out flame in the form of a tongue to be pasted in the middle of the band. Tell the children to assemble their headbands and wear them. Tell each child to look for a partner. Let each tell their partner: "The Holy Spirit speaks to my heart."

C. *Learning Time*

1. Present the following activities:
 - a. Let the children make their name tags. Ask each child to stand before the class and tell him or her to say something about themselves: Name-Daughter-Older/ Younger Sister, Name-Son-Older/Younger Brother, or Name-Neighbor-Friend. Ask: "Does it mean you are more than one person?" (No. I am still one person.)
 - b. Prepare a smooth stone. Ask the class to tell three things that it can do (Expected answers: can be a paper weight, can be a decor, can be a toy)
 - c. Let the children guess what you have in mind by describing it three times. Examples: Read books, play with friends, learn songs (school); Sing songs of praise, listen to stories of Jesus, pray with classmates and friends (church)
2. Say: "There is one mystery that I will tell you today: God is one God, in three persons - God, Our Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit. This is called the Trinity."
3. Tell the class before Jesus went back to heaven, he said in Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Distribute patchwork in a shape of the symbol of "Trinity" with the label "God with us" Tell the children to paste the words in each of the circles: FATHER, SON. and HOLY SPIRIT. Then let them color the circles (Father: yellow, Son: red, and Holy Spirit: blue).



E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: When is God with us? (God is always with us.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Tell the children to say the label in their work: "God with us" Explain to them that God has promised to be with us always. With God's presence through the Holy Spirit, ask the children to think of ways of showing appreciation for God's presence as their commitment. Expect the children to include the following sample commitments.

1. I will remember to pray always.
2. I will remember to read God's word.
3. I will remember to thanks the people who help me.

G. Closing Worship

1. Memory verse: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19)
2. Offering
3. Closing song: While singing the closing song, help each child to use their symbol of the Trinity as a part of the closing ritual.
4. Closing prayer: "Loving God, thank you for being with us always. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Middle and Older Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. describe the importance of the coming of the Holy Spirit;
2. claim the promise that God will always be with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit; and
3. express creatively one's commitment to do what pleases God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit

II. Concept: Through the Holy Spirit, we can always experience the presence of God.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), crayons, pens and journals

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: "Loving God we thank you that you continue to be with us through your Holy Spirit. Help us to love you more as we love our sisters and brothers. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "O God in Heaven" (HFJ # 50)

B. Getting Ready

1. Divide the class in three groups. Give each group an object (a branch of any available tree in the locality, a baseball, and a piece of cloth). Let the members talk about the uses of the object.
2. Ask each group to share their answers to the big group.
3. After giving the uses of each object, ask the class if the object remained the same.

C. Learning Time

1. Prepare two sets of objects and place them on the front table.
 - a. A glass of water, some ice cubes, and a kettle with boiled water. Tell the class to describe each item. Draw from them that what they see are different forms of water: ice cubes are solid, water in the glass is liquid, and the heat that they can feel from the mouth of the kettle is in gaseous form. Ask: Does the water remain the same even in each of the three forms? (Yes)
 - b. Present an apple. Cut a slice. Ask the class to describe the apple and its parts—skin, flesh, and core.
 - c. Ask: Does the apple remain the same even though it has three parts? (Yes)
2. Read orally Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."
Ask: "How is God described? (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)"

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Ask: In what way God relates to you and me? (Through the Holy Spirit.)
2. Read the following references and tell the other comforting things the Holy Spirit does to all believers aside from guiding us into the truth:
 - a. Romans 8:16 (The assurance that that we are God's children)

- b. Romans 8:26 (The assistance on how to pray.)
- c. Ephesians 3:16 (Our transformation to regain God's image)
- 3. Let the class do what is asked.
 - a. Two words that describe God, the Father
 - b. Two words that describe God, the Son
 - c. Two words that describe God, the Holy Spirit

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: To whom do we experience the presence of God? (Through the Holy Spirit, we can always experience the presence of God.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

- 1. Let the learners write in their personal journal their commitment to do what pleases God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And allow them to design creatively their journals.
- 2. Tell the class to sing the following song with expression:
Come, Holy Spirit I need you.
Come, Holy Spirit I pray.
Come with your strength and your power,
Come in your own special way.

G. Closing Worship

- 1. Memory verse: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19)
- 2. Offering
- 3. Closing song: "O God in Heaven" (HFJ # 50)
- 4. Closing prayer: "Thank you God that you are not distant but you are always with us. In every happenings and events in us you are there. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep our commitment to you. Amen."

Youth Level**I. Objectives**

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. describe how the Trinity helps believers to experience God's presence in continuous creation, redemption, and sustenance;
2. claim the promise that God will always be with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit; and
3. express creatively one's commitment to do what pleases God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit

II. Concept: The presence of God can be experienced as our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), worksheets, cards, mat, crayons, pencils, pen, cartolina

III. Learning Experiences**A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "God, our creator, redeemer. and sustainer, grant us your grace to understand you and to enjoy your guiding presence as we study your word and as we commune with one another. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer" (HFJ # 1)

B. Getting Ready

Tell the class work in triads. Let each group read the sets of words. Let them think of a fourth word that connects the first three words..

1. musician - violin - songwriter (Music)
2. twig - leaf - root (Tree)
3. electric current - bulb - filament (Light)
4. flowing water - ice cubes - vapor (Water)
5. body - mind - spirit (Person)
6. faith - hope - love (Virtues)
7. past, present, future (Time)

C. Learning Time

1. Say: "Our faith ancestors of the early Christian church tried to put into one word what God meant to them by using the word "Trinity". This attempt to express what kind of God led the early church parents to formulate the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. And yet the word Trinity is not found in our Bible although we can read a statement about it in Matthew 28:19. This doctrine explains the activities of God as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer or as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. Tell the class to read the biblical references.
 - a. Isaiah 42:1-4. God giving his anointed one to be the servant and the light of the nations
 - b. Matthew 28:19. The Great Commission
 - c. Ephesians 4:4-6. One God and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all
3. Using the triads in the earlier activity, tell each group to choose any three of the following references and share what the verses tell about the Trinity.
Genesis 1: 26 Deuteronomy 6: 4 Matthew 3: 16, 17

Matthew 28: 19 John 8: 54-58 John 10: 30
 John 14: 9, 10 John 17: 21 Romans 9: 5
 1 Corinthians 8: 6 2 Corinthians 13: 14 Colossians 2: 9
 Hebrews 9: 14 1 Peter 1: 2

4. Let the learners read and memorize the UCCP Statement of Faith Article I: "We believe in one God: Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, who provides order, purpose and meaning and fulfillment to all creation. That in Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, God became human and is Sovereign Lord of life and history. That in the Holy Spirit God is present in the world, empowering and guiding believers to understand and live out their faith in Jesus Christ."

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Present the following table. Tell the class to give a word or phrase that will connect the three descriptions of God.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: What are the three activities of God what we experienced? (The presence of God can be experienced as our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.)

Connecting Link	FATHER	SON	HOLY SPIRIT
(Called God)	Phil. 1:2	John 1:1,14; Col. 2:9	Acts 5:3-4
(Creator)	Isa. 64:8; 44:24	John 1:3	Gen. 1:2
(Resurrects)	1 Thess. 1:10	John 2:19, 10:17	Rom. 8:11
(Indwells)	2 Cor. 6:16	Col. 1:27	John 14:17
(Everywhere)	1 Kings 8:27	Matt. 28:20	Psa. 139:7-10
(All knowing)	1 John 3:20	John 16:30; 21:17	1 Cor. 2:10-11
(Sanctifies)	1 Thess. 5:23	Heb. 2:11	1 Pet. 1:2
(Life giver)	Gen. 2:7; John 5:21	John 1:3; 5:21	2 Cor. 3:6,8
(Fellowship)	1 John 1:3	1 Cor. 1:9	2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1
(Eternal)	Psa. 90:2	Micah 5:1-2	Rom. 8:11; Heb. 9:14
(A Will)	Luke 22:42	Luke 22:42	1 Cor. 12:11
(Speaks)	Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22	Luke 5:20; 7:48	Acts 8:29; 11:12; 13:2
(Love)	John 3:16	Eph. 5: 25	Rom. 15:30
(Searches the heart)	Jer. 17:10	Rev. 2:23	1 Cor. 2:10

Source: Understanding the Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity (Godhead)

By Cooper P. Abrams, III

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Have the class make a poster of what Christian lifestyle is or what it means to follow Jesus.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer" (HFJ # 1)
3. Closing prayer: The Lord's Prayer

Adult Level

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. describe the Trinity as illustrated by the ascension of Jesus to God and the descent of the Holy Spirit in obedience to God and Christ Jesus;
2. claim the promise that God will always be with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit; and
3. express creatively one's commitment to do what pleases God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

II. Concept: We confess our faith in a God that reveals God's self as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), worksheets Printed copy of the UCCP Statement of Faith article I

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

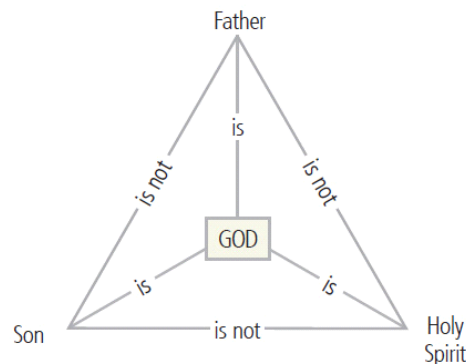
1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Triune God, we pray to you that by your grace grant us wisdom to understand and grow in your Word and help us live a life that is according to your will. In sharing your love to all the whole of creation will experience life abundance. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer" (HFJ # 1)

B. Getting Ready

Tell the class to establish the presence of one God. Ask the adults to choose any ne of these references to make their claim (Isaiah 43:10, 44:6, 8, 45:5, 14, 18,21, 22, 46:9, 47:8, John 17:3, 1 Cor. 8:5-6, Gal. 4:8-9).

C. Learning Time

1. Let the learners read Isaiah 42:1-4, Ephesians 4:4-6, and Matthew 28:19.
2. Tell the class to study the following diagram to illustrate God in three persons.



Source: <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/justintaylor/2010/10/14/explaining-the-trinity-to-a-seven-year-old/>

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

1. Tell the class to research on the Trinity.
 - a. Psalm 115:5. The loving qualities of God, the Father, the First Person in the Trinity
 - b. 1 John 4:14. The redeeming qualities of God, the Son, the Second Person in the Trinity
 - c. John 14:26. The comforting and sustaining qualities of God, the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the Trinity
2. Let the learners read and memorize the UCCP Statement of Faith Article I: "We believe in one God: Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, who provides order, purpose and meaning and fulfillment to all creation. That in Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, God became human and is Sovereign Lord of life and history. That in the Holy Spirit God is present in the world, empowering and guiding believers to understand and live out their faith in Jesus Christ."
3. Let the class react to this: "God, the Father is the author of change; God, the Son is the unknown companion of those who struggle for change; God, the Spirit enlightens the mind to discern the truth and inspire all to work together for change."

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "To whom do we confess our faith?" (We confess our faith in a God that reveals God's self as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Tell the class to apply in life situations the knowledge of the Trinity.

1. *God, the Father.* As a parent or significant adult to the young, We love, care, and protects or family and others.
2. *God, the Son.* Inspired with God's Son who came to save us from our sin, we adults can do things that will help the young recover our broken relationship with God by joining our young in walking, talking and sharing God with them.
3. *God, the Holy Spirit.* God send His presence to us because He loves us. Let us always make our presence in our family a meaningful one.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer" (HFJ # 1)
3. Closing prayer: The Lord's Prayer