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# CONNECT!

BRINGING FAITH TO LIFE

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# Chapter 1

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# Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition

## KEY WORDS

Gospels  
Revelation  
Sacred Scripture  
Sacred Tradition

If you googled “the big bang theory,” most likely the first references you would find would be to a popular TV show. But did you know that the big bang theory is an actual scientific theory first proposed by a scientist who was also a Catholic priest? It is currently the most likely explanation of how the universe began: with an exploding atom, a “big bang.”

But, some might say, doesn't the Bible reveal that the world was created in seven days? Yes, it does. How can these two explanations both be true? The truths we learn in the Bible cannot contradict the truths we learn in the universe that God created. In this chapter, we learn that the truths we study in the Bible, when understood as God's message of salvation, do not contradict science. Yes, you can believe in God and be a scientist too!

## Revelation

The universe, God's creation, is one of God's greatest gifts to us and communicates God's presence to us in many wonderful ways. The Earth itself is a sign of God's existence. In



### CONNECT with GOD

Lord God, I ask,  
When I . . .  
... am lost, make  
yourself known to me.  
... am lonely, make  
yourself known to me.  
... am confused, make  
yourself known to me.  
... am sick, make your-  
self known to me.  
... am joyful, make  
yourself known to me.  
... doubt you, make  
yourself known to me.  
... am in need, make  
yourself known to me.  
... pray, make yourself  
known to me.  
Amen.

fact, you can find the evidence of God's handiwork everywhere: the trees that give you shade, the sun that warms your back, the dogs that bark in the distance, and, of course, all the people around you. Though we do not fully understand God and his ways, we can use our minds to see that God truly exists because of the wonder of creation itself.

In fact, throughout all history, God has made himself known to human beings in a number of ways. He continues to do so today through the signs of creation around us, through the voice of the Church, and through the voices of our consciences speaking from within us.

You may already have had an experience where God became known to you. Maybe after going to confession, you have felt the relief of having God remove the burden of your guilty feelings and your sins. Maybe you have felt God's presence in the prayerful quiet of the church before Mass. If anything like this has ever happened to you, you know it comes as a gift. God makes himself known to us because he loves us. Even more amazing, he wants to give himself to us so we know we are never alone.



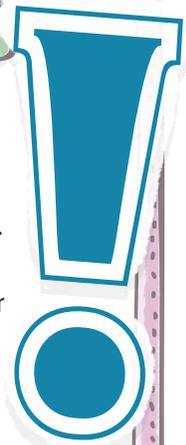
## good to KNOW

Did you know that the Catholic Church operates an astronomical observatory in Arizona? The telescope on Mount Graham in southeast Arizona is known as VATT (for Vatican Advanced Technology Telescope). The observatory is operated by the Vatican Observatory in Rome, in partnership with the University of Arizona. When not exploring the vastness of the universe, the staff sponsors educational events for teachers and students who want to know more about God's creative work amid the stars and planets.

## CHECK *this* OUT

### Father Lemaître and the Big Bang Theory

Fr. George Lemaître (1894–1966) was a Catholic priest who was a professor of physics at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium. He was also an astronomer and mathematician, and his work on the theory of an expanding universe was confirmed by Edwin Hubble, for whom the Hubble Telescope, built by NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), was named. Father Lemaître’s theory of the origin of the universe, which he originally called the “hypothesis of the primeval atom,” was later shortened by others to “the big bang theory.” From March 1960 until his death in 1966, Father Lemaître was president of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.



What God has made known about himself and his plan for humanity is called **Revelation**. Throughout history, God’s Revelation has been made known through his creation, through events, and through other people; it is most especially and fully made known through Jesus Christ.

Though it is certainly possible for one to have a personal experience of God, Revelation is communicated to the whole world in two main ways: Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Scripture and Tradition are distinct, yet very closely related. Both communicate or transmit the Word of God. Scripture and Tradition make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God and have been given to the Church to be safeguarded and passed on so that all generations will know God’s Revelation. The Church, in her teachings, life, and worship, transmits to every generation what God has revealed through Scripture and Tradition.



**Revelation** → God’s communication about himself and his plan for humanity. Throughout history, God’s Revelation has been made known through creation, events, and people, but most fully through Jesus Christ.

God fully revealed himself by sending his only Son, Jesus Christ. There is nothing new that God needs to reveal until Christ comes again to establish a new Heaven and a new Earth. But what the Father revealed through his Son needs to be explained and taught to all people. Teaching what God has revealed through Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture became the responsibility of the Apostles and their successors, the popes and bishops of the Church.

## Sacred Scripture

**Sacred Scripture** is the seventy-three divinely inspired books we recognize and honor as the Word of God. Another name for Sacred Scripture is the Bible. The seventy-three books of the Bible include the forty-six books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. God is the ultimate author of the Bible. The Holy Spirit inspired the human authors to communicate what God wants us to know for our salvation.

Four special books in the New Testament are called the **Gospels**. The word *gospel* means “good news.” The Gospels are special because they tell us about the life, teachings, Passion (suffering), death,



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**Sacred Scripture** ➡ The Word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

**Gospels** ➡ The Good News of God's Revelation. The four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—tell us about the person, life, teachings, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord, Jesus Christ, in whom God's Revelation is complete.

Although the Bible often contains accurate scientific facts and history, we must be careful in looking for that kind of information. God did not give us the Bible as a source of information about scientific or historical events; rather, he gave us the words of Sacred Scripture to share with us the truths that will bring us our salvation.

God is the author of Sacred Scripture because he inspired its human authors. The Holy Spirit guided the Bible's authors to record without error what God wants us to know for our salvation. This is called inspiration.

Remember that even though the Holy Spirit guided these writers, they were still human beings. They wrote in ancient languages and lived in cultures different from ours. Just like us, they had an incomplete understanding of the world. Because of this, the meaning of the words of the Bible is not always clear.

The Pope and our bishops provide the Church with the authentic interpretation of the Bible. Guided by the Holy Spirit, they teach us about God's message of salvation as revealed through the inspired writers of the Bible. The Church is assisted in this work by biblical scholars, who study the Bible closely to find out exactly what its human



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Sometimes people say God speaks to them. But if you were to ask them whether they hear voices in their heads, they would probably say: "Of course not! I'm not crazy!" How does God communicate with us without using an actual voice? What are some ways God might make his will known to us?

authors intended to say. Biblical scholars must always follow the guidance of the Church and ensure that their work reflects the unity of all Church teachings.

## Sacred Tradition

To fully learn the truths God wants to reveal to us for our salvation, we must look to **Sacred Tradition** and Sacred Scripture. *Sacred Tradition* is based on a word meaning “to hand on.” So, *Tradition* refers to both the central beliefs of our faith and the way in which that content has been handed down through the centuries under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



## PRAYING TOGETHER

### The Liturgy of the Word

We listen to God’s Revelation every time we go to Mass. When we celebrate the Liturgy of the Word (the part of Mass when the Word of God is proclaimed), God is revealed to us in a special way. In the Scripture readings, we hear about what God has done for our salvation. We listen to how God led Moses and the Israelites out of slavery, how the prophets reminded the people of their promise to be faithful to God, about what Jesus taught and did, about the events of Jesus’ Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension, and about how the early Christians carried on Christ’s mission. In all the readings from Sacred Scripture, God is revealed to be all powerful, all loving, and all forgiving, always caring for his people, no matter what.



**Sacred Tradition**  From the Latin *tradere*, meaning “to hand on.” Refers to the process of passing on the Gospel message. It began with the oral communication of the Gospel by the Apostles, was written down in Scripture, and is interpreted by the Magisterium under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

*Tradition* with an uppercase *T* is not the same thing as *tradition* with a lowercase *t*. You probably take part in a number of traditions. They might include things like your family eating a certain kind of pie every year for your Thanksgiving meal, or everyone at school wearing the school colors to all the sporting events. The Church's Tradition has some things in common with these, but it is still different.

Sacred Tradition started with the preaching of the Apostles. Although some of this preaching was written down in the Bible, the Bible does not contain all of Sacred Tradition. Tradition includes our belief in the Trinity, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Seven Sacraments, and many other matters revealed through the teachings of the Pope and bishops under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, God actively leads us to salvation.

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Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome symbolizes the life and teachings of the Catholic Church, handed down from Saint Peter and the Apostles.



# LIVING the GOSPEL

## Be a Prophet

Prophets are people who speak God's Word. In the Bible, the prophets reveal God's will to the people. Jesus Christ is the Word Made Flesh, the ultimate prophet who was sent by the Father and anointed by the Holy Spirit. In Baptism, we are anointed to share in Christ's prophetic ministry. We are all called to be prophets in some way. We are all called to speak God's Word.

That doesn't mean we have to preach on street corners, but it does mean our words and actions should reveal the faith we claim as our own. If someone were to follow you around for a day, would he or she be able to see God in the way you interact with your classmates? If it were illegal to be a Catholic, how many of us would be found guilty?

## God's Mystery

Although God does make himself known to us, we cannot expect to fully understand all his ways. We can come to know a lot about God, but our human understanding cannot completely grasp him.

The Book of Job tells the story of a man named Job. Job was trying to understand why bad things were happening to him. At the end of the story, God asks him questions that no one but God could answer (see Job, chapter 38). Job then realizes something important: Even if we stand face-to-face with God, we will still never be able to understand everything about him (see 42:1–6).



## roots of faith

### Scripture, Tradition, and the Ecumenical Councils

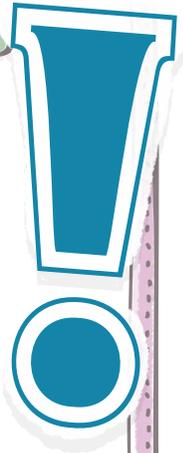
In the early 1500s, a German priest named Martin Luther began to teach that the Bible was the only necessary source of truth. Shortly afterward all the bishops in the world gathered at the Council of Trent (1543-1565), in Italy, to respond to Luther's ideas. At the Council of Trent, the Pope and the bishops affirmed that both Scripture and Tradition are necessary ways of passing on, or transmitting, God's Revelation.

Ecumenical councils, such as the Second Vatican Council, are official meetings of all the world's Catholic bishops with the approval of the Pope. These councils are how the Church addresses important issues or questions that come up from time to time. The councils do not occur often. In fact, throughout the entire history of the Church, there have been only twenty-one ecumenical councils.

### CHECK this OUT

#### The Flat Earth Under the Dome

The Holy Spirit inspired the human authors of the Bible, but they still had the same mistaken ideas about the Earth as everyone else during the times they lived. For example, when the Book of Genesis was written, people believed the world was flat and covered by a giant dome. They believed water surrounded the dome. When the Creation accounts were written, this incorrect scientific information was described. What is important is that God created everything in the world out of love for us. That truth is part of God's Revelation.



# Chapter 2

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# God the Father

## KEY WORDS

Abba  
mystery  
Yahweh

**W**hen you picture God in your mind, what do you see? Many people see an old man with white hair and a beard sitting on a throne in a cloud up in the sky. Is this what God really looks like? Not really. It seems that many of us have adopted this image of God, which resembles that of the Greek god Zeus, whom the stories about the ancient Greek gods describe just like this.

You might be curious why you have the image of this Greek god in your head when you think about the one, true God. Centuries ago, artists needed some way to portray God in their works, but the Bible contained no physical descriptions of God the Father. Some painters used Zeus as the model because he was the most powerful of the Greek gods. The image of Zeus helped many people connect to some of the traits of God. That image has stuck with us. It is not wrong to picture God like this. However, remember that this is not an accurate representation of God. If God is not an old man with a white beard in the clouds, then who is he?



An ancient statue of Zeus.



## CONNECT with GOD

God, our Father, you exist beyond the farthest star, but I also know you are here with me now. I do not know everywhere I will go in the future, but I do know I came from you. I do not always understand your ways, but I do know I can trust you. I cannot even guess how you came to be, but I do know you will always be with me. Amen.

# Who Is God?

If you were asked to describe a friend, you might answer in a few different ways. You could say something about her relationships to others (she is a daughter, a sister, and a friend). You might talk about what she does (she is a student and a softball player). Maybe you would say what kind of person she is (she is smart and kind). We get to know people through their relationships with others and by observing what they do and listening to what they say.

Everything we know about God, we know because he revealed it to us. God first revealed his name to Moses. It is pretty simple but very powerful: I AM (see Exodus 3:14). The Hebrew word for “I AM” is **Yahweh**. The name I AM, or Yahweh, reminds us how immense and beyond us God truly is. I AM may seem like an incomplete sentence (“I am . . . what?”), but that is what makes the name so powerful. Think about all the possibilities that could complete this sentence: the who, what, when, where, how, and why. There are an infinite number of ways for God to be. God sustains every person, place, time, and condition that exists. At the same time, God exists beyond all people, places, times, and conditions.

Many of our Jewish brothers and sisters do not even say the name of God. The ancient Israelites believed that naming someone or something gave one power over the person or thing. Out of respect for the name of God and for how beyond us he truly is, they substituted “Lord” for the name Yahweh.



**Yahweh** → The Old Testament name for God that he revealed to Moses. It is frequently translated as “I AM” or “I am who I am.”

Though God is so great and beyond us, he is still close to and intimate with us. He knows every hair on our heads and every passing thought that flows through our minds. The Book of Psalms says it best:

Lord, you have examined me  
and you know me.  
You know everything I do . . .  
When my bones were  
being formed,  
carefully put together in  
my mother's womb,  
when I was growing there  
in secret,  
you knew that I was there—  
you saw me before I was born.  
(139:1-2,15-16, *GNT*)



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## The Trinity

Long after God told Moses his name was Yahweh, he revealed much more about himself. He revealed himself as the Holy Trinity—one God in three Divine Persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is the Holy Trinity. This is the central belief of our Christian faith. God, in three Divine Persons, is all knowing, all-powerful, and present everywhere. Try to imagine that. Even when God reveals himself to us, he remains a **mystery**. As hard as we try, we can't fully understand this mystery.



**mystery** ➡ A truth that is so big and profound that no human being can completely know and understand it. We encounter mystery and enter into it.

## God the Father

Let's explore the First Divine Person of the Trinity—God the Father. He is far beyond any image we can conjure in our minds. The Bible portrays God as having both masculine and feminine qualities, but still God is neither male nor female. We praise God as a loving, powerful Father, at the same time recognizing that our picture of him is incomplete. Despite our



God holds each one of us in his loving embrace.

## PRAYING TOGETHER

### Thanks to the Father

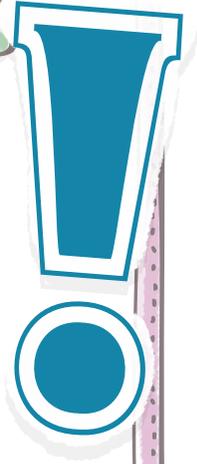
Have you ever noticed that most of our prayers at Mass are directed to God the Father? Although our prayers also address Jesus Christ, his Divine Son, they are mostly spoken to the Father. If you think about it, it makes sense. During Mass, we recall all the good things God the Father has done for us, including sending his Son. His Son, Jesus, is the greatest way for human beings to get to know the Father. We also thank God for doing this. But again, Jesus is a key part of our gratitude. We offer thanks to the Father in the same way we come to know the Father: “through Christ, our Lord.”

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## CHECK *this* OUT

### “Abba”: Jesus’ Name for His Father

In the Gospels, Jesus addresses God as “**Abba**.” The language Jesus spoke was Aramaic, and *abba* is the Aramaic word for “father.” This gives us an idea of the special bond Jesus has with his Father. The Father loves Jesus, much as a human father loves his children by protecting, feeding, and teaching them. Yet the Bible also sometimes portrays God’s motherly characteristics. “As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you,” says the Lord (Isaiah 66:13). Jesus teaches us to address God as “Father” and to share in his special close relationship with God, our loving Father.



limited understanding of God, we know and profess in faith through our Creed that God the Father is maker of “all things visible and invisible,” the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

Jesus called God “Father,” and we do the same. In calling God “Father,” Jesus expresses his unique relationship with him. “All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27).

God the Father is most certainly a distinct and special person, but unlike us, he is not a human being. Though this might seem obvious, it is important to note this difference between God and us. We should remind ourselves that God’s ways are not human ways.



**Abba** → The Aramaic word for *father* that Jesus uses to address the Father.

The universe has been around for billions of years. You might think that because—as we confess in the Creed—God is the Creator of the universe, he must be at least several billion years old, right? The only problem with this idea is that time itself is a part of God’s creation. God lives outside time, and because he created it, he is not limited or confined by it. If this boggles your mind, do not worry. It can baffle the most intelligent minds on our planet.

Logically, one could say that God created everything in the universe, but the next step backward is the difficult one. Who made God? The answer is that no one made God. God is not a created being, but rather one who is, always was, and always will be.

If this somehow doesn’t make sense, do not worry. This is why we call God a mystery. A religious mystery is not like a story the reader has just not figured out. Rather this kind of mystery refers to a truth so big that no human being can completely know or understand it.

## good to KNOW

In the Bible, God often appears in the form of a cloud. When the Israelites escaped from Egypt, they followed a cloud (see Exodus 13:20–22). They camped in one place as long as the cloud covered the Tent of the Lord’s presence (see Numbers 9:15–23). In the New Testament, a cloud came over Jesus, Peter, James, and John, and said, “This is my beloved Son” (Matthew 17:5).



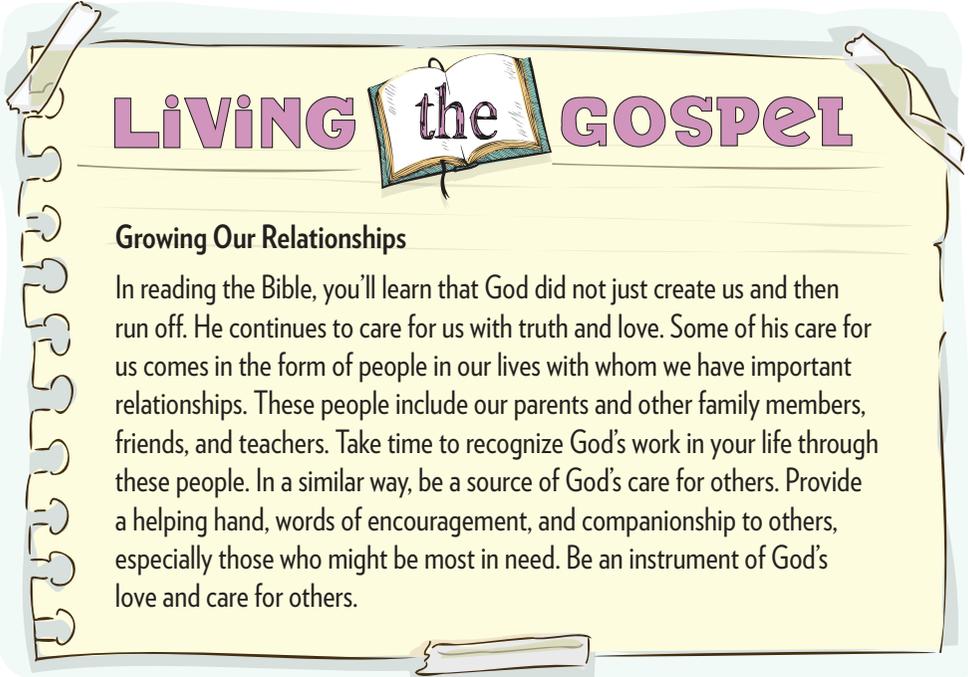
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# God Is Truth and Love

Throughout time, God has revealed himself to us. He is Yahweh. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: three Divine Persons in one being. He is Truth and Love.

God is Truth simply because what he tells us is true. We can trust God's Word. We can count on God, more than even the most trusted human being we know. God always keeps his promises.

God is also Love. First and foremost, God created us out of love. God's love does not end at creation though. The Bible is filled with accounts of what God has done for us. Even though we human beings have failed to keep our part of the bargain, God forgives us and continues to be faithful to his people. Most important, God became one of us out of love for us. God the Father gave his only Son for our salvation and sent the Holy Spirit to be with us always. There is no greater sign of love than this.



## LIVING the GOSPEL

### Growing Our Relationships

In reading the Bible, you'll learn that God did not just create us and then run off. He continues to care for us with truth and love. Some of his care for us comes in the form of people in our lives with whom we have important relationships. These people include our parents and other family members, friends, and teachers. Take time to recognize God's work in your life through these people. In a similar way, be a source of God's care for others. Provide a helping hand, words of encouragement, and companionship to others, especially those who might be most in need. Be an instrument of God's love and care for others.

# Chapter 3

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# The Holy Trinity

## KEY WORDS

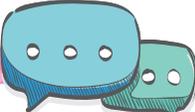
God the Father

Holy Spirit

Son of God

Trinity

**T**hink of the many different ways you have reached out to God in the past. There may have been times when you wanted the comfort of the all-knowing Father, who could help you see that everything was going to be okay. Or maybe you reached out to God as one who could move mountains and change lives. Other times you may have reached out to God when you were confused. Maybe you wanted God to inspire you or reveal his will to you. Of course, there were times when you just wanted God's presence, providing comfort during a hard time, like having a friend who is always there to listen to you—someone who has gone through the same pain and suffering as you. The good news is that God can help with all these needs.



## CONNECT with GOD

In the name of the Father, who created everyone I love and all I know; and of the Son, who became a human being like me, and showed me the right way to live; and of the Holy Spirit, who inspires me with courage and creativity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in you I place my trust. Amen.

## One God, Three Divine Persons

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” How many times have you said or heard these words? Have you ever really thought about what the phrase means? During Mass on Sundays, Catholics stand to say the Creed. Together we state, “I believe in one God. . . .” But if people think the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate individuals, they would be misunderstanding the central truth of our faith.

The earliest Christians were Jews who followed Jesus when they recognized that he was the Messiah sent from God to save Israel. Because they were Jewish, they knew there could be only one God. One of the most basic prayers of the Jewish faith is taken from the Book of Deuteronomy, as follows:

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength” (6:4–5). Yet these Jewish Christians knew that Jesus was the Son of God and was one with the Father. They were also aware that the Hebrew Scriptures—our Old Testament—spoke of the Spirit of God. Through these experiences, they realized that the one true God revealed himself as three Persons: the Trinity.

The Trinity is the central mystery of our Christian life and faith. God has made himself known to us in the three Divine Persons of the **Trinity**: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Yet these three Divine Persons are one God and cannot be separated from one another.

The Trinity is not divided into three parts. For example, a baseball team is made up of a pitcher, a catcher, a first base player, and so on. When all nine players are assembled, you have a complete baseball team.



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**Trinity** → The central Christian belief that there is one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

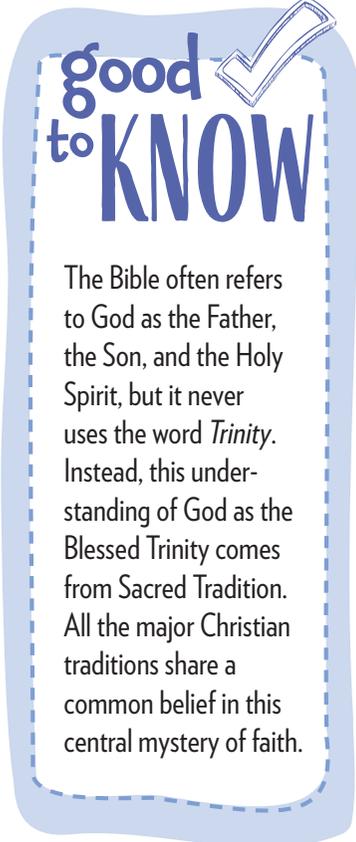
This is not so for the Trinity. Each Divine Person of the Trinity does not make up one-third of the whole God. Instead, the complete presence of God can be found in each of them. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cannot be separated from one another.

If you have ever watched a pair of truly great dancers in action, it almost seems as if you are watching just one dancer. They move in complete harmony together. When one dancer lifts the other, it seems as if there is no effort. Each move flows naturally into the next. It seems as though the two blend into one single dancer.

In a similar but far more real way, the three Divine Persons of the Trinity live in complete harmony. They are distinct Persons, yet they are completely united. Unlike the dancers, they are not united just by their actions. They are also united by what and who they are: one Divine Being.

## The Work of the Trinity

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God. Therefore all the works of God are done by all three Divine Persons. However, some of God's works are more strongly associated with either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit.



### good to KNOW

The Bible often refers to God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but it never uses the word *Trinity*. Instead, this understanding of God as the Blessed Trinity comes from Sacred Tradition. All the major Christian traditions share a common belief in this central mystery of faith.

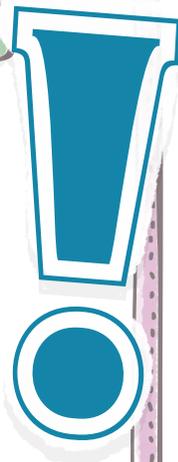
**God the Father** is the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. When we speak of God as the Creator, we tend to think of God the Father. However, even though the work of Creation is associated with God the Father, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together are one source of creation. Like a parent, the Father is the source from which life comes. It is natural to think of God the Father when we think of the Creator.

God the Son is the Second Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity, Jesus Christ. The title **Son of God** points to Jesus' divine relationship with the Father as the only Son of God. We also call Jesus Christ the "Savior" to recognize his saving actions on our behalf. But we cannot forget that the Father and the Holy Spirit also save us.

## CHECK *this* OUT

### The Sign of the Cross

Christians have been making the Sign of the Cross for almost two thousand years. In the early days of Christianity, Christians moved their thumbs across their foreheads in the shape of a cross. It was a reminder to carry the cross of Christ in their lives. In other words, we are called to sacrifice ourselves to help others. During the times and in the places Christianity was illegal, making the Sign of the Cross became a secret way for Christians to recognize one another. Today, Catholics often make the Sign of the Cross when we enter a church. We dip our fingers into the holy water to make the Sign of the Cross, as a reminder of our Baptism.



**God the Father** → The First Divine Person of the Holy Trinity.

**Son of God** → A title frequently given to Jesus Christ, the Second Divine Person of the Trinity.

God the **Holy Spirit** is the Third Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity. He inspires, guides, and makes the lives of the believers holy. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are truly given by the Father and the Son too. Yet it is proper to recognize the gifts as being from the Holy Spirit.

## The Trinity Is a Communion

Because God is three Divine Persons in one, the Trinity is the communion of those three Persons. Another way of saying this is that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are completely in union with one another. They communicate perfectly and are in perfect harmony.

Because the Trinity is a perfect communion of the three Divine Persons, we can see how the Trinity is the perfect community. The love and unity that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share are so perfect that they flow out to us. Our families share in this love and community. The love of a mother and father extends past



WHAT DO  
YOU  
THINK?

When making the Sign of the Cross, we say, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” We also move our hands in the shape of a cross on our head, chest, and shoulders. Why do you think the Sign of the Cross connects the Trinity and Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross? How are each of the three Divine Persons of the Trinity connected to Jesus’ suffering, death, Resurrection, and Ascension?



**Holy Spirit** → The Third Divine Person of the Trinity.

them to the children they share. That love can extend even past the family. The love in our families should flow out in service to the rest of the community and the entire world.

## LIVING the GOSPEL

### Harmony at Home

The Trinity is a community that lives in complete harmony, unity, and love. Unlike the Trinity, human families are not perfect communities. But you can work toward creating a home of harmony, unity, and love by doing some simple things. For example, you might help your family without being asked. This might seem like a typical thing an adult would tell you. But what would happen if you did it? Your parents wouldn't have to nag you about simple tasks. You wouldn't have to listen to them complain. And they would be less frustrated too! Doesn't that sound like a more harmonious community to you? This is only one way of making a home of unity, harmony, and love. However you do it, it will take some work, but the payoff is worth it.

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## PEOPLE of FAITH

# Saint PATRICK

Saint Patrick (c. 389–461) was born in the fourth century AD in what later became Great Britain. As a youth, Patrick was kidnapped and taken to Ireland, where he became the slave of a warlord for several years. At that time, Ireland was a rough place to live. The Irish tribes were often at war, slavery was common, and human sacrifice was practiced. After several years, Patrick either escaped or was released. He returned home, where he soon became a priest. Later, Patrick returned to Ireland, the land of his former captors, to preach the Gospel. This was an extremely brave step. Ireland certainly had been a difficult place for him earlier, and at that time, few people had traveled to such a foreign place to convert others to Christianity. He bravely went and later was appointed the Bishop of Ireland.

Patrick planted the seeds of Christianity in Ireland. Over the next few decades, the practices of both slavery and human sacrifice ended in Ireland. Legend says that Patrick used a shamrock to explain the Trinity to the Irish people. Like the three Persons united in one God, the shamrock is made up of three leaves united to make this single, unique plant. Today, Patrick is remembered for his courage and his strong faith, and for his teaching about the one true God in three Divine Persons.

