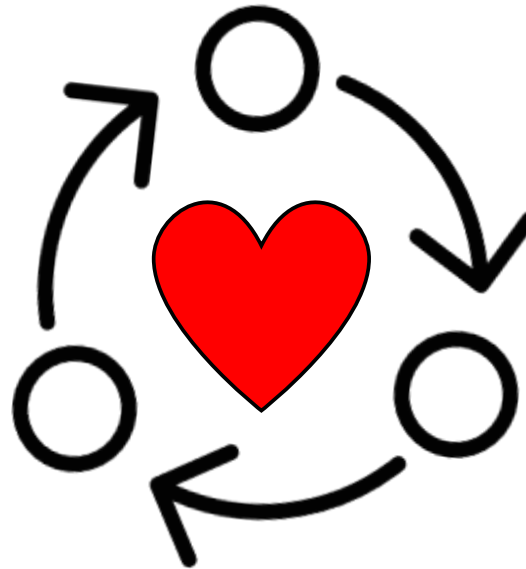


CHRISTIANITY Y6: How is God Three – and yet One?



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<p>What's the purpose of this unit? It is the intention of this unit to explore the Christian concept of the Trinity and to give pupils opportunity to investigate how some Christians express their ideas and beliefs, in words and in art. Although the concept of the Trinity is unique to Christianity, some more able pupils may be able to make connections / comparisons between this idea and other religions' understanding of God e.g. the Trimurti in Hinduism.</p>	
<p>Links across learning</p> <p><i>In order to access the learning in this unit, pupils should have learnt about....</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The different ways in which Christians describe God e.g. Father, King etc., that Jesus is God's Son and that Christians were given the Holy Spirit after Jesus ascended into Heaven. These key ideas form part of the learning in: Y5 CHRISTIANITY: How did the Church begin – and where is it now? Y5 CHRISTIANITY: Why is the idea of rescue so important to Christians? Y6 CHRISTIANITY: For Christians, what does it mean to belong to God's Kingdom? LKS2 THEMATIC Are words more important than actions? (ref. liturgy) <p><i>Where will pupils' learning go from here?....</i></p> <p>This unit may also link into another Y6 unit, For Christians, what does it mean to belong to God's Kingdom? depending on how your long term plan has been structured.</p> <p>This unit will introduce key theology relating to the Trinity, which will form a foundation for study in KS3</p>	<p>'Sticky knowledge' By the end of this unit, pupils should know:</p> <p>that most Christians believe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> God is a Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit God is Three – and yet One – and each is equal that each Person of the Trinity has a distinct character and purpose, but is still part of the one God that this understanding of God is unique to Christianity and is often referred to as a 'mystery'! that symbols are sometimes used to express deep Christian beliefs about the Trinity that Jesus the Son and God the Father are with Christians in the Person of the Holy Spirit and that this makes a difference to how many Christians live
<p>Key questions to shape the learning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Is it one – or more? Who is the Trinity? How do some Christians show what they believe about the Trinity? Where was the Trinity at Jesus' baptism? What does Rublev's icon show about the Trinity? Is it important that all Persons of the Trinity are equal? How do some Christians understand or experience the Trinity?.....and what difference does it make to how they live? What questions do we want to ask? How is God Three – and yet One? How could we show this concept? What are your ideas about the Trinity? 	<p>Expected outcomes for this phase: <i>i.e. what will pupils do to show this knowledge?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the concept of the Trinity as Three and yet One, in their own words describe and suggest meanings for different aspects of Trinity symbolism, using appropriate vocabulary and suggesting similarities / differences investigate and connect features in Christian art portraying Jesus' baptism or the Trinity, identifying similarities and differences between different artists' representations, and linking to different interpretations of the text identify the impact of beliefs about the Trinity on some Christians' lived experience or on artists' work, thinking about what's the same and what's different – and what some possible reasons for this might be compare their own ideas about God as a Trinity with those of others make links between what they and Christian artists think about the Trinity, giving reasons for beliefs / attitudes / choices ask significant questions about the Trinity, comparing their ideas with others' ideas and suggesting answers from their learning find their own way of representing the qualities of the Trinity, explaining what has influenced their choices



Background knowledge for the teacher

This is a unit that introduces a complex theological idea that most adult Christians would struggle to fully articulate! It sets out to do this through the use of Christian imagery depicting the baptism of Jesus, and the text that it relates to, but also creates opportunity to listen to Christians talk. This is best achieved through visitors to your classroom, but where this is not possible, there are some video resources you could use. It's likely that pupils will have questions throughout this unit, so do create a Question Bank that you could share with your Christian visitor(s) – or to send with them back to their community to ask for some help!

- Pupils will already be more familiar with ideas relating to God the Father and God the Son through previous units of work, although they will have encountered the Person of the Holy Spirit in units relating to the concept of Kingdom and how Christians live. It's interesting to note that although Christians sometimes use the word 'he' or 'him' to talk about the Holy Spirit (and certainly about God the Father and God the Son), the Hebrew word for the Holy Spirit is 'ruach' [roo-akh], which is feminine and means 'breath'. Some pupils might find this really helpful. In order to give pupils a chance to deepen their understanding of the Trinity, this unit allows some time or pupils to explore the imagery of the Holy Spirit, in words and visuals.
- *It should be emphasised here that the Trinity is a uniquely Christian concept, and is not shared by Jewish or Muslim people, as they firmly articulate and understand God as One. In Sanatan (Hindu) Dharma, Hindus express the three main incarnations of Brahman in the **Trimurti**, but these are three **separate** beings, not Three in One. Pupils should already be familiar with the all three persons of the Trinity through prior learning, and most recently in the Y5 unit 'How did the Church begin – and where is it now?' but have not been introduced to the complexities of how each 'person' relates to the others: some children may have some personal knowledge of this concept and may be helpful in articulating these ideas in the classroom in ways that other children may understand. <https://request.org.uk/resource/restart/2016/07/22/the-trinity/> contains some useful videos that might help with this unit. View as a teacher first to select how and when. Good teacher info here as well: [The Trinity - God and authority in Christianity - GCSE Religious Studies Revision - Edexcel - BBC Bitesize](#)
- **Session 2:** refers to the idea of **liturgy** – and links to a key text for Christians in the Apostles' Creed. Pupils may already have explored this through a LKS2 thematic unit 'Are words more important than actions?', so do refer back to this unit for further information or activities.
- **Session 3:** Although this is not a unit on **baptism**, this session will feature a deep dive into the account of Jesus' baptism, helping pupils to make links between text & artistic interpretations of the text, which will include a reminder of how different artists portray the act of baptising (i.e. some show 'sprinkling', others 'full immersion') Encourage pupils to make links from this to different baptismal practices in the Church today. This unit therefore builds on the Y5 unit 'How did the Church begin – and where is it now?'. Please ensure that you look at this unit so you can build these links.
- **Session 4:** Rublev's Trinity is one of the most famous images of the Trinity and can be easily found using an internet search: it's actually also a picture of the three angelic visitors who came to Abraham & Sarah's tent, in Genesis 18:1-8, but has traditionally been re-interpreted to symbolise the equality of the Trinity. Read more here: [Trinity \(Andrei Rublev\) - Wikipedia](#) If you want to do some searching for yourself in relation to how artists across the world portray Christian beliefs, then try here: [Artists – Art & Theology \(artandtheology.org\)](#) or [Indigenous Jesus](#)
- **Session 5:** requires some visitors to your classroom to help answer questions. If you have links with your local parish church, or any other church near your school, they would be more than happy to help you, with some advance warning! This session will need to be shaped by you, based on questions that your pupils have collated. If you cannot arrange this, then there are some short videos that you could access as an alternative. Some relate more specifically to the Holy Spirit as the part of the Trinity that is God at work in the world, through the lives of Christians. Tempting as it might be to use these instead of real-life people, you will achieve far more depth to pupils' understanding by using their own questions to shape this session.
- **Session 6:** *A 'kenning' is a two-word per line poem describing something or someone without naming them e.g. a dog might be described as a 'postman-chaser' or 'tail-wagger'.

Golden thread	Further questions to support learning	Vocabulary / glossary for this unit:
<p style="text-align: center;">God</p> 	<p>Who is the Trinity?</p> <p>How do Christians show what they believe about the Trinity?</p> <p>Where was God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in this reflective story? How might this show more about who the Trinity is?</p> <p>Where was the Trinity at Jesus' baptism?</p> <p>How many of the elements that happened to Jesus at his baptism are still included in baptisms today?</p> <p>What happened <i>after</i> Jesus' baptism?</p> <p>What might Christians' art show about their diverse views / beliefs / practices?</p> <p>What might each Person of the Trinity 'do'? Are they all equal?</p> <p>How might some Christians understand or experience the Trinity?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trinity – the Christian belief that God can be known as three distinct persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), yet God is still one. They sometimes call this a 'mystery'! • God the Father is the first person of the Trinity (linking to Christian beliefs in God as CREATOR and parent) • God the Son is the second person of the Trinity (relates to the person of Jesus, linking to INCARNATION & SALVATION) • God the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity (linking to KINGDOM, the work of God in the world through the lives of Christians)

 <p>Community</p>	<p>How do different representations of the Trinity show cultural influences? How does the concept of the Trinity show the Three Persons 'in communion' with each other? What difference does the Trinity make to the way that some Christians live?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John the Baptist – was Jesus' cousin (son of Elizabeth & Zechariah), born about 6 months before Jesus' birth. After John's death, many of John's followers became followers of Jesus
 <p>Identity</p>	<p>Is water three ideas or one? If Jesus was God's Son, do you think he needed the Holy Spirit? Is it important that all Persons of the Trinity are equal? How might these different characteristics of the Persons of the Trinity help Christians to have a deeper understanding or experience of God? What questions do we want to ask? How is God Three – and yet One? How could we show this concept? What are your ideas about the Trinity?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptism (christening) – an initiation (joining) ceremony for babies, as a sign of welcome into the Christian community • Believers' baptism – a Christian initiation (joining) ceremony marking a person's commitment to follow Jesus, involving water (often by full immersion) • Liturgy – a set of words spoken as part of a Christian service, such as a baptism • Unity – being together in heart and mind • 'In communion' – being in a united, equal relationship together

<p>What might this look like in the classroom? This sequence of activities should help you plan pupils' learning....</p> <p><i>**If you can, it would be really helpful to invite some Christians from your local church to help answer pupils' questions in session 5</i></p>		Resources: incl. Bible refs
<p>Engage (10%)</p> 	<p>Session 1: One.....or more? Is water three ideas or one?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show pupils optical illusions where there is one picture, but two or more different 'views' as part of it e.g. the old / young woman; the old man & cowboy; faces & vase; duck or rabbit. Are they one picture, or more than one? <p>Is water three ideas or one?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at water in its three different forms. Is it still water? (the chemical composition doesn't change) How is each state different from the other? Does each have a different 'use'? They are three, but still one. What other examples of 'three in one' can pupils think of? (body, mind, spirit; cleaning products etc.) Three-in-one: Find / create your own 3-in-one example that demonstrates your understanding of this idea. Keep this for session 6 where pupils may choose to use it again. 	<p>You can easily find these optical illusions using an internet search, but here's one to start you off: Vase or heads?</p> <p>Some ideas for 3-in-1 images:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> an egg (shell-white-yolk); tree (roots – trunk-branches); person (body-mind-spirit); apple (pip-flesh-skin) etc.
<p>Enquire & Explore (60%)</p> 	<p>Session 2: Who is the Trinity? How do some Christians show what they believe about the Trinity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the word 'Trinity': are there any clues in this word about what it might mean? (e.g. tri...) Explain how the Trinity is a complex idea and that many Christians also struggle to fully understand it. One of the greatest early theologians said that trying to understand the Trinity is like trying to empty the ocean with a cup! Use one of the video links in the Resources section and consider what this shows about the Trinity: Where was God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in this reflective story? How might this help us to understand more about who the Trinity is? Give groups names and symbols associated with the different Persons of the Trinity (resource, p.) – sort which they think might belong to God.....Jesus.....Holy Spirit? Why do they think this? Can they think of their own ideas? What characteristics might belong to each Person? How do Christians show what they believe about the Trinity? As a class, explore two pieces of Christian liturgy relating to the Trinity: the words of the Apostles' Creed and Paul's blessing in 2 Corinthians 13:14 (often called the Trinitarian Blessing). Use three colours of highlighters to show which parts relate to which Person of the Trinity. Give each group a piece of art from the selection <i>[right]</i>: which part(s) of the liturgy do they think are relevant to their piece? Annotate text or image to show the connections. Present your thinking to the class: do they agree with you? 	<p>Video links: 'Always There' is a reflective story featuring the Three Persons of the Trinity: you can also find a copy of the script & props list if you'd like to tell it yourself. Download it from the 'RE Downloads' area https://gdbe-elevate.org/help#re; also (14) RE version The presence of God - YouTube also depicting some of the attributes of the Trinity</p> <p>Information about the Apostles' Creed: Resources - RE:quest (request.org.uk)</p> <p>Examples to select from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Hand of God (art) - Wikipedia; France St Michel Church - Free photo on Pixabay; God the Father & Holy Spirit (& Baby Jesus?!) at the Annunciation: Fra Filippo Lippi The Annunciation NG666 National Gallery, London; Austrian The Trinity with Christ Crucified NG3662 National Gallery, London; First Nation art: 'dot' painting: Indigenous Jesus: Indigenous Painting: Holy Spirit in This Land Lakota Trinity: Fr. John Giuliani's iconography - U.S. Catholic (uscatholic.org) <p>There are also lots of different images of the Holy Spirit in Guildford Cathedral, the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit (the only one in the UK!) Guildford Cathedral - Holy Spirit (guildford-cathedral.org), look at the rolling photos for images</p>
	<p>Session 3: Where was the Trinity at Jesus' baptism?</p>	<p>Selection of art here: The Baptism of the Christ with Dove by Daniel Bonnell (pixels.com); This is My Beloved Son VCS (thevcs.org); 3. The Baptism VCS (thevcs.org); Probably by</p>

Evaluate
(10%)



- Find the story of Jesus' baptism in the Bible [[Matthew 3:13-16](#)]. In groups, annotate the text to show where pupils find the three persons of the Trinity. **If Jesus was God's Son, do you think he needed the Holy Spirit?**
- Then look at how artists have portrayed this event – and consider what the similarities and differences are between them. In groups, annotate each picture, showing what you understand about the symbolism & linking to Bible verses from the account.
- What might these show about the views / beliefs / practices of different artists – and what influence might the artists' culture have had over the way they have created their piece? (**personal knowledge**)
- **How do different representations of the Trinity show cultural influences?**
- Watch a clip of believers' baptism and see if you can spot where the language of the Trinity comes into the **liturgy**. **How many of the elements that happened to Jesus at his baptism are still included in baptisms today?**
- ***What happened after Jesus' baptism?** Read on in the account of Jesus' baptism [[Matthew 4:1-11](#)] to what happened afterwards, when Jesus went out into the wilderness. How might this experience have tested Jesus, and why do you think this happened?

- **Session 4: What does Rublev's icon show about the Trinity? Is it important that all Persons of the Trinity are equal?**
- As a class, spend some time looking at Rublev's Trinity icon – you could do this as a silent debate, with pupils annotating the picture with their ideas about which person of the Trinity they think is which – and why. How does it show that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are equal, but different? **How does this image of the Trinity show the Three Persons 'in communion*' with each other?** [they are all looking at each other; they look identical except for colours; they are sitting together around a table]
- In groups, look at images of the Trinity: which Persons are which? (It's easier to tell who the different Persons are in some images than others) The selections in the resources are deliberately chosen to encourage debate! Talk about how each try to symbolise Three and yet One.
- **What might each Person of the Trinity 'do'? Are they all equal?** Give groups names and symbols associated with the different Persons of the Trinity (resource, p.) – sort which they think might belong to God.....Jesus.....Holy Spirit? Why do they think this? What might these words mean in terms of their roles in the Trinity? Annotate the words with your thoughts. **How might these different characteristics help Christians to have a deeper understanding or experience of God?**
- Can pupils think of their own ideas? What characteristics might belong to each Person?
- Look at Jesus' words in [John 14:25-26](#): highlight words that relate to the Three Persons of the Trinity. How might these words help us to understand the roles of the three different Persons of the Trinity? Speculate about the impact that these words might have on the lives of Christians today – and save your responses / questions for the next session when you will get to interview Christians about the Trinity!

Session 5: How do some Christians experience the Trinity.....and what difference does it make to how they live? What questions do we want to ask?

[Lorenzo Monaco | The Baptism of Christ | NG4208 | National Gallery, London](#)

Watch clip 4, 'What happens when someone is baptised?' from [Resources - RE:quest \(request.org.uk\)](#) Many church websites will archive their services for the community to watch on 'catch-up', so do look for any believers' baptisms there and focus only on the actual baptism. Many people will include prayer for the candidate to be empowered by the Holy Spirit.


*** This may generate some questions about Christians' experience after their own baptisms, so don't leave it out!**

Rublev's Trinity is actually also a picture of the three angelic visitors who came to Abraham & Sarah's tent, but it's traditionally been re-interpreted to show the equality and relationship between the Trinity. Read more here: [Trinity \(Andrei Rublev\) - Wikipedia](#)

*Although the word 'communion' is often used by Christians to talk about the sacrament of the Eucharist (bread and wine), 'communion' simply means 'together, in relationship'

Compare with: [Trinity in The Book of Hours; Mural of the trinity, Ethiopian Christian art, Abba Pendwo... | Flickr; Triquetra Gold Trinity - Free image on Pixabay; Shield of the Trinity - Wikipedia; Celtic Tribal Knot - Free vector graphic on Pixabay;](#)

This session will need to be shaped by you, based on questions that your pupils have collated. If you cannot arrange this, then there are some short videos that you could

	<p>Invite some Christian visitors in to your classroom to help answer the key question, and others that you have gathered during the course of this unit.</p>	<p>access as an alternative. Tempting as it might be to use these instead of real-life people, you will achieve far more depth to pupils' understanding by using their own questions to shape this session.</p> <p>There are some materials to use with this unit, which show different Christians' ideas about the Trinity - & the person of the Holy Spirit. You can find them in the 'RE Downloads' area: https://gdbe-elevate.org/help#re</p>
<p>Express (20%)</p>  <p><i>(Could be more if you are cross-curricular)</i></p>	<p>Session 6: How is God Three – and yet One? How could we show this concept? What are your ideas about the Trinity?</p> <p>All pieces should be accompanied by a short explanation of pupils' reasons for their choices and what's influenced their thinking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-and-One: Revisit your 3-in-1 image from session 1. If each part was to represent one of the Persons of the Trinity which would be which and why? Re-create it with annotations to explain your reasons. • Use an outline of a person to represent a Christian: fill it with words, pictures and/or phrases that demonstrate your understanding of how Christians experience the Three Persons of Trinity, or as a response to your findings in session 5 • Write Trinity kennings to show your understanding of the Three Persons of the Trinity (<i>*see 'Background for teachers'</i>) Choose words carefully for maximum effect. • Create a triptych with equal proportions, using each third to express a person of the Trinity. Children could choose their preferred image from this unit to help create their own piece or produce an original piece of art showing the Trinity • Create word pictures using colour, shapes & words to illustrate each Person of the Trinity e.g. create a fiery image in red, orange & yellow with the words 'Holy Spirit' forming parts of the flames or using words from the Bible verses, or the word 'Helper' formed from hands helping, or words relating to Jesus forming a cross etc. 	

