

EPIC Cycle 4 – Leader's Guide for Understanding the Trinity

How to have a student-led club:

- Welcome everyone and open in prayer
- Explain what First Priority is (a Christian group, but you do not have to be a Christian to attend)
- Start with a quick icebreaker (idea: ask everyone to say their favorite athlete/sport)
- Ask everyone to download the First Priority of Tampa Bay phone app
- Assign someone to report weekly attendance on the phone app
- Assign someone to send meeting reminders to the group
- Close in prayer

Memory Verse: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all". 2 Corinthians 13:14

EQUIP- WEEK 1

The Bible talks about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, collectively known as the "Trinity". This week, we will look at verses to help us understand that each person of the Trinity is a part of God and with a distinct role.

1. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, we read about God's creation of people: "God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Questions:

A. Why does God refer to himself in the plural?

He is referring to himself as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit- also known as the Trinity.

B. Why is this significant?

It is important to know and believe that the Father, son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit are all one in God. For example, some people believe that Jesus was a real person on Earth, but they don't believe that he is God. The difference matters because believing I Jesus as God is necessary for salvation. Otherwise, if Jesus was just an ordinary man than he did not have the power to overcome sin and death.

2. In **Corinthians 13:14** we read: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. And in **Matthew 28:19** we read: So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Questions:

A. In Corinthians 13:14, what does each person of the trinity provide (hint: Jesus provides grace) and why is this important?

God the Father provides love, Jesus the Son provides grace, and the Holy Spirit provides fellowship.

B. Why is each person of the trinity referred to individually (instead of collectively) and why does this matter?

It is important to know this because each person of God has a distinct and important role to fulfill (so to speak).

3. The Trinity may be difficult to explain to someone else. Some give the example of H₂O: water, steam, and ice. All of these are water but in different forms. This is not a perfect example but it gives you an idea.

Questions:

A. How would you explain the Trinity to another person?

It is like a triangle, all of the sides are equal and make up the triangle, but if you take a side away it would no longer be a triangle.

B. Do you believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in God?

Have an honest conversation with everyone about this.

C. How does this week's lesson EQUIP you to follow God?

By learning more about God, we are able to trust him more. You can't trust in someone you don't know or understand.

Challenge: Pray for a friend who needs to know Jesus.

PREPARE- WEEK 2

Last week, we talked about the Trinity- the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit- each is a part of God and with a distinct role. This week, we will talk about the role of the Son, Jesus Christ.

1. In **John 1:18** we read: "No one has ever seen God. The only Son is the one who has shown us what God is like. He is himself God and is very close to the Father."

Questions:

A. Who is the only Son? Jesus

B. Based on what you know about the Trinity, why hasn't anyone seen God before?

Because God is Holy and we are not (in our human form) we are not able to stand in his presence. When believers die and the sinful flesh is gone, then we are able to be in his presence.

C. How has Jesus shown us what God is like?

Because Jesus is God and came as a man, he reflected God's love, compassion, holiness, and perfection and taught us how to be reconnected to and live in communion/fellowship with God.

2. In **1 John 4:14**, the Apostle John talks about Jesus, whom he and the other apostles knew personally: "We have seen and can testify [witness; proclaim] that the Father sent his Son to be [or as] the Savior of the world. And in **Galatians 4:4-5** we read: But when the right time came, God sent his Son, who was born from a woman and lived under the law. **5** God did this so that he could buy the freedom of those who were under the law. God's purpose was to make us his children.

Questions:

A. In 1 John 4:14, how does John refer to Jesus?

John knew Jesus personally and testifies to Jesus being the Son of God and the Savior of the world.
B. In Galatians 4:4-5, why is it important for us to know that Jesus was “born from a woman and lived under the law”?

This verse tells us that he was born a human and lived under the same penalty of sin (all people die) even though he was sinless.

C. In this same verse, why did God send his Son [Jesus]?

He sent his Son (also God) to save us from the penalty of our sin (death and eternal separation from God). Jesus was the only person who was qualified to die on our behalf and to save us from eternal separation from God. - Jesus was qualified because he's perfectly Holy (since he's God).

3. For the remainder of today's meeting, PREPARE for next week's INVITE meeting by:

- Asking a student to prepare a faith story (how Jesus has affected their life) for next week.
- Asking a student to prepare to share the gospel and/or invitation next week.

Challenge: At the end of the meeting, gather in a circle and pray for each other.

INVITE- WEEK 3

This week, a student shares a faith story and another the gospel and/or invitation. After the invitation, the Response Cards are passed out and collected, and then the leaders use the Follow Up Plan below.

Please follow these steps:

1. Welcome everyone and open in prayer
2. Explain First Priority and the purpose of today's meeting
3. Introduce the student sharing his/her faith story
4. After the faith story, a student reads the gospel and/or invitation
5. Response cards are passed out to all students and then collected at the end of the meeting
6. A leader invites all guests to next week's First Priority meeting
7. A leader reports today's attendance and decision for Christ's on the First Priority phone app
8. A student closes in prayer

Gospel Message (To be read out loud to the group):

- Admit that you are a sinner. To "sin" means to make a bad choice out of selfish desires, and sin separates us from God because we are pursuing our own path aside from what God's perfect plan for us.
- Believe in Jesus and put your trust in Him. Christ's death on a cross was an act of selfless love. He took on the whole sins of humanity, making it possible for all people to be reunited with God.
- Confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. This means acknowledging that you want Him in your life. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except

through me." This means that we cannot be saved by being "good enough", but only through accepting Jesus as our Savior.

Invitation/Prayer (ask students to bow their heads):

If this message is speaking to you today, and you want to trust in Jesus as your Savior, then pray this simple prayer to yourself: Dear Lord, I have sinned and this has separated me from you because you are a Holy God. But, your Word says that Jesus died for me, and his grace is extended to me so that I can be forgiven. Today, I pray that you will come into my life and be my LORD, helping me to trust in you and live in a way that is pleasing to you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Follow UP Plan:

Once you've shared the gospel and invitation, collect the student response cards (can be downloaded from the First Priority website) and then follow these steps:

Student leaders commit to praying for and contacting any student who has made a decision for Christ and/or has questions.

When contacting these students, student leaders will:

- Answer any questions they may have
- Offer to pray for them
- Invite them to the next week's CONNECT meeting
- Invite them to your church, if they don't have one

Return all student response cards to the student leader or teacher (response cards or information on the cards must never be given to an outside adult or organization/church).

Challenge: Invite two friends to next week's meeting.

CONNECT- WEEK 4

In this cycle, we have talked about the Trinity- the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit- each is a part of God and with a distinct role. This week, we will talk about the role of the Holy Spirit.

1. In **Acts 2:38** we read: "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Questions:

A. How do you receive the Holy Spirit?

By admitting to God that you have sinned against him (acted on selfish desires and impulses) and that this has separated you from him; admitting and believing that Jesus died for your sins; and asking Jesus to come into your life and lead you. Amen.

B. Why do we need the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit communes (lives) in our hearts (spirit) as our helper and comforter. He helps us to understand the Bible, to convict us when we sin (want to repent and turn back to God), and helps us to follow God's plan for our lives.

2. In **John 14:26** we read: "The Helper will teach you everything and cause you to remember all that I told you. This Helper is the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name."

Questions:

A. In this verse, what is one of the roles of the Holy Spirit?

To help us to understand and remember God's Word (scripture/the Bible).

B. Do you struggle with the idea that someone who you cannot see can provide you guidance or comfort?

Discuss this question honestly with the whole group.

C. Has the Holy Spirit helped you to remember God's promises (please provide examples)?

3. In **John 15:26** we read: "But I will send you the Advocate [Encourager]—the Spirit of truth [the Holy Spirit]. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me."

Questions:

A. How does this verse describe the Holy Spirit?

This describes the Holy Spirit as an advocate- one who speaks to God on our behalf; spirit of truth- one who teaches us about God and how to follow Jesus.

B. Why is it important for us to have someone who testifies to us about Jesus?

We often doubt or struggle to believe so having the Holy Spirit to remind us and prove that Jesus is real, sufficient and still at work in our lives is important.

4. Read **Psalms 143:10**: "Help me to do your will, for you are my God. Lead me in good paths, for your Spirit is good."

Questions:

A. How does this verse help you to overcome your own selfish desires?

It tells us that God can and will help us to do His will and follow him, if we ask.

B. If the Holy Spirit comforts, convicts, and encourages us, how should this affect our lives and the decisions we make?

It should lead us to constantly ask the Holy Spirit for help or comfort or direction when we need it and make that our first response.

5. Spend the remainder of the meeting talking about ways to help others get CONNECTED to your First Priority club.

Challenge: Invite two friends to your youth group or church this week.

