

“Welcome to the Family: Introduction to Discipleship at Holy Trinity Church”

## Lesson #1 – Getting to Know the Holy Trinity Family: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

*Note About Class:*

1) *Binder: Please bring the binder to class. I will be adding materials to it as we go along. There will be take home work for you to do. Couples and families are encouraged to work on the binder together at home.*

2) *Bible: Please bring your own Bible. If you don't have one, talk to me and I can recommend a Bible.*

3) *Index Card Feedback: I want your feedback after each class. There are index cards in your binder. Please feel free to leave anonymous questions and comments after each class. Was there anything that we did not cover that you wished we would have? Was there anything that we did touch on that would like to learn more about? Do you have any constructive feedback for me as the teacher? Jot your comments down as we go along. You can turn this in after class or at anytime.*

Opening Thoughts: Tell us something about your family. Where did you grow up? What was your family life like? What creates a family? What keeps a family together? What are some “family values” that are important to you? Now think about your church family. What creates a church family? What are some values that you think should be important to a church family?

### Ephesians 1:4-6

English Standard Version: *even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

The Message: *Long before He laid down earth's foundations, He had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of His love, to be made whole and holy by His love. Long, long ago He decided to adopt us into His family through Jesus Christ (What pleasure He took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of His lavish gift-giving by the hand of His beloved Son.*

\* Difference between Translation and Paraphrase (look at editor notes in front of your Bible)

What words come to mind when you think about God? What do you picture? (List On Board)

Two basic religions in the world:

#### 1 Natural Religion

Polytheistic (“many gods”)/Pantheistic (“everything god”)

Revealed in nature/natural experience

Examples: hinduism, animism

Sacred Rituals

#### 2 Historical Religion

Monotheistic (“One God”)

Revealed through historical events and prophets word

Only three: Judaism, Christianity, Islam

Sacred Scriptures

\* Judaism and Islam are Unitarian (Revelation of God as One)

\*\* Christianity is Trinitarian (Revelation of God as Three in One - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

**Title for the Bible: A Father Keeps His Promise to Get His Family Back**

- What was God doing before he created the heavens and the earth? (See Genesis 1:1-3)
- “Family” is what we all understand and is the foundation of all human society (Genesis 2:18)
- Genesis 3:9 The Fall - “Where are you?” God is hidden and man is hiding. What does God’s voice sound like when He asks this question?
- The Christian Faith is a matter of God’s Revelation, not our own doing or finding. God finds you and reveals Himself. Read Matthew 11:27 and John 1:18. (The Spirit does use experience and evidence to persuade us, but ultimately you cannot prove to someone why you’re right and they are wrong, nor should you try. The presence and message of Jesus persuades.)
- God reveals himself to us in two combined ways: relationship and story. That Story has the central plot: God sends His Son into the world to save us.
- The early Christians put their beliefs into a Creed (Look at “Apostles’ Creed” Attachment)
- Jesus taught us to pray His prayer (Look at “Lord’s Prayer” Attachment)
- “Father” is found 170x in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John). Also Paul uses the name Father to introduce almost every one of his letters (see Ephesians 1:2)
- Read Ephesians 3:14-21 (DIAGRAM OF THE HOLY TRINITY)
- Augustine: “Now love means someone loving something that is being loved with love. There are three: the lover, the one being loved, and love itself.”
- In Ephesians 1:6 what is the name which refers to Jesus?
- What was God doing before he created the heavens and the earth? = Ephesians 1:4-6 He Was Planning to Adopt You
- Look up Mark 1:9-11. Jesus was Baptized so that the Beloved Family of God could come to earth and we could see it and become part of it.
- Matthew 28:19-20 Baptism is The Act of Adoption where you receive the family name; The Cross of Jesus is placed on your head and your heart, that is why the pastor crosses us and we cross ourselves in prayer, worship, and giving/receiving blessing.
- Augustine: “At the center of the universe there is a family of love.” -- Love is also at the heart of the First Commandment: Exodus 20:3-6; God is right to get jealous

Closing Thoughts: You are brothers and sisters in God’s Family - How does this understanding affect the way we look at church and our church family? Not everyone has a good father figure: absent, abusive, unapproving. But what does that word Father really mean?

Song: “Father Welcomes” (LSB 605)

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of God  
the Father almighty.  
From there He will come to judge  
the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name;  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
And lead us not into temptation;  
But deliver us from evil;  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the  
glory forever and ever. Amen!