

Topic: If God is Trinity, what does that mean for Christians?

I need to know:

- To explain what Christians mean by talking about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, using evidence from biblical texts.
- To understand how different biblical texts talk about God as Trinity and how these can be read.
- Make links between the concept of the Trinity and the roles and actions of God through the 'big story' of the Bible.
- To know how Christian communities might respond to the idea of God as Trinity.
- How Christians worship God as Trinity.
- What difference does belief in God as Trinity make for Christians?



Key Words and Definitions:

- Apostles' Creed:** A statement of Christian belief about the nature of God.
- Ascension:**
- Gospels:** The word 'gospel' means good news. The term is also used to describe first four books of the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) where we read about the life of Jesus.
- Holy Spirit:** Part of the Trinity that was sent to earth after Jesus ascended to heaven.
- Incarnation:** The way in which God becomes 'flesh' of human in the form of Jesus.
- Monotheism:** Belief in one true God.
- Omnibenevolent:** All-loving.
- Omnipotent:** All-powerful.
- Omniscient:** All-knowing.
- Paraclete:** Another term for the Holy Spirit.
- Resurrection:** when someone who is declared dead suddenly returns to life.
- Son:** Refers to Jesus as a person of the Trinity.
- Trinity:** The three persons of God: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

God as Trinity

Christians are monotheists which means they believe in one God. However, they believe that God is made up of three persons:

- God the Father
- God the Son
- God the Holy Spirit

Christians are often blessed in church services by a minister with a reference to this belief. Catholics will often bless themselves by making the sign of cross and reciting this prayer:

'In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'

Trinity Sunday

Some churches celebrate Trinity Sunday. Ask students to come up with ways they could celebrate – appropriate music, prayers, Bible readings and action in the community that a church might plan which could express the belief in the Trinity.

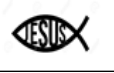
God as Father

Jesus taught his followers to refer to God as the Father. Thinking about God as Father refers to God as being omnipotent (all-powerful) and omniscient (all-knowing) part of God. It is also how God is seen as creator of the world. Jesus sometimes used the term 'Abba Father'. This shows God as omnibenevolent (all-loving). The idea that God wants a personal and loving relationship with people, like a father and child.

God as Son

Christians believe that Jesus was the Son of God. For many Christians. They see Jesus as God in human form. Jesus said, *'I and the Father are one'* (John 10:30). This belief is known as the incarnation. The idea that Jesus was both human and divine.

By looking at the character of Jesus, Christians believe that God revealed something of himself to humans.



God as Holy Spirit

Many Christians believe that after a period of time following Jesus' resurrection, he ascended (rose up) into heaven. They believe that God then sent the Holy Spirit into the world.

Christians believe the Holy Spirit does the following:

- Guides them.
- Gives them comfort and courage.
- Inspires and guides them.
- Helps to strengthen their faith.
- Can give them spiritual gifts.
- Pentecostal Christians worship God as Trinity, but they emphasise the need to allow the Holy Spirit to fill people with power, so that they can exercise the gifts of the Spirit

Christians believe that the Holy Spirit can intervene in the world in a miraculous way and is present during worship. They believe it connects them to God.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe 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 to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.