

UNIT 2: THERE ARE THREE PERSONS IN ONE GOD

Unit Objectives

1. To review that there are three Persons in one God.
2. To discuss person and nature as they apply to us and to God.
3. To study the transcendence of God.
4. To learn how God acts within the Blessed Trinity and how He acts toward us.

Vocabulary

person: someone who has a mind and a will; who someone is
nature: what something or someone is
Blessed Trinity: three Persons in one God

Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *Compendium*, and YOUCAT

Divine works and the Trinitarian missions: CCC 257–60, 267
(*Compendium* 49) (YOUCAT 39)
Holy Spirit: The gift of God: CCC 733–41, 747 (*Compendium* 145)
(YOUCAT 119)
Holy Trinity as mystery: CCC 232–37, 261 (*Compendium* 44)
(YOUCAT 35–36)
Holy Trinity in the doctrine of the Faith: CCC 249–56, 263–67
(*Compendium* 48) (YOUCAT 39)
Revelation of God as Trinity: CCC 238–48, 262 (*Compendium* 46–47)
(YOUCAT 37–38)

LESSON 5: THREE PERSONS, ONE GOD

Preparation

Set up a sacred space. Place a picture of Rublev's *The Trinity*, or some other suitable picture of the Blessed Trinity in the sacred space for this unit's lessons. Gather students in the sacred space and pray together the Our Father and the Glory Be. Open and close with the Sign of the Cross.

Proclamation

There are three Persons in one God.

Lesson Objective

To review that there are three Persons in one God.

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Explanation

Have the students read and discuss textbook pp. 15-16.

UNIT 2: THERE ARE THREE PERSONS IN ONE GOD

Vocabulary

Person someone who has a mind and a will; who someone is addressing; what something or someone is

Blessed Trinity three Persons in one God

LESSON 5: THREE PERSONS, ONE GOD

We know from Jesus that there are three Persons in one God. Before His Ascension into Heaven, Jesus said to His Apostles, "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" (Mt 28:19). In God, there is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Learn more by reading YOUCAT 35.

Jesus Himself is God. He is God the Son. As the Nicene Creed states, "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God... God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God". The Nicene Creed is an ancient summary statement of what Catholics believe. It comes from the first two councils, the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) and the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381). It can be found in the *Book of Catholic Prayer* (p. 100).

There were many times when Jesus taught about His Father and Himself to His disciples. The Father, too, is God. Again, the Nicene Creed states, "I believe in one God, the Father almighty."

Learn more by reading YOUCAT 37.

Finally, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, who would come after Jesus' Ascension into Heaven. The Holy Spirit is also God. Going to the Nicene Creed for a third time we find, "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is together in glory and who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, and who speaks through the prophets". Since the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all God, does that mean that there are three Gods? No, there aren't three Gods. There is only one God. But, in the one God there is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

If what you have just read is difficult to understand, you have read it correctly. Three Persons in one God is the deepest mystery of the Catholic Faith. No one except God Himself understands it fully.



Learn more by reading YOUCAT 35 and 37 as a class.

God



Three Persons in one God is the deepest mystery of the Catholic Faith.

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Application

Have the students complete the Scripture Search and review questions on textbook pp. 17–19. Answers can be used for classroom discussion.

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Review Questions

1. What two short prayers do we say that express our belief that there are three Persons in one God?
The Sign of the Cross and the Glory Be.
2. Read Matthew 10:20. How does this verse point to the doctrine of three Persons in one God?
Jesus—God the Son—speaks about the Father and the Spirit.

Blessed Trinity Scripture Search

Find the following Scripture passages in the Bible. Fill in the blanks and answer the questions.

1. Matthew 28:19–20: “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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”
2. Matthew 10:20: “For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”
3. Matthew 3:13–17, Mark 1:9–11, Luke 3:21–22, John 1:32–34.
What is the main event in all four Gospel passages?
The Baptism of Jesus.

How is the Blessed Trinity present in these passages?
God the Father—His voice; God the Son—the baptized Jesus; God the Holy Spirit—under the appearance of a dove.

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4. John 14:8–9: How does Jesus answer Philip when Philip asks Him to show the Father to the Apostles?
“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.”
5. John 14:16–17: Who is the Comforter Jesus promises to ask the Father to send?
The Spirit of truth (Holy Spirit).
6. John 16:13: Who will guide us to the truth?
The Spirit of truth (Holy Spirit).
7. John 20:22: Jesus breathed on the Apostles and said: “Receive the Holy Spirit.”
8. Luke 24:49: Who is the “promise of my Father” that Jesus is sending to the Apostles?
The Holy Spirit.
9. Acts 1:8: From whom will the Apostles receive the power to witness to the world?
The Holy Spirit.
10. Acts 2:1–4: In what three ways did the Holy Spirit make His presence known to the Apostles?
Wind, tongues of fire, and the ability of the Apostles to speak in different tongues (languages).

Review Questions

1. What do we mean when we describe God as the “Blessed Trinity”?
We mean that there are three Persons in one God.
2. Name the three Persons in one God.
God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit
3. What is another name for God the Son?
Jesus Christ.

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Celebration

Gather in the sacred space. Make the Sign of the Cross, and lead students in extemporaneous prayer praising God and thanking Him for who He is and all He has done for us. Encourage students to add their own prayers of praise and thanksgiving. Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Review Questions (continued)

4. What prayers of faith summarize what we believe? *The Nicene Creed, The Apostles' Creed.*

5. Why can't we understand fully the concept of the Blessed Trinity? *Because it is a mystery.*

LESSON 6: PERSON AND NATURE

Even though we cannot fully understand the mystery of the three Persons in one God, we can understand the concept of Person and Nature. Nature is the part of a person that is common to all persons. Nature is who someone is. Names are given to persons, and a name tells who a person is. For example, if you are asked who you are, you respond with your name: Joe, Jennifer, Maricela, John, or whatever your name is. A name names your person. A name tells others who you are.

On the other hand, nature is what something or someone is. For example, each of us is human. We share the same nature as all humans. There are certain capacities that belong to human nature. Two essential capacities are the capacities to think and to choose. In other words, as human beings, each of us has a mind and a will. We don't all have the exact same mind and will, but each of us, individually, has a mind and a will. We share the same mind and will as all humans. We share the same body. No two of us share the same body. As human beings, then, each of us is one person (one name, one will), possessing one nature (not the exact same nature, but individual repetitions of the same nature).

Using the concepts of person and nature in reference to God, we can say that God is three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), but that each Person possesses one and the same nature (not individual natures, but the same nature). Identical to God's nature is the capacity to think and to choose. God has a mind and a will.

In God, then, there are three Persons, but each Person possesses the exact same mind and will as the other two Persons. There are not three minds and three wills in God, but one mind and one will. In God, there is one nature, but three Persons.

The names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each name a Person (each name tells who one of the Persons is), and each Person has the exact same nature (there is only one divine nature). We call the mystery of three Persons in one God the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

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LESSON 6: PERSON AND NATURE

Preparation

Place a picture of Jesus Christ in the sacred space. Gather in it and pray an opening prayer such as the Our Father. Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Proclamation

“Person” refers to who we are and “nature” refers to what we are.

Lesson Objectives

1. To discuss person and nature as they apply to us and to God.
2. To study the transcendence of God.

Explanation

Have the students read and discuss textbook pp. 19–20.

The material in this lesson is difficult and should be discussed carefully in class.

LESSON 6: PERSON AND NATURE

Even though we cannot fully understand the mystery of the three Persons in one God, we can understand it a little if we keep in mind the distinction between person and nature.

Person is who someone is. Humans are given to persons, and a name tells who a person is. For example, you are given to persons, and your name tells who you are. Similarly, Adam, or whatever your name is, is given to persons. A name tells others who you are.

On the other hand, nature is what something or someone is. For example, each of us is human. We say that we are human beings. As a human being, each of us has a human nature.

Each of us has a human nature, but we do not have the same nature. We are the only ones on the earth to think and choose. No other animals, plants, or things can do this. We do not all have the exact same mind and will, but each of us, individually, has a mind and a will.

Further, the human body is part of human nature. Each of us, individually, has a body. No two of us share the same body. As human beings, then, each of us is one person (one name, one will), possessing the same nature (the same ability to think and choose).

Using the concepts of person and nature in reference to God, we can say that God is three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), but that each Person possesses one and the same nature (not individual repetitions of the same nature). Essential to God’s nature is the capacity to think and to choose. God has a mind and a will.

As God, then, there are three Persons, but each Person possesses the exact same mind and will as the other two Persons. There are not three minds and three wills in God, but one mind and one will. In other words, each Person in God thinks with the same mind and chooses with the same will.

The names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each name a Person (each name tells who one of the Persons is), but they do not name the nature (the nature is the same for all three Persons). We call the mystery of three Persons in one God the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

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★ Learn more by reading YOU CAT 36.

In Luke 3:21–22, each Person of the Blessed Trinity made Himself known. Read this passage and answer the following questions.

How did God the Father make Himself known? A voice from Heaven

How did God the Holy Spirit make Himself known? By appearing in the form of a dove

How did God the Son make Himself known? God the Son is Jesus, God incarnate.

When we say that God has a mind and a will, we are not saying that His mind and will are the same as our minds and wills. Recall that in the discussion of God, we learned that God is transcendent. That means God is far beyond us in every aspect of His being. Consequently, He is infinitely more intelligent than we are. He is infinitely more loving than we are. He is infinitely more powerful than we are.

Review Questions

1. What do we mean by "person"?
A person is who someone is.
2. What do we mean by "nature"?
A nature is what someone or something is.
3. What are the two essential capabilities that belong to human nature?
To think and to choose.

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★ Learn more by reading YOU CAT 36 as a class.

Application

Have the students complete the questions regarding Luke 3:21–22 on textbook p. 20. Answers can be used for classroom discussion.

Ask: Why should we be grateful for God's transcendence? We are in the care of Someone who knows all and can do every good thing for us.

Have the students complete the review questions on textbook pp. 20–21. Answers can be used to generate classroom discussion.

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Review Questions (continued)

4. In addition to the mind and the will, what else is part of human nature?
The human body.
5. As a human being, each of us is one person possessing one nature.
6. God is three Persons, each possessing one and the same nature.
7. If there are three Persons in one God, are there three minds and three wills?
No, each Person in the Blessed Trinity possesses the same mind and will.
There is but one mind and one will in God.
8. What do we mean when we say that God is transcendent?
We mean that God is far beyond us in every aspect of His being.
9. Describe several ways by which God transcends us.
God is more intelligent than we are; more loving; more powerful, etc.

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Celebration

Gather in the sacred space and have a student hold up the crucifix, another student hold up the Bible, and another student hold up the picture of Jesus Christ. Pray together the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, and the Glory Be, and close with the Sign of the Cross.

LESSON 7: GOD'S POWER, WISDOM, AND LOVE

Preparation

Gather in the sacred space with a prayer card or family note containing the Act of Faith or Apostles' Creed. Have the students make the Sign of the Cross and then pray the Act of Faith or Apostles' Creed together. Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Proclamation

God is Power, Wisdom, and Love.

Lesson Objectives

1. To study how God loves within the Blessed Trinity and forms a personal loving communion.
2. To study how God acts toward us—with power, wisdom, and love.

Explanation

In order to explain the word "communion", show the students that it is related to two words, "common" and "union". "Communion of persons" means persons united by a common activity. With respect to God, that activity is love. "Communion" is a very important word in the vocabulary of Vatican II and Blessed John Paul II.

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Ask: Who is the most powerful person on earth or what is the most powerful thing or event on earth that you can think of? For example, the president of the US, a volcano, a hurricane, the rocket that took men to the moon, the atomic bomb. God is infinitely more powerful than any person, thing, or event.

Have the students read and discuss the bottom of p. 21 and p. 22. Read 1 Corinthians 1:24 aloud when indicated in the text.

LESSON 7: GOD'S POWER, WISDOM, AND LOVE

In one of his apostolic exhortations, Blessed John Paul II wrote, "God is love and in Himself His love is perfect. He is love because He is God. He is God because He is love." Pope John Paul II is teaching us that what happens among the Persons of the Blessed Trinity is love. The Father loves the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Son loves the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit loves the Father and the Son. The life that God lives in Himself is personal (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The life that God lives in others (we) is a communion (the three Persons are united in Their common love).

In Himself God lives a mystery of personal loving communion. How does God act toward us? God acts in power, wisdom, and love.

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God's power is demonstrated in creation. No one has ever made something from nothing, except God. God made the entire universe, all the human beings who ever lived, and the world of angels. To create all of this entails unstoppable power.

St. Ignace of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, who lived around the year 1535, said about the creation from nothing by God, "God was all alone and nothing existed but Himself when He determined to create the world. He thought of it, willed it, spoke the word and so made it. It came into being instantaneously, exactly as he had willed. It is enough then for us to be aware of a single fact: nothing is contained in the God. Apart from God there was simply nothing else. It is enough for us to believe, but not to think, that God created the world from nothing. All that is necessary is to believe in God, and He himself was all. At a moment of His own choosing and in a manner determined by himself, God manifested His Word (God the Son), and through him he made the whole universe" (*The Liturgy of the Hours*, vol. 1, Office of Readings, December 23).

Wisdom

is the knowledge of the greatest things. St. Basil revealed the knowledge of the greatest things. He revealed everything that we need to know about God and about ourselves. I created, Jesus is the wisdom of God. **Read** 1 Corinthians 1:24.

God shows His love for us by coming to live within us. But God does give Himself to us, especially, in Jesus Christ, Jesus who came to live with us. He came to come to dwell in us and to share His life with us. We call the gift of God's life that He shares with persons grace.

We can say that God shows His power through creation, His wisdom through His love, and His love by coming to live in us. And although we are not God, we can try to imitate His act toward us in power, wisdom, and love, we can associate power with the Father, wisdom with the Son, and love with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is the Holy Spirit who we believe in God the Father, maker of Heaven and earth. The Father acted in power to create Heaven and earth. We believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, who is Light from Light (light lights up the dark, and Jesus enlightens our minds with wisdom). And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life (grace).

The Holy Spirit gives us God's life because He loves us. We believe in God the Father, the Father of Jesus Christ, the Father of the Holy Spirit, the Father of the Holy Church, the Father of the Holy Eucharist, the Father of the Holy Sacraments, and toward us God shows His power, wisdom, and love. By knowing these things about God, we know a great deal. But there is so much more to know about God that we will never know it all. We can only hope that each day our appreciation of who God is and what He is doing for us will grow.

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A Sacrament is a physical sign, given to us by Christ, in which Christ meets us and gives us grace. The seven Sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

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Application

Have the students complete the exercise on textbook p. 23.

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Read the quotes and answer the questions that follow.

The Holy Spirit is the giver of life (grace). In fact, through the Sacrament the Holy Spirit truly comes to live in us. Blessed John Paul II has spoken of the Holy Spirit living in us:

The Church prays: "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love" (Liturgy of Pentecost).

"Fill the hearts." Consider, young friends, how great is the human heart. If God alone can fill it with the Holy Spirit.

You Are My Favorites, 165

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ... When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. If children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Romans 8:14-17

Consider these words of Blessed John Paul II and of Sacred Scripture. Is God Someone who wants to remain far away from us and uninvolved in our lives? Explain. What difference does God make in your life right now?

(Accept any reasonable response.)

Explain that in this unit the students have learned that the Blessed Trinity forms a personal loving communion. They have learned how God acts within the Blessed Trinity and how He acts toward us—with power, wisdom, and love.

After students have completed the exercise, lead a discussion about the meaning of the Scripture passage Romans 8:14-17. The following questions will help.

Ask: How can we live as children of God?

How can we live in loving communion with Him?

How can our sufferings draw us closer to Him?

Are our sufferings part of our inheritance as children of God?

What help does God give us to bring us closer to Him?

UNIT 2: THERE ARE THREE PERSONS IN ONE GOD

Have the students complete the Sacrament Crossword Puzzle on textbook pp. 24-25 either in class or as homework.

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Sacrament Crossword Puzzle

Look ahead in your textbook to pages 243 and 244. On these two pages you will find information on the seven Sacraments that will help you solve the puzzle.

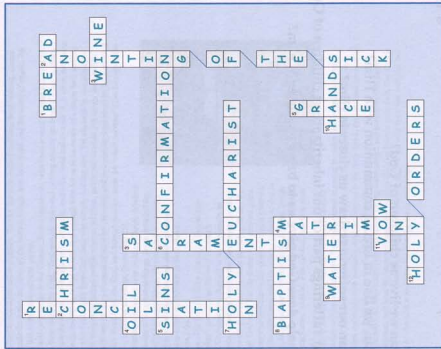
Across

1. A sign of Christ's body, used in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist.
2. A special oil used in the Sacraments.
3. A sign of Christ's Blood, used in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist.
4. Another name for Christ.
5. One _____ are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
6. In this Sacrament our faith is strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit.
7. In this Sacrament we receive Jesus as our spiritual food and drink.
8. In this Sacrament Original Sin is taken away, and we become members of the Church.
9. The physical sign of Baptism.
10. One of the physical signs of Holy Orders is the imposition, or laying on, of the bishop's _____.
11. A promise.
12. In this Sacrament men are ordained bishops, priests, and deacons.

Down

1. The Sacrament in which our sins are forgiven.
2. The Sacrament in which Jesus meets us and heals us spiritually and sometimes physically.
3. Instituted by Jesus to give us grace.
4. The Sacrament in which a man and a woman say "Yes" to one another through their vows.
5. In the Sacraments we receive _____.

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UNIT 2: THERE ARE THREE PERSONS IN ONE GOD

Have the students complete the review questions on textbook p. 26. Answers can be used to generate classroom discussion.

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Review Questions

1. Explain how the Blessed Trinity is a communion of Persons. The three Persons of the Blessed Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are united in Their common love.
2. How does God act toward us? God acts in power, wisdom, and love.
3. Where does God demonstrate His power? In creation.
4. Through whom is God's wisdom revealed to us? Jesus Christ.
5. What is wisdom? Wisdom is knowledge of the greatest things.
6. Why is Jesus called the Wisdom of God? Because He revealed everything that we need to know about God and about ourselves.
7. Name several ways that God shows us His love. He gave Himself to us by becoming man, suffering, and dying for us. He continues to show us His love through the Sacraments.
8. Explain how each Person of the Blessed Trinity is associated with power, wisdom, and love. Power is associated with the Father, wisdom with the Son, and love with the Holy Spirit.
9. Why is the Holy Spirit called Lord and giver of life? The Holy Spirit is called the Lord and giver of life because He gives us grace, which is God's life in us.

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Celebration

Write the prayer to the Holy Spirit on the board at the beginning of the class or have prayer cards or prayer sheets prepared with the following prayer:

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you shall renew the face of the earth.*

Gather in the sacred space and pray this prayer and the Glory Be, and close with the Sign of the Cross.

Family Note

Make copies of the Unit 2 family note and send it home for students to discuss with their parents.

Assessment

Make copies of the Unit 2 Assessment and have students either take it as a test or work together in groups to answer the questions. After test is taken have the class discuss the discussion questions together if there is time. After corrections are made, tests should be taken home and discussed with parents.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Unit 2 Assessment—There Are Three Persons in One God**Matching**

Match each word with its corresponding definition or explanation.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| H. 1. person | A. a loving union |
| I. 2. nature | B. three Persons in one God |
| B. 3. Blessed Trinity | C. beyond what we normally experience |
| G. 4. Jesus Christ | D. used to exercise the power to choose |
| J. 5. creed | E. used to exercise the power to think |
| E. 6. mind | F. the gift of God's life |
| D. 7. will | G. the second Person of the Blessed Trinity who became Man |
| C. 8. transcendent | H. who someone is |
| A. 9. communion | I. what someone or something is |
| F. 10. grace | J. a prayer and declaration of faith |

Short Answer

Write a brief answer or completion.

- Name the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. **God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.**
- A truth of our Faith that we cannot fully understand is called a **Mystery**.
- How many Persons are there in God? **Three**
- How many natures are there in God? **One**
- How many persons and natures are there in a human being? **One person and one nature.**
- Who is the Blessed Trinity the perfect communion of unity of Persons?
Answers should include the love of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity is perfect. The perfect love of the three Persons makes them one.
- How does God show us His power? **Through creation**
- How is God's wisdom revealed to us? **Jesus revealed God's wisdom.**
- Who was the most perfect way God demonstrated His love for us? **God sent His only Son to suffer and die on the Cross for us.**
- The Holy Spirit gives us this, which is God's life in us. **Grace**

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Essay

Answer the following question in paragraph form.

We know that God acts in power, wisdom, and love. How are each of these actions actively present in your personal life?

(Answers to essay question will vary. Accept all appropriate answers.)

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