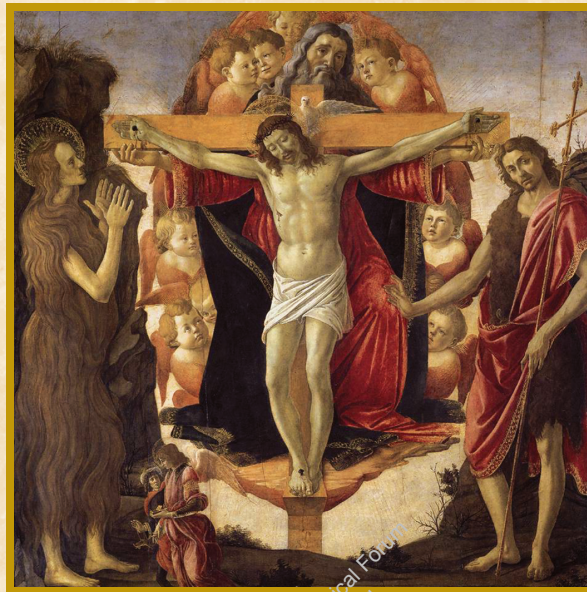

PRESENTER'S GUIDE

The Blessed Trinity

and Our Christian Vocation



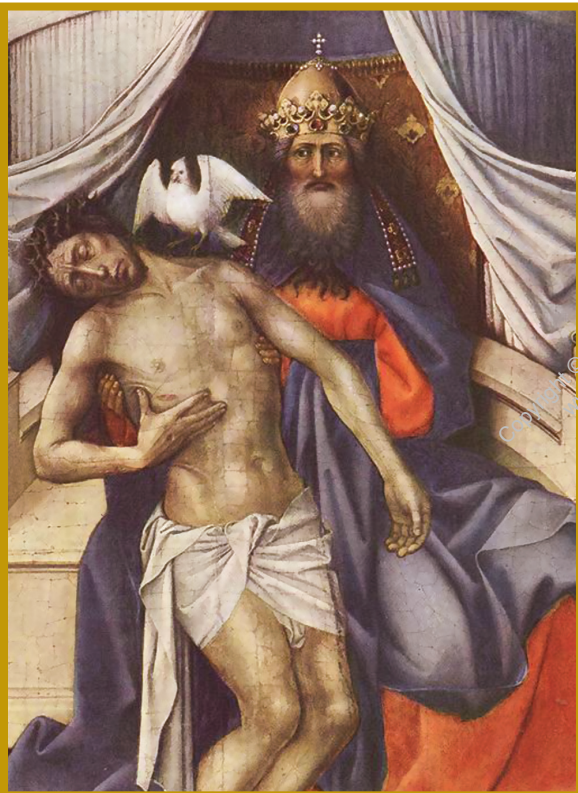
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Holy Trinity by Master of Flemalle.

THE BLESSED TRINITY AND OUR CHRISTIAN VOCATION

PRESENTER'S GUIDE

How to Use This Presenter's Guide

Guidelines

Read these guidelines before you start to plan what you will do in each session:

Congratulations! You have been entrusted to help others grow in their love of God by growing in their knowledge of the Catholic Faith. Whether the participants in your sessions will be high-school students attending religious education classes, adults who want to learn more, or inquiring non-Catholics who want to learn about the Faith, we have made this *Presenter's Guide* to help every participant better comprehend the material in the book.

We have also designed the *Presenter's Guide* to aid you in your presentation, covering one chapter per session. We encourage you to tailor the activities and questions to your participants, taking into account their knowledge level, what they hope to get out of these sessions, and the amount of time you have to meet. For example, you might choose to forego the Opening Activity altogether if your participants have not yet read the material, or you might choose to omit some of the Focus Questions if you are pressed for time.

As the presenter, your tendency might be to schedule more activities and questions than can be completed in the amount of time that a session lasts. **Start out with less**, and have a few questions or activities in mind if there is time at the end of a session. You should have no problem, for example, introducing a discussion topic from an earlier section after having presented the whole chapter.

There is at least one exercise in each chapter, be it a Guided Exercise or Closing Activity, that is focused on helping each participant make a personal connection to the material. It is recommended that you identify this one and make time to cover that activity with the participants during the session.

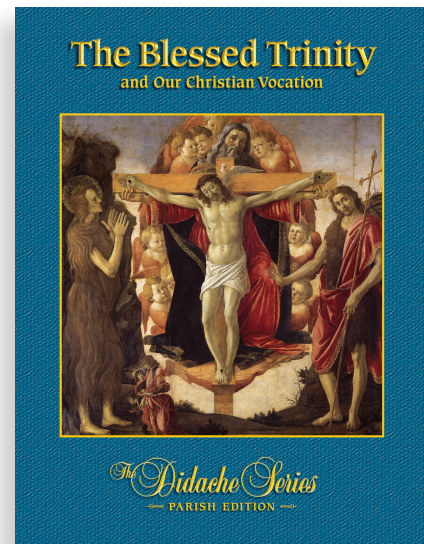
It is a good idea to open and close each session with a prayer. You might choose to use the same prayer to open and close each session, especially a popular

prayer such as the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Hail Mary*, or the *Glory Be*. If you prefer, each session has a suggested Opening Prayer that is related to the chapter.

BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION

Overview of Chapter 1

Be sure you and each of the participants have a copy of this book:



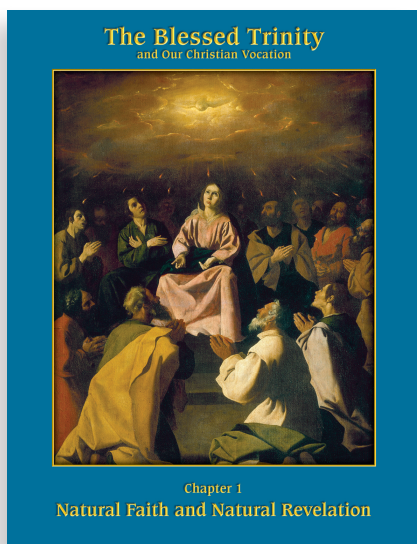
The Blessed Trinity and Our Christian Vocation,
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Available from MTF at www.theologicalforum.org

At the time of registration, give each participant a summary of Chapter 1 and have him or her read Chapter 1 before the first session.

You might want your registrar to reproduce and distribute page 54 in this guide to the participants.



Chapter 1: NATURAL FAITH AND NATURAL REVELATION

Key Ideas

These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- Reason tells us that we are bodily-rational beings designed for happiness, the highest form of which is God.
- Natural faith in the testimony of trustworthy authorities is necessary if we want to obtain knowledge.
- Through reason, we can know that a being exists who is one, infinite, all-intelligent, and Creator of all else, and who possesses complete truth, love, goodness, and beauty.

Vocabulary List

There are no vocabulary words for this chapter.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SESSION

Opening Prayer

Begin the session with an opening prayer such as the following:

*We praise you, O God,
we acknowledge you to be the Lord.*

*You, the Father everlasting,
all the earth does worship.*

*To you all the angels,
to you the heavens, and all the powers,*

*To you the cherubim and seraphim
cry out without ceasing:*

*Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of hosts.*

*Full are the heavens
and the earth of the majesty of your glory.
Amen.*

(From Te Deum)

Overview of the Chapter

If you did not have the registrar distribute the summary to the participants, read the summary (p. 54 in this guide) to them.

Opening Activity

Have the participants complete the Opening Activity (p. 2).

Key Ideas

Have a participant read aloud the Key Ideas (p. 2).

GOD IN SEARCH OF MAN

(pp. 2-4)

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

1. What does it mean to say that Jesus Christ is the Son of God made man who reveals to humanity who God truly is and who we truly are? As the Intercessor, a kind of bridge between God and man, Jesus Christ can reveal some of the mysteries of who God is and who we are.
2. Ultimately, why did God create man? God created man so every person could participate in God's life for all eternity and thus achieve perfect happiness.

3. Are human beings free to reject God's purpose for them? Yes. God created us with free will. Adam and Eve misused their free will when they disobeyed God, and every person who sins does the same.

4. What are some of the ways God helps man? He gave us his only Son, Jesus Christ, as Savior and Redeemer. The Holy Spirit, who was sent by Jesus Christ, guides and sanctifies his Church.

Additional Activities

If there is time, have the participants complete the Guided Exercise (p. 4).

MAN IN SEARCH OF GOD

(pp. 5-6)

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

5. What does it mean to say that the human person is a rational being, comprising body and soul, who is designed for happiness? It means that we have material bodies and rational, immortal souls, and we are made to seek happiness in everything we do.

6. Do human beings ever find complete happiness on earth? No. Although there are many legitimate satisfactions on earth, nothing here completely satisfies a human being.

7. How does man's thirst for God manifest itself? Our desire for God is manifested in our desire for happiness, even if we do not recognize it as such.

8. What can keep God's search for us from being successful? We can "hide" from God by not desiring him and rejecting his will in our lives.

NATURAL FAITH

(p. 6)

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

9. What is natural faith? It is belief in the truthfulness of something based on the trustworthiness of the authority who tells us.

10. Could we know very much without natural faith? No. We would have to learn everything by independent verification.

Additional Activities

If there is time, have the participants complete the Guided Exercise (p. 6).

REASONING ABOUT GOD; CONCLUSION

(pp. 6-9)

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

11. Can we know that God exists without having to rely on the authority of the Bible or the Church? Yes. We can know that God exists by the use of reason and by observing the natural world.

12. Why did St. Thomas Aquinas teach that our belief in God's existence should begin with arguments from reason? The knowledge of God's existence is accessible to every human person apart from faith simply by considering the order of nature and creation. Such arguments can help nonbelievers come to recognize that God must exist.

13. What is "great" about St. Albert? He was a genius in theology, philosophy, and science.

14. What is something St. Albert wrote that influenced the development of modern science? He wrote, "The aim of natural science is not simply to accept the statements of others, but to investigate the causes that are at work in nature." This means not just repeating what others have said but discovering what actually causes nature to work.

15. On what grounds should we believe what a philosopher or scientist says about God? We can

believe it if we think the person giving the testimony is wise and good.

16. How does God make it possible for us to know him intimately? God reveals himself to us actively not only through nature and creation but also in his words and deeds throughout salvation history. His definitive and complete self-Revelation is in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Additional Activities

If there is time, have the participants complete the Guided Exercises (pp. 7-8).

CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Closing Activities

Have the participants complete the Closure or Alternative Assessment (p.10).

Ask the participants to answer the Discussion Questions (p.10; answers below). These can be given as a quiz or used to lead a class discussion.

Discussion Questions (p.10)

- 1. Ultimately, why did God create man?** God created man so every person could participate in God's life for all eternity and thus achieve perfect happiness.
- 2. Are human beings free to reject God's purpose for them?** Yes. God created us with free will. Adam and Eve misused their free will when they disobeyed God, and every person who sins does the same.
- 3. Do human beings ever find complete happiness on earth?** No. Although there are many legitimate satisfactions on earth, nothing here completely satisfies a human being.
- 4. What can keep God's search for us from being successful?** We can "hide" from God by not desiring him and rejecting his will in our lives.
- 5. What is natural faith?** It is belief in the truthfulness of something based on the trustworthiness of the authority who tells us.
- 6. Could we know very much without natural faith?** No. We would have to learn everything by independent verification.
- 7. Can we know that God exists without having to rely on the authority of the Bible or the Church?** Yes. We can know that God exists by the use of reason and by observing the natural world.

8. How does God make it possible for us to know him intimately? God reveals himself to us actively not only through nature and creation but also in his words and deeds throughout salvation history. His definitive and complete self-Revelation is in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Overview of the Next Chapter

Read this summary to the participants:

Chapter 2 delves into supernatural faith, the gift from God that enables us to give our willful assent to the truths he has revealed. This chapter explores the progression of faith: receiving faith, verifying faith, and the coming alive of faith as we live in communion with the Church. The chapter traces the communication of Divine Revelation through the Deposit of Faith and its mediation by the teaching authority of the Church.

Key Ideas of the Next Chapter

Have a participant read aloud the Key Ideas (p.12). These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- God has revealed himself to humanity supernaturally through Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, culminating in the Revelation of Jesus Christ.
- We can confidently assent to what God supernaturally reveals because he gives us the ability to do so through grace, and he guarantees the truth of Revelation through the Magisterium of the Church.
- Our experience of living the Faith also confirms the truth we are called to pass on.

AT THE END OF THE SESSION

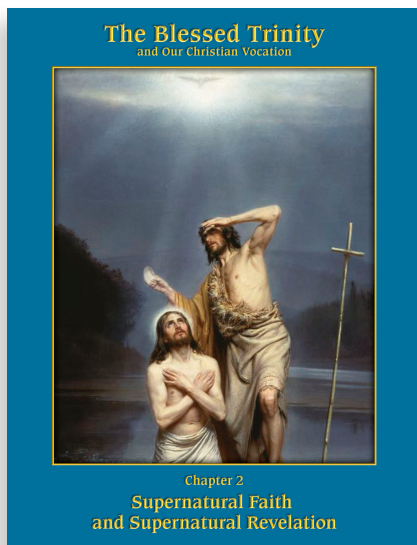
Read the Next Chapter

Have the participants read Chapter 2 before the next session.

Closing Prayer

End the session with a closing prayer.

Examples include the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Hail Mary*, or the *Glory Be*.



Chapter 2: SUPERNATURAL FAITH AND SUPERNATURAL REVELATION

Vocabulary List

*These are reprinted from the textbook
for your reference:*

- **Divine Revelation**—God’s communication of himself by which he makes known the mystery of his divine plan; a gift of God’s self-communication that is realized by his deeds and words through time, the fullness of which was sending his Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ; also called *supernatural revelation*. (p.13)
- **Supernatural faith**—The theological virtue by which one believes all that God has said and revealed to man and that the Church proposes for belief. It is a gift of God whose focus is God himself, enabling us to know with certainty those truths revealed by him that cannot be known by human reason alone. (p.13)
- **Theological virtue**—Virtues or permanent habits not attainable through our natural human capacities that come as a free gift from God and have God as their object or focus. The theological virtues are faith, hope, and love (or charity). (p.13)
- **Deposit of Faith**—All of the Divine Revelation granted to the Church by Jesus Christ, contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition and mediated by the Magisterium. (p.16)
- **Sacred Scripture**—The Bible, which contains the sacred writings deemed by the Church to have been written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It

includes the forty-six books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. (p.16)

- **Sacred Tradition**—The “living transmission” of the truths taught by Christ as communicated through the doctrine, life, and worship of the Church. (p.16)
- **Inspired**—Guided by God; from a word meaning “breathed in.” The human writers of Scripture wrote in their own words, but through God’s inspiration they wrote what God intended them to write and nothing more. (p.17)
- **Infallible**—Immune from error. The Bible and the Church are infallible because of a special protection afforded by God. (p.17)
- **Magisterium**—The name given to the universal teaching authority of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him, which guides the members of the Church without error in matters of faith and morals, through the interpretation of Sacred Scripture and Tradition. (p.17)

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SESSION

Opening Prayer

*Begin the session with an opening prayer
such as the following:*

*O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful
by the light of the Holy Spirit,
grant that by the gift of the same Spirit
we may be always truly wise
and ever rejoice in his consolation.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(Come, Holy Spirit, Closing Prayer)

Opening Activity

*Have the participants complete
the Opening Activity (p.12).*

THE MOVEMENTS OF FAITH

(pp.12-15)

Vocabulary

*Have a participant read aloud the definitions
of the vocabulary words on page 13.*

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

1. **What is supernatural faith?** It is a theological virtue given by God so a person can assent to what God reveals and the Church proposes for belief.
2. **What are the three stages or movements of faith, from Pope Benedict's perspective?** Faith is first received from others and for others, then verified by one's own experience, and then comes alive as one lives in communion with the Church.
3. **What role did Christ give the Apostles in terms of the transmission of the Faith?** They were to take the gift of the Faith that they had received from Christ and transmit it to others.
4. **What is a person who receives the Faith supposed to do with it, besides live it?** He or she is to transmit the Faith to others.
5. **What are a "cradle Catholic," a convert, and a "revert"?** A cradle Catholic is one born into and brought up in the Faith. A convert is someone who discovers the Faith and makes a decision to accept it. A revert is one who once had the Faith, abandoned it, and then returned to it.
6. **What does it mean to say that the Faith can be verified by personal experience?** Our lived experience verifies that the Faith is true and that it answers all the expectations of our hearts and minds.
7. **Is the Christian religion just something between Christ and the believer?** No. Our faith is received and sustained through an interdependent communion of persons—the Church—centered on Christ.

Additional Activities

If there is time, have the participants complete the Guided Exercise (p. 14).

NOTES

THE DEPOSIT OF FAITH; CONCLUSION

(pp. 16-19)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definitions of the vocabulary words on pages 16-17.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

8. **Why did Christ found his Church?** To continue his ministry of salvation.
9. **What is the Deposit of Faith?** It is the entirety of Divine Revelation entrusted to the Church by Jesus Christ; its two sources are Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture.
10. **What is Oral Tradition?** It is the spoken Sacred Tradition of the Gospel given by the Apostles before the New Testament was written.
11. **What is the New Testament?** It is comprised of the Gospels and writings that pertain to the completion of God's self-revelation in Christ.
12. **Why is Christianity not a religion of the book?** Christianity is a religion of the living Word of God, the Person of Jesus Christ, transmitted through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition and directed by the Magisterium of the Church.
13. **What is the inspiration of Sacred Scripture?** The Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit, who enlightened the human writers.
14. **What is the inerrancy of Sacred Scripture?** Scripture teaches no error, only truth.
15. **Should Scripture always be interpreted literally?** They should be interpreted according to the intention of the author based on their genre and literary devices used to communicate the inspired truth.
16. **What is the Magisterium?** It is the official teaching authority of the Church, exercised by the Pope and the bishops united to him, who are entrusted with the transmission of the Deposit of Faith without error.