

Name: _____

Abiding Savior Free Lutheran Church Confirmation

The Trinity

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to:

- Describe the Holy Trinity.
- Define the attributes/vocation of God the Father
- Define the attributes/vocation of God the Son
- The two natures of Christ
- Define the attributes/vocation of God the Holy Spirit

THE APOSTLE'S CREED

Use your catechism to write the Apostles Creed. Please copy it word for word below.

THE TRINITY

It has been said that God is one. Deuteronomy 6:4 states, "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one...*", however God is not alone. When we speak of the God, we say there is One God in three persons- God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity is also of great importance because it is closely connected with the Christian's salvation. Christians believe we receive salvation through the forgiveness of our sin and receiving new life. This is made possible because the second person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ, took on human form without giving up his deity and bore the sins of humans as their substitute. Jesus was able to present to the Father the perfect sacrifice for human sin. Through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, God the Father forgives our sins and through the Holy Spirit we are given new life. If what we believe about the Trinity is not true, then our understanding of salvation would have to be changed.

Further, our view on this doctrine affects our views of other doctrines. If the Godhead does not consist of three persons equally divine and yet inseparably one, then our understanding of who God is would be wrong. Jesus may not be fully God, or if he is, he is a lesser deity than is the Father. The Holy Spirit is in some sense inferior to both the Father and the Son. The doctrine of the salvation would have to be changed as well.¹

¹ Millard J. Erickson, [*Making Sense of the Trinity*](#), 3 Crucial Questions (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), 15.

1. What would happen if we changed the doctrine of the Trinity?

2. Read Matthew 28:19 – In what names does Jesus instruct His disciples to baptize in?

GOD THE FATHER

The first person of the Trinity is God the Father. We talk about God not only in terms of “Creator” but also “Father.” God is our Father in two ways. First, He created us in His image, and he made us all for a specific reason and a purpose. **Psalm 139:13** says, “...you knit me together in my mother’s womb...” In this way, God is the Father of every single person. Second, because in Christ, he has adopted us as sons and daughters (see Ephesians 1:5). In this way, God is the Father of anyone who has faith in Jesus. As a believer, regardless of whether your earthly father is good or bad at being your dad - or is alive or has died - you are never Fatherless. God is your Father. He cares for you and daily provides all that you need. Your food, family, shelter and even the air that you breathe.

The work of God the Father is as a Creator. **Genesis 1:1** – “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” We can know and believe in God because He left evidence of Himself all over creation and He has revealed Himself in His Word (The Bible).

3. Describe two ways in which God is rightly considered your father.

4. How can we know that there is a God?

GOD THE SON

Jesus is God made flesh and He is the only Begotten Son of God. Jesus is not a created being like the animals, humans or even angels and other spiritual beings. **John 1:1-5,14** - Describes Jesus in this way,

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Remember from our previous lesson, that there is a difference between just knowing something and believing something. The “I believe” in these statements is meant to mean more than “I know about these things” but rather “I trust that this is true and my only hope to save me.” The Second Article is about God the Son and His work of redemption. Redemption is a wonderful word that means ‘to buy back, or to ransom, to release from captivity, to deliver, or to acquit’. Today’s lesson will focus on the fact that Jesus is both truly God and truly man. Jesus is a unique person. From the Bible we learn that He possessed two natures, God, and man. Thus, He was both God and man.

5. To show this: look up John 10:30 and 1 John 5:20 in your Bible and write how they speak of Jesus as being truly God or possessing the quality or attributes of God.

6. Now let us focus on passages that speak to Jesus as being truly human—read Luke 2:7 and John 11:35, what do they tell us about Jesus?

JESUS - “JEHOVAH SAVES”

Scripture most often refers to our Lord and Savior as Jesus Christ. The name Jesus is a translation of the Greek version of the Hebrew name Joshua (Joshua=Jesus). Joshua means “Jehovah saves” and thus Jesus means the same thing.

CHRIST - “ANOINTED ONE”

Christ is the Greek form of the Hebrew word “Messiah” which means “The Anointed One.” The word Christ is not so much a name as it is a title, for it really refers to the *office* He holds or the work which He does. An “office” means a position of authority or a work. It is also used to describe someone’s function, role, or task. For example, your mom and dad have the “offices” of Mother and Father. It describes what they do and who they are. Their office has certain authorities and rights with it, like receiving honor and obedience from their children. Jesus holds the office of Messiah, hence He is called the Christ. In Old Testament times, priests and kings were anointed with oil, and this served as a visible sign to all the people that these individuals were set apart for a particular work.

ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD

In Luther’s explanation to the Second Article of the Creed, he uses the phrase “begotten of the Father.” This can be very confusing to many Christians. What does “begotten” mean? In fact, because of this language, Jews and Muslims often accuse Christians of teaching that Jesus was the product of a physical relationship between God and Mary! Let’s look at what Scripture says. We will consider two words: “begotten” and “son.”

- **BEGOTTEN** - The term *begotten* only occurs in one place (John 3:16) and it carries a variety of meanings. Most often we think of the term to mean “to bring forth” or to “to produce.” We especially apply the term referring to parents bringing forth a child. However, the term is much broader than merely a child brought forth from two parents. The word

begotten also means “be sent from.” Theologically, Jesus being begotten does not mean Jesus was created, rather, it means that He was *sent* by the Father.

- **SON** - Similarly, the term *Son* has a theological meaning. Matthew 3:16-17 says, “*And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “**This is my beloved Son**, with whom I am well pleased.*” Immediately upon being baptized, God declares His pleasure in His beloved Son. When referring to Jesus as the Son of God, we know that it does not mean God has sexual relations with Mary. So what does it mean? The early church wrestled with this question by examining what Scripture taught and they concluded that the term is rightly understood as a relational term.

The term “Son” is to be understood as referring to the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. The Father loves and cares for the Son and the Son loves and gives glory to the Father. So why is this so important? Because if at some point before he was born to Mary, Jesus didn’t exist, then He is not God! God is eternal. And if Jesus is not God, then his death means nothing for the forgiveness of our sins. But, Jesus *is* God, and, because He is God, His death means that all of our sins are forgiven on His account!

SON OF MAN

Jesus is fully divine and fully human, except without sin. He is 100% divine and 100% human. How is that even possible? It’s a mystery! It is very difficult - even impossible - for us to wrap our minds arounds this truth. Jesus was conceived in a way unlike any other human - and we call this the Virgin Conception. This is critical to our understanding of our salvation. No ordinary human could pay the price for our sins since they had sin themselves. To pay the penalty, a person had to be perfect. The only person who was perfect, who had no sin, was Jesus. The word *incarnation* describes how God the Son came down to earth and took on human flesh yet without sin. Every Christmas we celebrate the incarnation of the Son of God.

7. Why is the Virgin Conception so important for our salvation?

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and is fully God. He was there at Creation, when the heavens and the earth came into existence, and He was there when your sins were washed away through Baptism. As fully God, the Holy Spirit is worthy of all your worship. If you have any doubt the Holy Spirit is fully God, you can look at the account in Acts 5, when the Apostle Peter told Ananias that when he lied to the Holy Spirit, he was NOT lying to men, but that he was lying to God. It’s important that we think of the Holy Spirit as a member of the Trinity and not as an “it” or a “thing.” Rather, the Holy Spirit is 100% God - just like the Father and just like the Son.

The work of the Holy Spirit is **Sanctification**. Sanctification is the process of being set apart, consecrated, and made holy. Sanctification is never complete on this side of eternity. This means that until we enter heaven, the Holy Spirit will continue the work of setting you apart and making you holy throughout your entire life. Sanctification begins immediately after **justification** (receiving Jesus as your Lord and Savior) and it involves the inward spiritual transformation resulting in living a life that reflects Christ.

8. We know that God is the one who created the heavens and earth (Genesis 1:1). Read Genesis 1:2 and write down who was there at creation hovering over the face of the waters.

9. Look up John 14:16. What does Jesus say about the Holy Spirit? Where does He live?

Often as Christians we try to look for ways to explain the Trinity. Some have said it is like a four-leaf clover, or an egg made of three parts, or in the same way a man can be a father, son, and husband at the same time. While it is tempting to explain the Trinity through analogies there is no right way to do perfectly. The best thing that we can do is believe that the Trinity exists, and it is something beyond our comprehension. This is a mystery of God, which means that it is not something that God did not fully reveal it to us. The evidence of the Trinity is found all through Scripture and it is an important doctrine to believe. It is through faith that God is one in essence yet three separate persons that we receive salvation through the forgiveness of our sins.

STUDENT & PARENT QUESTION *for the student and a parent to discuss and answer together*
Why is a right understanding of the Trinity important to a Christian's belief in salvation?

STUDENT & PARENT SIGNATURE:

By signing below, we affirm (1) this lesson is complete and that (2) we completed the "Student & Parent Questions" section together.

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____