



The Trinity: Dynamic Community of Love

Parish Core Community Meeting

Aim

To provide an opportunity—through prayer, reflection, presentation of information, and sharing—for the Parish Core Community to grow in community and in understanding the abundant love of our Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) for us.

Ideally, this meeting will

- assess the needs of the parish (or small Christian communities) to grow in their understanding of the Trinity as a model for community life.
- create plans, workshops, speakers, and so on, to meet these needs.

Leader's Instructions:

- a) You may want to provide soft music in the background as people gather and have beverages and snacks available. These are ways to help set the tone for this spiritually and communally enriching topic.
- b) An informal setting such as a living room rather than a classroom is important. Place a candle and a Bible on a table in a central, visible place at the meeting. Open the Bible to the reading from the Gospel of John. The setting will convey an atmosphere of prayer and reflection.
- c) All participants can easily sing the recommended song.

Opening Prayer

Song (optional)

"Father, I Adore You"

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<http://www.maranathamusic.com>.

Leader's Introduction

Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross (*slowly and with prayerful intention*):

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

As we continue our journey together as a Core Community, let us take the next moment or two to quiet ourselves in the presence of our Triune God.

Leader: O God, ever three in one, we open our minds, and raise our hearts to you. Help us to erase the false divisions we see between others and ourselves so that we may better live in the perfect unity of your divine love. Help our relationships to reflect the love and self-giving of you: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Grant us, each moment of today, to grow ever more aware of your indwelling presence, so that we may become a reflection of your merciful love in the world, you who are Eternal Peace, Unending Mercy, and Abiding Love. Amen.

Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Reading John 14:1–7

Leader’s Reflection

Imagine yourself driving down a dark road late on a winter’s night. You are alone in your car and you feel tired and uncertain about where you are going. After having traveled many winding turns and narrow country roads you notice that your fuel is low. The thought of getting stranded on these lonely wooded roads intensifies your anxiety and you begin to doubt that you are traveling in the right direction. Suddenly you are filled with a sense of relief and new life as you see ahead of you a sign pointing to the nearby village of your destination. You know that a close friend awaits your arrival and will welcome you with a warm fire and a cup of hot tea before you rest for the night.

The contrast we imagine between the cold, dark, lonely winter’s night, and the warm, comfortable, intimacy with a good friend speaks to us of the image Jesus wanted to convey to his friends. Jesus sensed their hearts were troubled by the cold night of doubt and the darkness of fear. His words were to reassure them that his Spirit would always be with them regardless of how desperate or alone they may sometimes feel.

In the original Greek of John’s Gospel, the word for “way” is *hodos*, and it means road. John was telling us that Jesus was not only going ahead of his friends in order to prepare a place for them in the kingdom, but he also promises to be the very “road” to guide them, the light that will illuminate their path, and the life that will give them strength for the journey.

Jesus himself is the road upon which we travel to make our pilgrimage to the Father. This reveals something profoundly beautiful about Jesus’ relationship with God, and God’s relationship with us. First, no one can journey to the Father, nor even really know him, except through Jesus. Second, only in Jesus do we come to know and fully experience God, the Father. This is because, as the letter to the Colossians tells us, Jesus is “the image of the invisible God...” (Colossians 1:15). The relationship between Jesus and the Father is so intimate, so abiding, that they are one. When we see the visible image of Jesus, we come to know the depth of love, which the invisible Father has for us. His love is so great, in fact, that in Jesus, he comes to us to show us the way to him, since we were unable to find it ourselves. This love of the Father and the Son is so intense that it is another person—the Holy Spirit. The Spirit guides us to embrace the Trinity and empowers us to continue the evangelizing mission of Jesus Christ in the world today.

This is the meaning of the Trinity. God so loved us, that he was not content to simply be our final destiny. In Jesus, God also became for us the very road upon which we travel under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in sharing a deep relationship with Christ, we come to partake in the intimate relationship between him and the Father in the love of the Spirit. In our journey of faith, then, it is impossible that we will ever be alone. In the seemingly dark, cold, or lonely times in our faith, we must only remember Jesus’ words: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.... If you know me, you will know my Father also” (John 14:6,7). We are never alone. God never abandons us. The road upon which we stand is Christ himself. So, Jesus reminds us, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me” (John 14:1). Through the guidance of the Spirit, Jesus not only leads the way, he *is* the way to the Father. Such is the love of our Triune God.

Leader's Instructions:

Allow a few moments of silence for individual reflection and prayer.

Faith Sharing

Leader: Share on one or more of the following:

- How would I describe the road of faith upon which I now travel? Is it smooth? Bumpy? Curvy? How might I try to see Christ present to me in my joys or troubles?
- Who or what has helped me to keep traveling the journey of faith? How did someone or some event reveal the presence of Christ in my life? How have I been the presence of Christ for another?
- What strikes me about viewing the Trinity as a community in which God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are always in a relationship of love with one another? How does my relationship with Christ bring me into deeper communion with the Father and the Spirit?

Business Meeting Agenda

1. Review previous meeting's minutes and actions.
2. Decide upon possible actions to introduce the topic of the Trinity to the parish (or small Christian communities):
 - Provide a guest speaker to present an evening of reflection on the topic of the Trinity or a series on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - Establish a parish library of books and tapes on the Trinity, or increase the number of volumes in an existing library.
 - Contact RENEW International (Mike Fabian: 1232 George St., Plainfield, NJ, 07062-1717; phone: 908-769-5400 (ex. 144); fax 1-908-769-5660; Web site www.renewintl.org; e-mail: SCCServices@renewintl.org to schedule a speaker to come to your parish to conduct a workshop on Mary, or decide to download the Day of Reflection, "Mary, Woman of Faith: Renewing Our Awareness," (www.ParishLife.com) and conduct the workshop yourselves.
 - Consider downloading the RENEW International workshop, "The Trinity: Dynamic Community of Love" from www.ParishLife.com.
 - What additional ways can we name to assist the parish with regard to this topic?
 - Consult with others in the parish who are interested in or working in the area of faith and learning.
3. Notes:
 - a. If we want to introduce this topic to the parish (or small Christian communities), we should first consider how and to what extent the parish or small communities experience a need for such a topic. This may take some informal assessment.
 - b. If a decision is made to introduce this topic, the following may be helpful in implementing the decision:
 - How are we going to go about introducing the topic?
 - By combining a number of small groups into large groups?
 - By going out to each small group?
 - Who will we call upon to be hosts?

- Should we consult RENEW International to help us organize a workshop and/or run it?

4. Assign tasks to individual members or groups.

5. Other action items to be discussed as part of normal business of the Parish Core Community.

Closing Prayer

Begin by having everyone slowly say aloud the Sign of the Cross:

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Pray together:

Holy Trinity, you whom I adore, may I forget myself so completely in your peace that I may already experience your eternity here and now. May nothing shake or trouble this peace or tempt me to leave you, but each moment bring me closely into your presence and mystery! May I never leave or abandon you, but may my entire being be watchful in faith, in adoration, completely surrendered to your creative power.

(based on Prayer of Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity)

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”