



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

Children's Liturgy of the Word

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

One in Three

Overview

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity is celebrated on the Sunday after Pentecost. It focuses on the key mystery of the Christian faith: the Trinity, which is one God in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

This teaching reflects the mystery of God and his love, shared with humanity through the Son and the Holy Spirit, offering a desire for eternal life. The unity of the Church stems from the Blessed Trinity, emphasizing a strong bond among diverse individuals rather than uniformity.

When discussing the Trinity, it's essential to be careful and humble, honouring one God in Trinity and the Trinity in unity, recognizing that it surpasses full human understanding.

Leader Reflection Questions

- † How do you understand your role as a catechist within the broader mission of the Church?
- † What spiritual practices do you find most helpful in sustaining your own faith life and avoiding burnout?

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Background

Proverbs 8:22-31 speaks of Wisdom's integral role in creation alongside God. Wisdom was present when God established the heavens, drew a circle on the face of the deep, and made firm the skies. She witnessed God assigning the sea its limits and marking out the foundations of the earth. This passage illustrates the concept of divine Wisdom as a distinct yet inseparable aspect of God. God actively participates in the creation of the world and finds joy in both creation and humanity.

Psalms 8 reflects on humanity's place in creation, acknowledging both human insignificance compared to the vast universe and the unique dignity and authority granted to humanity by God. It emphasizes the responsibility humans have to care for creation.

Romans 5:1-5. Romans 5:1-5 discusses the blessings that come through faith in Jesus Christ.

Through Jesus, we have gained access to God's grace, in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of sharing God's glory. We can even boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope. Faith in Jesus Christ leads to peace, grace, hope, and the experience of God's love through the Holy Spirit. This passage is often cited as a source of hope and encouragement for Christians.

John 16:12-15 discusses the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding believers into truth and conveys that the Holy Spirit will come to guide us into a deeper understanding of the truth, glorifying Jesus and revealing the things of God. The Spirit's guidance is essential because the disciples were not yet ready to comprehend everything Jesus wanted to teach them. Jesus emphasizes that the Spirit's role is to reveal and illuminate the truth about Jesus. V 15 ("All that the Father has is mine") highlights the unity between the Father and the Son, and how the Spirit reveals the divine reality shared by both.

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

Priest: (in these or similar words)

My dear children, today we celebrate the Most Holy Trinity. That means we celebrate that God is One - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—all in one! Go with your leaders to listen to a mystery about God.

When most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the place of the celebration. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the location of the celebration, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Welcome.

The leaders assist the children in sitting and preparing. **Begin with the Sign of the Cross.** Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may say the following prayer in these or similar words.

Let us pray:

Dear God, thank you for showing us that you are a family of love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Help us to love each other as you love us. Amen.

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, the Gospel is required.

Readings from the Lectionary ¹

First Reading

A reading from the first book of Proverbs.

Thus says the Wisdom of God²:

"The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.

Ages ago, I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there
were no springs abounding with water.

"Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—
when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.

"When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting
in the children of Adam."

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

¹ Omitting Verses: If necessary, verses of a biblical reading may be omitted due to the children's limited capacity. However, this should be done cautiously to avoid distorting the meaning, intent, or style of the Scriptures. The quality of the selected texts is more important than the quantity. A shorter reading is not always better; it depends on the spiritual benefit the reading brings to the children. Directory for Masses with Children, 43 and 44.

² The wisdom of God is deeply embedded in his works in creation and in the story of redemption.

Responsorial Psalm

R. O Lord, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what is a man that you are mindful of him,
or the son of man that you care for him? **R.**

Yet you have made him a little lower than the Angels,
and crowned him with glory and honour.
You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet. **R.**

All sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas. **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

Since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand;
and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

And not only that,
but we also boast in our sufferings,
knowing that suffering produces endurance,
and endurance produces character,
and character produces hope,
and hope does not disappoint us,
because God's love has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

Gospel

The children stand for the Gospel. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel, according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I still have many things to say to you,
but you cannot bear them now.

When the Spirit of truth comes,
he will guide you into all the truth;
for he will not speak on his own,
but will speak whatever he hears,
and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

He will glorify me,
because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

All that the Father has is mine.

For this reason, I said that he will take what is mine.

and declare it to you."

At the end of the Gospel, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The Gospel of the Lord."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Children: Glory to you, O Lord.

Simplified Readings for Children

A reading from the first book of Proverbs.

A long, long time ago, God made Wisdom³. Wisdom was with God when God made the world. Wisdom helped God make the mountains, the rivers, and the sky. Wisdom was very happy helping God, and Wisdom loved being with people.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

³ All Wisdom is rooted and grounded in God. Wisdom forms a central part of the nature of God. In Wisdom, God created the universe and mankind. Those matters which are not understood by human beings or any other living creature are fully comprehended within the Wisdom of God.

Responsorial Psalm

R. O Lord, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

When I look at the sky, the moon, and the stars,

I know that God is mindful of us.

O Lord, our God, how wonderful is your name in all the earth! **R.**

God made humans a little lower than himself,

and He has given us charge over all creation.

O Lord, our God, how wonderful is your name in all the earth! **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

Because we believe in Jesus,
we are friends with God! Jesus helps us be strong.
When things are hard, we learn to be patient.
When we are patient, we grow to be good people.
If we are good, we always have hope!
God loves us so much,
and God shows us his love with the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

Gospel

The children stand for the Gospel. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel, according to John.

Jesus said, 'I have many things to tell you,
but you can't understand them all right now.
But when the Holy Spirit comes,
He will help you understand everything.
The Holy Spirit will tell you what is true
and will help you know God better.'

At the end of the Gospel, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The Gospel of the Lord."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Children: Praise to you, O Lord.

Reflection:

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions. An excellent place to begin is the question:

Good morning, children. Let's begin by making the Sign of the Cross.

What did we hear?

Today, we celebrate something very special: the Most Holy Trinity. That might sound like a big, complicated word, but it's actually a beautiful idea. It means that God is three persons in one: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Think about your own family. Maybe you have a mom, a dad, brothers, sisters, grandparents, and cousins. Each person is different, but you all belong to the same family. You love each other, help each other, and share your lives together.

God is like that, but even more amazing! God the Father is like the head of the family. He created everything – the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, and all of us! He loves us very, very much, like a parent who always wants what's best for their children. Then there's God the Son, Jesus. Jesus came to Earth to show us how much God loves us. He taught us how to be kind, how to forgive, and how to love everyone, even our enemies. Jesus is like a big brother who always looks out for us and shows us the right way to live. And then there's God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is like the love that the Father and the Son share with each other. It's like a warm, cozy feeling in our hearts that helps us know what is right and gives us the strength to do good things. The Holy Spirit is always with us, guiding us and helping us feel close to God.

The Trinity means that God is a family of love. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all love each other perfectly, and they love us too! The Trinity is a mystery, which means it's hard to understand completely, but we can feel God's love in our hearts every day. Today, let's try to be more like God's family. Let's be kind to each other, help each other, and share our love with everyone we meet. Because when we love each other, we show the world how wonderful God's love is!

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

Alternative Reflection

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity is the ideal day to introduce, practice or explain the Sign of the Cross. The reflection below is meant to help children and may be presented in these or similar words.

Introducing the Sign of the Cross to Children

1. Start with Why (Explain the Meaning)

- Explain it simply: "The Sign of the Cross is a special prayer that shows we are Christians and that we love God."
- God's Love: "When we make the Sign of the Cross, we're asking God – the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit – to be with us and to bless us."

2. Show Them How (Demonstrate the Gesture)

- Slowly and clearly: "We use our right hand to make the Sign of the Cross. Watch me."
- Forehead: "First, we touch our forehead and say, 'In the name of the Father...'"
- Chest: "Then, we touch our chest and say, '...and of the Son...'"
- Shoulders: "Next, we touch our left shoulder, then our right shoulder, and say, '...and of the Holy Spirit.'"
- Joining Hands: "Finally, we bring our hands together and say, 'Amen.'"
- Emphasize reverence: Make the sign slowly and deliberately, not rushed.

3. Explain the Symbolism (What it Means)

- The Trinity: "When we say 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,' we remember that God is three persons in one."
- The Cross of Jesus: "The Sign of the Cross reminds us that Jesus died on the cross for us because He loves us very much."
- Our Whole Being: "We move our hand from our head to our heart to our shoulders, asking God to bless our thoughts, our feelings, and our actions."

4. Practice Together (Make it Fun)

- Follow the leader: "Now, let's try it together! We'll go slowly, and you can follow me."
- Repeat and reinforce: Practice the Sign of the Cross several times, repeating the words each time.
- Make it a game: Turn it into a fun activity by saying it differently (e.g., whisper, loud voice, slow motion).

5. When to Use It (Make it a Habit)

- Start and end prayers: "We can make the Sign of the Cross when we start and end our prayers."
- Entering a church: "We can make it when we come into church."
- Times of trouble: "We can make it when we are scared or need God's help."
- Morning and night: "We can make it when we wake up and before we go to sleep."

6. Reinforce and Encourage (Positive Feedback)

- Praise and encouragement: "Great job, everyone! You're learning to make the Sign of the Cross!"
- Explain its importance: "Every time you make the Sign of the Cross, you tell yourself and others that you belong to God."

Additional Tips:

- Keep it Simple: Avoid overwhelming them with too much information at once.
- Be Patient: It takes time and practice to learn, so be patient and encouraging.
- **Personal Testimony:** Share why the Sign of the Cross is important to you.

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: I believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. The leader may need to repeat and paraphrase the petition and conclude it with the cue for the response: we pray. All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

Leader: Dear God, we know that you are a family of love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We ask you to hear our prayers today.

After each prayer, we will say, "Lord, hear our prayer."

1. For the Church: that she may always show the love of the Trinity to everyone, especially those who feel lonely or sad. We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
2. For our Families: That we may be filled with love, peace, and joy, just like the Holy Family.
We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
3. For the sick, that they may feel God's love through the people who care for them.

We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
4. For ourselves: that we may always remember that God is a family of love, and that we may share that love with everyone we meet.

We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
5. For our own special prayers, which we hold in our hearts...
(Pause for a moment.) We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: God, our Father, thank you for showing us your love. Help us to love you and to love each other, as you love us. We ask this through Jesus, your Son, in the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Leader: Let's finish by making the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Return to the church.

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and think about what they have heard and are now doing. Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.

Readings: Lectionary for Sundays and Solemnities, CCCB, Ottawa, ON.
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