

RCIA

RCIA HO Class 9 Trinity analogies

The Holy Trinity is a great mystery. We know that God is three persons from the Scriptures, but we also know from the same Scriptures that there is only one God. The term NATURE is used to describe WHAT God is, while the term PERSON is used to describe WHO God is. We say that God is three persons in one nature. This is hard for us to understand because for us human persons we are one person with one nature. No one can share his person or nature with someone else, although we are all human persons with a human nature.

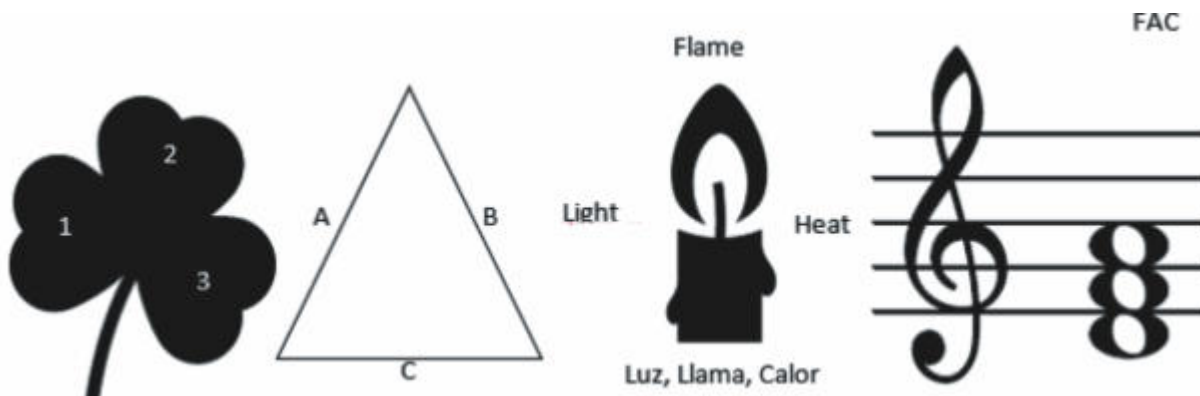
As we attempt to understand the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity it is helpful to make use of analogies or comparisons. These analogies do not exactly correspond to the mystery of the Trinity, but they can help us understand better. The analogies make use of a pattern or formula such as this: As the three persons of the Trinity are one God, so the three leaves of a shamrock are one plant. St. Patrick is said to have used this example to explain to people how God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are not three Gods, but three persons in one God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all equally God, but they are not the same person.

Another useful analogy is a triangle with three equal sides. Side A is exactly equal to side B, but is not the same as side B. A is A, and B is B, not the same, but equal (the same goes for side C). Sides A, B, and C are three equal sides that make up one shape. In other words: As the three sides of an equilateral triangle are one shape, so the three persons of the Trinity are one God.

We may think of a candle flame or a fire. The “fire” of a candle is the flame itself, the heat it creates, and the light it sheds. There is no flame without heat and light, and no heat without flame and light, etc. As the flame, heat, and light are one fire, so the three persons of the Trinity are one God.

Finally, a musical triad, or three-note chord. Each note is different from the others, but when played together they make one sound. Those who know music can hear the different notes in the one sound as those who know God can “hear” the different persons of the Trinity working and speaking through the Scriptures, Sacraments, and Teachings of the Church.

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RCIA WKSH Class 9 Trinity (BCL #3)

In the study of God, we use the word NATURE to answer the question WHAT? is God. We use the word PERSON to answer the question WHO? is God. Using your handout on the Trinity answer the following questions:

- 1) How many Gods are there?
- 2) How many PERSONS are there in God?
- 3) What are the names of the three Persons of the Trinity?
- 4) Are they all equally God?
- 5) Are they all the same God?
- 6) Thinking of our analogies, we can say that as a shamrock has three equals _____ but is one _____, so the Trinity is three equals _____, but one _____.
- 7) As a triangle has three equals _____, but is one _____, so the Trinity is _____, but _____ God.
- 8) Is the Father God?
- 9) Is the Son God?
- 10) Is the Holy Spirit God?
- 11) Are they three Gods?
- 12) The correct way to speak of the Trinity is to say that God is Three _____, but only one _____?
- 13) If God made everything, who made God?