

A Parent's Guide to “I Am Included!”

Understanding the Trinity for Your Family

Introduction: The Most Important Truth Is That God Is Love

Welcome, parents and caregivers. This primer is designed to equip you with a foundational understanding of one of the deepest truths of the Christian faith: the nature of God as Trinity. This is not intended as a complex academic exercise, but as a guide to a life-giving reality that you can share with your children in simple, profound ways. The goal is to explore the very heart of God, so that you, in turn, can help shape the hearts of your little ones.

The single biggest and most important truth we can ever know is that **"God is love."** This is the bedrock of our faith and the starting point for every conversation we have with our children about who He is. This guide aims to help you "plant seeds of wonder and joy about who God is and who we are" in a manner that feels both comforting and familiar to the youngest members of your family. Together, let us explore this wonderfully loving God and discover our family's place within His grand and beautiful story.

1. The Foundation: God Is a Community of Love

1.1. The Nature of the Trinity: One God, Three Persons

Understanding the Trinity is not just for theologians; it is strategically important for every follower of Christ because it defines the very nature of God. This doctrine is not an abstract puzzle but a revelation of God's character, and it fundamentally shapes how we understand love, relationship, and community. The central teaching of the Trinity is that we worship **"one God in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."**

A profound implication of this truth is that God has never been alone. Before creation, before time, God was not lonely. He has eternally existed as a "loving relationship of three Persons, sharing life together forever." This means that at the core of the universe is a perfect **"Community of Love."** This truth stands in harmony with the foundational declaration of Israel's faith:

"The Lord our God, the Lord is one." — Deuteronomy 6:4 (NIV)

This one God exists as a perfect, loving relationship. Let's take a moment to meet the three divine Persons who form this eternal community.

1.2. Meet the Persons of the Godhead

God the Father

The Father is the eternal source of love and care for all. We can confidently say that "God is our loving Father who cares for everyone." It is essential to clarify that God's fatherhood is the true and perfect original, not merely an extension of our often flawed and painful human experiences with fatherhood. True, perfect, and unfailing fatherhood is found in God alone, and He is now restoring us into His family.

God the Son, Jesus

The Son is Jesus Christ, who came to "show us how much God loves us." He is not a created being but has existed eternally with the Father. The Gospel of John reveals His divine nature, explaining that "From the very beginning, the Word was with God" and that through Him, all things were made, making Him the very source of life (John 1:2-4). This "Word" is a person: Jesus himself, the Son of God, who became human to make God known to us.

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is our divine Helper and Teacher. It is the Spirit who "helps us learn and grow close to Him." Jesus promised His followers that the Father would send the Spirit as a guide and comforter who "will teach you all things" (John 14:26, ICB).

These three distinct Persons are perfectly united as one God. This "triunity" is beautifully captured in the instruction Jesus gave for baptism:

"Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." — Matthew 28:19 (ICB)

1.3. Why It Matters: Made in the Image of a Relational God

The doctrine of the Trinity is not just about who God is; it is also about who we are. The core significance for humanity is that because we are **"made in God's image,"** we too were **"created for love, for relationship, and for life with God."** Our deepest longings for connection, belonging, and community are not accidental; they are a reflection of the very nature of our Creator. Therefore, God's very nature as a loving community is not a closed circle; it is the very reason He created us and the foundation for His history-changing invitation to be included in His divine life.

2. The Invitation: God's Plan for Our Inclusion

God's love is not a passive feeling or a distant attribute; it is an active, history-changing force. The ultimate expression of this active love is the Incarnation—God's invitation for humanity to be included in His own life and love through the sending of His Son, Jesus.

2.1. Created for Communion

From the very beginning, God's intent for humanity was relationship. The simple and profound truths we teach our children—"God made you with care and love" and "You are special because you are like God in many ways"—point to this original design. We were not created to be isolated individuals but to "enjoy personal communion with the triune God."

Our primary purpose, woven into our very being, is to live in a loving relationship with our Creator.

2.2. The Incarnation: God With Us

The Incarnation is the historical event where God became human in the person of Jesus. This is the heart of the Christian story, captured in the prophetic name given to Jesus: *Emmanuel*.

"They will call him Emmanuel, which means 'God with us.'" — Matthew 1:23 (NIV)

The motivation behind this astounding act was simple and pure: God became one of us "because he loves you!" In Jesus, we see the very nature of God's love made visible and tangible. The apostle John explains that Jesus is the ultimate demonstration of divine love:

"This is how we know what real love is: Jesus gave his life for us." — 1 John 3:16 (ICB)

2.3. The Good News of Inclusion

This story of God's loving action is the "Good News," or the Gospel. The Good News is not primarily a set of rules to follow, but a declaration of a reality to receive. It is **"what God has done in Christ, for us and in our place, and through this our inclusion and communion with God."** God's invitation has been sent, and the way has been made for us to enter His life. The next step is to explore how our families can live in response to this incredible gift.

3. The Response: Living Within God's Love as a Family

Understanding God's Trinitarian nature and His loving invitation naturally leads to a transformed way of life. This theology is not meant to remain in our heads; it is meant to reshape our hearts, our homes, and our communities. Just as God exists in a perfect community of self-giving love, our families are invited to become small reflections of that same love, where we learn to serve, honor, and cherish one another. As we grasp the reality of God's love for us, we are empowered to live within that love and extend it to others.

3.1 Our Life in God's Family

Our ability to respond to God is a gift from Him, enabled by the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who "helps us know God" and who fulfills Jesus's promise to "lead you into all truth" (John 16:13, ICB). Our love for God is not something we must generate on our own; it is a response to His initiating love for us.

"We love because God first loved us." — 1 John 4:19 (ICB)

The result of receiving this love is that we are adopted into "God's big family." Through the faithfulness of Jesus, we become God's children (Galatians 3:22, 26, ISV). In this family, we are never alone. We live with the constant assurance of Christ's presence, who promised, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20, ICB).

3.2 Our Love for the World

The love we receive from God is not meant to terminate with us. It is designed to flow through us to the world around us. Jesus gave a clear mandate for how His family should live:

"Love one another as I have loved you." — John 15:12 (ICB)

This circle of care extends beyond humanity to encompass all of God's creation. We are called to be stewards of the world He made, recognizing that *"God saw everything he had made, and it was very good"* (Genesis 1:31, ICB).

Furthermore, we are invited to participate in God's great restorative work. God "is restoring relationships between people, with all of creation, and with Himself." He doesn't ask us to do this in our own strength. Rather, "It is God who works in you to will and to act" (Philippians 2:13, ICB), empowering us to be agents of His love, healing, and reconciliation in the world. Our present life in God is a foretaste of the future hope He promises, when all things will be made new.

Conclusion: A Lifelong Journey of Wonder and Hope

The beautiful truth of the Trinity shapes everything we believe. It tells us that **"At the heart of everything is Love—a divine Community that welcomes us in."** God is not a solitary ruler but an eternal fellowship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and His greatest desire has always been to include us in that circle of love.

As you share these truths with your children, remember that your goal is not to provide exhaustive explanations but to plant "seeds of wonder." Through simple words, repetition, and a home filled with responsive love, you can introduce your children to the joy of Jesus' gift and the wonder of being included in His story. May you find great comfort and encouragement in this ultimate assurance:

"Remember: God loves you and your child more than you can imagine. He is with you, always."

Resources for Further Exploration

Resources for Your Family's Journey

- Scripture Union Scotland: <https://www.suscotland.org.uk/>
- Eden Book Store (online): <https://www.eden.co.uk/childrens/>
- The Chosen (TV series): <https://watch.thechosen.tv/>
- The Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/>

Deeper Theological Study

- **The Surprising God blog:** For those interested in a more in-depth exploration of Trinitarian theology, this blog is an accessible source "to learn more about what it means to have a properly trinitarian understanding of who God is, and by extension, who we are." Find it at https://bit.ly/trinitarian_theology.