

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Trinity Sunday
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: John 16:12-15

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

In three succinct sentences, Jesus continues to prepare the disciples for the coming of the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth. God who is and was has sent Jesus who is and was. Now the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, comes to be with the disciples and to be with us. We have God in three persons — a community. This community is so huge it has room for each of us to enter into this Kingdom of God.

Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Theme: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit: Abundant Love

Before: Sidewalk chalk is suggested for this session. If you choose to do this activity talk with the church staff to get permission and discuss where would be the best place to do it/if it will interfere with any other activities. You will need a back-up plan in case it rains (a large paper tarp like the kind found in some paint stores, or large pieces of newsprint). Disposable wipes or paper towels and some water will be needed at the end of the creating.

The concept of three can be reinforced by bringing from home a batch of bowls, baskets, or boxes with things that come in three. These could be an apple, an orange and a banana; paper, crayons and scissors; Bible, Prayer Book, Hymnal, water, ice, and steam — whatever strikes your imagination and is readily at hand. Set these threes where the children can explore them.

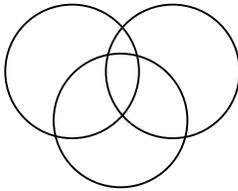
You may also choose to write in big letters the words suggested in the Activity as well as draw the three circles and the triangle and place them all where everyone can see, either inside or outside, depending on where you do the activity. Or write and draw on individual pieces of paper the children can take with them, either outside or inside.

Beginning: Invite the children to look at the display you have created. What is alike about each of the displays? What else comes in threes? (Bread – Peanut butter – Jelly? A glass – a soda – a straw?) Tell the children that we think of God in threes also: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

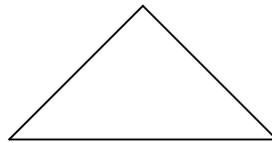
Praying: Hold hands forming a circle and tell the children that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are right here in our circle with us. “Good Morning God, the Father; Good Morning, God the Son; Good Morning, God the Holy Spirit. Thank you for being with us today. Amen.”

The Story: Jesus is getting ready to go back to be with God the Father. And he is talking to his friends, telling them the Holy Spirit is coming to be with them while he is away. Jesus tells them the Holy Spirit will help them do hard things. The Holy Spirit will help them figure things out. The Holy Spirit will teach them things they still need to learn. The Holy Spirit will help them remember what Jesus taught them.

Activity: Tell the children we have no photos of God, nor of Jesus, nor of the Holy Spirit. So we have ways to draw the idea of God being together with Jesus and together with Holy Spirit.



Or



We have words we can use: God, Jesus, Holy Spirit. And we have words like Holy, Holy, Holy.

If you can go outside with sidewalk chalk, tell the children that the people in church today will be hearing about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, so they will be happy to find our drawings waiting for them on the sidewalk.

If you have a rainy day, perhaps the children could place their drawings on the walls or on the floor in the hall where people gather after church.

Getting Closure: Provide the opportunity for children to remove the chalk from their hands. Teach the children the first part of the Sanctus by either singing it or saying it together.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Closing Prayer: Thank you God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, that you work together teaching us how to be together with you. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Trinity Sunday
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: John 16:12-15

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

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In three succinct sentences, Jesus continues to prepare the disciples for the coming of the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth. God who is and was has sent Jesus who is and was. Now the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, comes to be with the disciples and to be with us. We have God in three persons — a community. This community is so huge it has room for each of us to enter into this Kingdom of God.

Theme: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit: Abundant Love

Before Class: You will need sufficient copies of the Bible or of the scripture for the day so that each child may follow along as the passage is read. A large piece of newsprint would be helpful for taking notes. The activity calls for making Mobius strips. You will need a roll of calculator tape, transparent tape, pencils, and markers.

Beginning: Ask the children if this has ever happened to them: They were trying to explain something to another person. The other person clearly wanted to understand, was hanging on your every word and completely trusting you, but they simply did not get it — could not figure out what you were saying. Maybe you can remember a time someone was trying to explain something to you, and you just could not get it. Maybe that's how Jesus' disciples felt in the passage we have for today.

Opening Prayer: Blessed Trinity, today we give thanks for abundant love poured into our hearts by you and for your persistence in loving us even if we do not fully understand. Amen.

The Scripture: John 16: 12-15 Ask for a volunteer to read, while the rest of the children follow along.

Option: Let's see if we can figure out what Jesus is saying here by putting things in our own words. The leader of the class can scribe what the children say.

Questions:

What "things" do we think Jesus had to say to the disciples? (The way he was going to die and the way the resurrection would happen.)

How did Jesus know that the disciples would not be able to tolerate it? (Are we ever ready for hard things when they happen?)

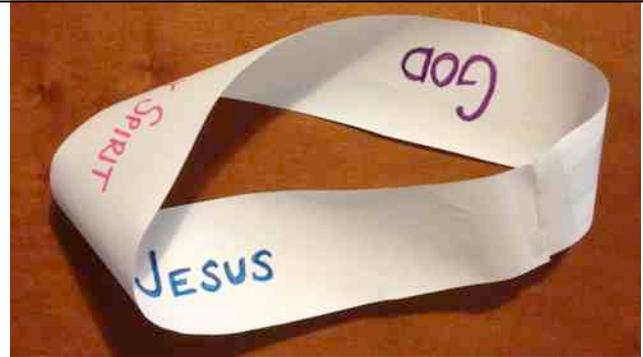
I wonder, who is the Spirit of Truth? (The Holy Spirit)

I wonder why Jesus doesn't name the Holy Spirit? (The disciples had not yet experienced the Holy Spirit — so the name would not help them understand.)

What message will the Holy Spirit bring? (The message that Jesus has been sent by God.)

How does what Jesus says in verse 15 show us that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit act together? (Everything that God has, God shares with Jesus; all that Jesus has he shares with the Holy Spirit.)

Activity: Mobius Strips

	<p>Cut a length of calculator tape about 30 inches long for each child. Show the children how to write the words "God" and "Jesus" on their strips as shown here.</p>
	<p>Then flip the strip up, so the words are face down and upside down. Then write "Holy Spirit" in the middle.</p>
	<p>Turn one end of the strip 180 degrees (twisting it once)</p>
	<p>Tape the two ends together by securely taping both sides. The paper now forms a continuous loop (with one twist that won't be very obvious).</p> <p>Now run your fingers over the paper from the word "God" to "Jesus" and keep on going. The words "Holy Spirit" that started on the other side of the paper are now on the same side as God and Jesus.</p>
	<p>If you fiddle with the paper, you can shape it into a triangle, and God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit can all be read without fingering the Mobius strip.</p> <p>If you have time, the children can decorate their Mobius Strip as you talk about how the Trinity works together using the "Getting Closure" below.</p>

Optional Activity: Treasure Hunt

Invite the group to go on a treasure hunt. They are to find things that are made of three parts OR have three sides. (clovers, triangles, pencils have lead, wood, and eraser, etc.)

As they gather together after their hunt, have them share what they found to represent the Trinity.

Optional Activity: My Experience with the Trinity

Use the template below to invite the children to think about ways in which they have encountered the Trinity in their own lives. Invite them to either write words in each box or create a picture(s) in each box.

When have they seen God in Creation?

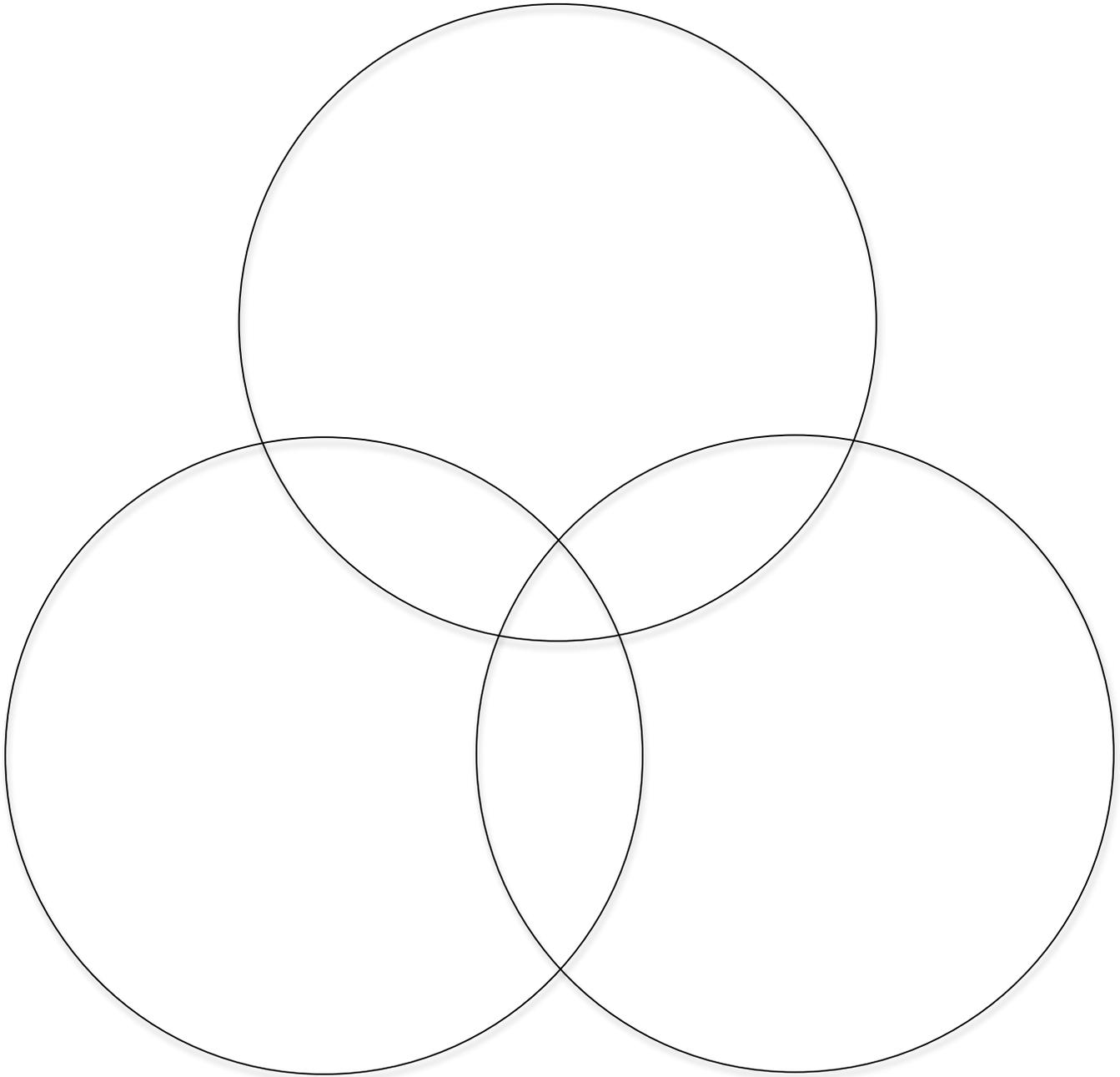
Where have they seen or heard or been a part of doing something that Jesus taught us?

When have they felt close to God and thus felt the Holy Spirit in their lives?

Getting Closure: I wonder what these strips tell us about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? I wonder how we know God in each of these three ways: God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit? I wonder what the Holy Spirit tells us about community?

Closing Prayer: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen. (Adapted from 2 Corinthians 13:13)

When have I seen God in Creation?



When have I seen/heard/been a part of doing something that Jesus taught us?

When have I felt close to God/Holy Spirit in their lives?

John 16:12-15

12 'I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

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**Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Trinity Sunday
Gospel Lesson for Adults**

Scripture: John 16:12-15

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

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Theme: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit: Abundant Love

Before Class: We are reading the scripture twice today and you may choose to read them from two different translations. You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture, slips of paper, and pencils to help people gather words from today's passage to ponder and share.

Beginning: Miles of ink have been spilled and acres of trees felled for paper to expound on the meaning of "Trinity." We are not likely to have a breakthrough here, but we can look for our own insights into the gift of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit: God a community.

Opening Prayer: Blessed Trinity, today we give thanks for abundant love poured into our hearts by you and for your tenacity in loving us beyond our ability to understand. Amen.

The Scripture: John 16: 12-15 Invite two readers for this passage. Ask one to read the three verses and, after observing a minute or two of silence, the second reader to read the passage (either the same translation or a different translation.)

Questions:

Invite people to share a word or phrase that spoke to them, either because it rang true or because it puzzled them.

Explore together why the group thinks Jesus did not think his disciples were ready for what he could tell them. What might it have been that he refrained from saying? (The disciples were still not completely braced for the crucifixion, let alone ready to understand the resurrection.)

Who is the Spirit of truth? (The Holy Spirit.)

I wonder how we would describe the job of the Holy Spirit found in verses 13 and 14.

What evidence do we find in these three verses that "God is a Community?"

Optional Activity: Create the Trinity

Invite the group to split into groups of three or four. In these groups invite them to think of various ways we could explain the Trinity to someone else. Could you describe it as a divine dance that three people participate in and that is not complete without all three? Could you describe the trinity as a three leaf clover? A triangle? A three-legged stool?

Once they have come up with an illustration or description of the trinity, have them depict it either by drawing or creating it with art materials or simply writing the description down on paper.

As you gather back together, invite them to share what they came up with and why they think it represents the Trinity of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

Getting Closure: Invite the group to discuss: What might the Trinity have to say about this leadership? What does this model have to say to us as we participate in a Christian community?

Closing Prayer: The Collect for the First Sunday after Pentecost: Trinity Sunday

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

John 16:12-15

12 'I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

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