

“We Believe in One God”

Preparation: Opening Prayer

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

or

Mark 12: 28-31

Proclamation:

We pray in the Nicene Creed, every Sunday, that “we believe in One God.” How do we know that there is only One God? God has revealed this to us. We could not have figured this out on our own reasoning power. This is called Divine Revelation. The word Divine means from God. Revelation comes from the word “to reveal”.

Explanation – Essentials

See pages 3-6 for the student handouts and the teacher’s copy.

1. Divine Revelation includes the Sacred Scriptures (the Bible) and Sacred Tradition, which are the Traditions that Jesus taught us and we continue to do. Example: the seven Sacraments. This is covered in the next lesson more thoroughly.
2. What else has God told us about Himself?
God has revealed His Name, that He is gracious and merciful and that His very Being is Truth and Love.
3. What are the implications of Faith in One God?
(Pray over this because this is very important)
 - a. I must serve Him - He created me and has given me everything and even holds me in existence at this very second
 - b. I must live in thanksgiving
 - b. I must know the unity and true dignity of all men - all of us are God’s children, created in His image and likeness.
 - c. I must make good use of created things
 - d. I must trust God in every circumstance
(why wouldn’t I, He created me, saved me by dying on the cross and He wants – more than I do – that I be with Him in Heaven forever.)

Students should be encouraged to ask or write down their questions. These questions need to be answered!

Note: if there is not enough time, summarize that our faith rests on the Blessed Trinity.

Application to Life: See pages 14-15.

Celebration

Closing Prayer: Liturgy of the Hours (praying the Psalms)

These are the prayers that priests, deacons, religious, and laity pray 3 or 4 times a day. This is called the Divine Office. Everyone, all over the world who prays the Liturgy of the Hours is praying the same Psalms. Please go to liturgyhours.org, click on Evening Prayer and then booklet to have it arranged for you.

The password is holy (12-9-03). There is no cost for this. If the password has changed, simply contact them to register which is no charge and they will give you the password.

We believe in One God

Nicene Creed

*“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord”
(Deuteronomy 6: 4)*

A. The Christian Faith confesses that God is one in nature, substance and essence. CCC 198-202

Isaiah 45: 22-24

Mark 12: 29-30

One true God: Eternal
Infinite
Unchangeable
Incomprehensible
Almighty
Ineffable

B. God reveals His name CCC 203-209

Exodus 3:13-15

God, Who reveals His Name as “I Am” reveals Himself as the God Who is always there, Present to His people in order to save them.

God alone IS - God is the fullness of Being and of every perfection, without origin and without end. All creatures receive all that they are and have from Him; but He alone *is* His very being, and He is of Himself everything that He is. CCC 213

C. A God merciful and gracious CCC 210-211

Exodus 34: 5-6

Ephesians 2: 4-5

By giving His life to free us from sin, Jesus reveals that He Himself bears the Divine Name: “When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will realize that ‘I Am’.” John 8:28

D. God’s very being is Truth and Love CCC 215-221

1. God is Truth
1John 1:5

2. God is Love
John 3:16
1John 4:8
Isaiah 54:10

E. **The Implications of Faith in One God** CCC 222-227

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

*Even when He reveals Himself, God remains a mystery beyond words:
“If you understood Him, it would not be God”
St. Augustine*

*Faith in God leads us to turn to Him alone as our first origin and ultimate good,
and neither to prefer anything to Him nor to substitute anything for Him.*

F. **The faith of all Christians rests on the Trinity** CCC 232-260

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life.

The Father loves the Son in an infinite love. The love of the Father and Son for each other is personified in the Holy Spirit.

God’s works reveal Who He is in Himself.

The mystery of His inmost being enlightens our understanding of all His works.

***Understanding God better – learning about Who He is and knowing by what He has done for us that He is completely faithful – helps us to love Him more.

(So it is analogously among human persons. A person discloses himself in his actions and the better we know a person, the better we understand his actions.)

The Blessed Trinity is a mystery of faith which can never be known unless it is revealed by God. God has revealed this mystery through the Incarnation of His Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

The Blessed Trinity is a Family of Persons, a Communion of Persons

Perfect love in this Family: each Person pours Himself out completely to the other

Self-giving love: they completely pour themselves out in love for each other

We want to be joined with this Family – to live in the midst of this perfect love

Model our imperfect families on the complete self-giving love of the Blessed Trinity

I. **The Blessed Trinity is One** CCC 252-255, 261-267

One God in Three Persons

The Divine Persons are really distinct from one another

We believe in One God

Nicene Creed

*“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord”
(Deuteronomy 6: 4)*

A. The Christian Faith confesses that God is one in nature, substance and essence. CCC 198-202
(students look these verses up in the Bible)

Isaiah 45: 22 For I am God and there is no other

Mark 12: 29-30 The Lord, our God, the Lord is One.
Love Him with your heart, soul, mind, strength.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| One true God: Eternal | <u>without beginning or end</u> |
| Infinite | <u>lacking limit or bounds</u> |
| Unchangeable | <u>without change</u> |
| Incomprehensible | <u>cannot be understood</u> |
| Almighty | <u>having unlimited power</u> |
| Ineffable | <u>too overwhelming to be expressed or described in words</u> |

B. God reveals His name CCC 203-209

Exodus 3:13-15 *(Read this aloud)* God was, is and always will be.
(Students read CCC #203, 206, 207, 209)

God, Who reveals His Name as “I Am” reveals Himself as the God Who is always there, He is present to His people in order to save them.

God alone IS - God is the fullness of Being and of every perfection, without origin and without end. All creatures receive all that they are and have from Him; but He alone *is* His very being, and He is of Himself everything that He is. CCC 213

C. A God merciful and gracious CCC 210-211
(students look up)

Exodus 34: 5-6 God is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, rich in kindness and fidelity

Ephesians 2: 4-5 God’s love so great: we were dead through sin but now alive in Christ

By giving His life to free us from sin, Jesus reveals that He Himself bears the Divine Name: “When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will realize that ‘I Am’.” John 8:28

D. God’s very being is Truth and Love CCC 215-217

1. God is Truth God is Truth, He cannot deceive
God’s words are true, that is why His promises always come true
1John 1:5 God is light and in Him there is no darkness

2. God is Love (Students read CCC #219 and 221)
 John 3:16 God so loved the world that He gave His only Son
 1John 4:8 God's very being is love
 Isaiah 54:10 My love shall never leave you

E. **The Implications of Faith in One God** CCC 222-227 (*enormous consequences*)

1. Coming to know God's greatness and majesty means I must serve Him first.
2. I must live in thanksgiving.
3. I must know the unity and true dignity of all men. (All made in image/likeness of God)
4. I must make good use of created things.
 (Any created thing, that is of course not God, should be used to bring me closer to God. If it leads me away from God, detach from it.)
5. I must trust God in every circumstance.

*Even when He reveals Himself, God remains a mystery beyond words:
 "If you understood Him, it would not be God"
 St. Augustine*

*Faith in God leads us to turn to Him alone as our first origin and ultimate good,
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I. **The Blessed Trinity is One** CCC 252-255, 261-267

One God in Three Persons

Key points that must be understood!

The Blessed Trinity

Who God Is: Three Persons in One God, Transcendent and Immanent

The Blessed Trinity is eternal – without beginning or end.

In time, the mission of the Father is Creator

The mission of the Son is Redeemer

The mission of the Holy Spirit is Sanctifier

Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

a Family of Divine Persons

This Family is a communion of perfect and total self-giving love

The Father loves the Son in an infinite love.

The love of the Father and the Son for each other is personified in the Holy Spirit

Jesus would not be the Son if He did not love the Father completely, unreservedly

Our families: we experience our most loving relationships in our family

We find our identity by learning how to love and belong in our family

Our families are imperfect – we do not receive or give perfect love

We are not a son or daughter if we do not give of ourselves to the family

*We are preparing ourselves in this life, in our family, for the life in Heaven

which is perfect and complete love in the life of the Blessed Trinity

We participate in Divine Life, here on earth, through the Sacramental Life

Because human love has limitations and is less than perfect – we want to participate in authentic love – the perfect love of God

We encounter and experience this love in the sacraments – Christ is truly present and we perceive Him by faith.

We are brought into the Family of God in Baptism

We are strengthened in the Life of God through Confirmation

We are brought fully into communion with Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist

What is the meaning of my life?

Catechetical Session

Depending on the level of your students, you might want to begin with this teaching, or at least give the key points before you begin with “We believe in One God.”

Preparation - Readings from Scripture

Note: It might be good to begin with an opening prayer, to be less formal the first night

First Reading: Romans 1: 19-20a

Psalm Psalm 105: 1-11, 43-45

Psalm Response "Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice"

Proclamation: Each person searches for the ultimate meaning of his/her life. Only in God will we find the truth and happiness that we never stop searching for. (CCC #26-27)

Explanation:

What is our makeup? What kind of creatures are we?

People, places and things do not satisfy the longing of the human heart. They do not bring us lasting joy and inner peace.

Human persons are religious beings because throughout history, we have given expression to this quest for God in our religious beliefs, behaviors, prayers, sacrifices, rituals, meditations etc. (CCC #28)

The dignity of the human person

We have a desire for God written on the human heart because we are created by God and for God

Our dignity rests on the fact that we are called to communion with God (CCC #27)

This intimate and vital bond of man to God can be forgotten, overlooked, or even explicitly rejected by us(CCC #29)

Such attitudes can have different causes:

Revolt against evil in the world

Religious ignorance or indifference

The cares and riches of the world

The scandal of bad example on the part of believers

Currents of thought hostile to religion

That attitude of sinful human beings which makes him hide from God out of fear and flee His call

God never ceases to call every one of us to seek Him, so as to find life and happiness

The search for God demands of every person

Every effort of intellect

A sound will

"An upright heart"

The witness of others who teach him/her to seek God

That desire in your heart has brought you here

Allow quiet time for each person to fill in the Faith Time

Three horizontal lines on a sheet of paper. Draw a line using symbols for key

moments of your life - above the line represents times of closeness to God; below the line represents the times of feeling far from God

You have a supernatural end- you were created for God

If you already have a personal relationship with God, begin to take more time on a daily basis to pray (add 5 minutes)

If you do not have a friendship with God, try to set aside fifteen minutes each day to talk with and listen to God. (Give a handout with Catholic prayers and

The Gospel of Jesus - the four Gospels put in chronological order with simple commentary and maps)

Application

1. What was the desire in your heart that brought you here?
2. What is your relationship with Jesus at this time?
3. How much time do you spend in prayer every day?
4. Are you willing to commit to a daily prayer time (or add 5 minutes more if already committed to at least 15 minutes a day)

Celebration - Suggestions for Closing Prayer:

St. Augustine's prayer, CCC #30 ("... our heart is restless until it rests in You.")

Hymn or song

The Existence of God

Catechist Preparation

Consider the following statement: God is the eternal, unchanging, uncreated personal Being. He is truth, goodness, beauty, and love. We can know that He exists even without divine revelation.

Keeping the above statement in mind, read and meditate on the following passages:

Scripture (in order by book):

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Ex 3:1-15 | God reveals His name to Moses: "I AM" |
| Ex 20:2-6 | God alone is to be worshipped |
| Ex 34:5-7 | God is merciful, gracious, steadfast, faithful, and forgiving |
| Dt 6:4 | God is one |
| 2 Chr 6:41 | Rejoice in God's goodness |
| Ps 19:1-4 | Creation itself proclaims its Creator's existence |
| Ps 119:160 | God is truth |
| Ps 135:6 | God is almighty |
| Wis 13:1-5 | God is the author and source of beauty and goodness in all created things |
| Jer 31:3 | God's love is eternal and everlasting |
| Jer 32:17 | For God, who created everything, nothing is impossible |
| Hb 1:12 | God is eternal and holy |
| Rom 1:18-32 | God can be known even without divine revelation, and denying God's existence leads to darkened minds and sinful lives |
| 1 Jn 4:8 | God is love |

Catechism (in order by paragraph number):

| | |
|---------|--|
| 27-30 | All desire and seek God, for He has made us for himself and calls us |
| 31-43 | We can know God by reason alone, but only with difficulty; our knowledge is limited, but we can know that there is a Being who is the first cause of all that exists and our final destination |
| 42, 239 | God is transcendent and at the same time immanent |
| 198-221 | There is only one God; He created everything, and He is eternal, merciful, faithful, truth, and love everlasting |
| 222-226 | We owe a response to God |
| 268-274 | God is almighty and infinite; nothing, absolutely nothing, is impossible to God |

Key Terms:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| <i>First cause:</i> | The initial cause of all things which is itself uncaused; God |
| <i>Immanent:</i> | God is intimately near to us |
| <i>Reason:</i> | The use of the mind to discern truth or the compatibility of things or ideas |
| <i>Transcendent:</i> | God is above and outside all of creation; all ideas and speech about God cannot fully understand or describe Him |

Suggested Hymns and Songs for Catechetical Session:

| | | |
|---|------------------------------|--------------|
| God Is Love (tune: Abbot's Leigh) | Let All Things Now Living | I Exalt Thee |
| The Works of the Lord Are Created in Wisdom | Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You | |

The Existence of God

Catechetical Session

Preparation—Liturgy of the Word:

Note: Choose either the first reading or the Gospel during the Precatechumenate. Inquirers receive a full Liturgy of the Word after the Rite of Acceptance/Welcoming

If beginning with a hymn or song, see previous page for suggestions

First Reading: Acts 17:22-28 or Gospel: John 1:1-3

Response: Ps 18:1-2, 6,16-19, 27, 30-33, 36, 46

Proclamation: God is the eternal, unchanging, uncreated personal Being. He is truth, goodness, beauty, and love. We can know that He exists even without divine revelation.

Explanation:

God exists

The desire for God is in every human heart; most societies developed deity worship

Knowledge of God is possible by reason alone—

- ~ The existence, order, and beauty of creation tell of its maker (see Ps 19:1-4)
- ~ The human heart knows the good and longs for the infinite and for happiness
- ~ Neither creation nor human beings could have made themselves

We need divine revelation because reason is limited in its ability to know God

The quest for the one true God (see Ex 3:1-15)

By nature, human beings tend to a belief in one or more deities

People had to struggle to come to believe in *one* God

The one true God revealed himself to Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the Israelites

God is pure existence and is eternal

God revealed himself in his fullness with the coming of Jesus Christ as a Trinity of persons

Attributes (see Ex 34:5-7 and 1 Jn 4:8)

God is transcendent and outside time; he is almighty, infinite, and all-knowing

God is truth, wisdom, and beauty

God is goodness and pure love: he is faithful, trustworthy, just, and merciful

God is immanent

Human beings share in, and reflect, God's attributes (see Gn 1:26-27)

God is infinitely perfect, yet we are created in God's image

God created our intellects to desire truth and our wills to desire what is good and beautiful

God created us to love and be loved; Jesus teaches us to love each other as he has loved us

These desires can be ultimately fulfilled only by God if we freely cooperate with him

We owe a response to God (see Ps 116:12-14)

To put him ahead of all others; to know, love, and serve him *first* and thereby gain heaven

To express our gratitude to him; to trust and love him *willingly*

To acknowledge the dignity of each human person who is made in his image and likeness

To use well and not abuse all of creation

Application—Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you believe in God? Do you know people who do not believe? Why do people not believe in God?
2. Do you think it matters whether a person believes in God? How might belief in God affect our view of sin, of cheating, divorce, euthanasia, abortion?
3. Have you experienced a desire for God, or a desire for "something" to fill your heart?
4. In what ways does your heart respond to the knowledge that God exists?
5. What impact do God's attributes have on your life?

Celebration—Suggestions for Closing Prayer:

1. Pray for the gift of faith in the one, true God
2. Hymn or song (see previous page for suggestions)
3. Pray together Psalm 147

Catechist's copy

Our Belief about God

Opening Prayer: Reading from Acts 17:26-28, Psalm 27

How do we know God exists?

Order and design- "everything has order"

Throw many pencils on the floor. Catechist lays them in order. What is needed to place the pencils in a logical order is a human intellect.

Draw attention to the sunshine, rain waters the earth, plants, trees, crops grow, animals eat the grass, we eat the animals. The birth of a baby. Note the order/design of creation- things didn't just happen- someone with a Divine Intellect had to create the universe

easier to put thousands of letters in a jar, shake them up and out comes the encyclopedia than to have had creation just happen.

There are five proofs for the existence of God. This is one: order and design.

Our belief in God:

From natural causes:

God is the Uncaused Cause

God is the source of all created beauty, truth, and goodness

God is the love from Whom all love proceeds

Home is Where Everyone Listens

Home is where I am appreciated as the true self I am, the person God meant me to be. It is where I am held precious as a magnificent work of God's love. It is where I am revered as a person made in God's own image and likeness, a person existing in my own right. I am not to be molded according to mere whims and fancies of my parents, but am to be allowed to grow in the way God meant me to be. My parents must search out God's will for me. They must listen to my whole being, they must search my heart to see what God has put there, and what God is doing there. Parent's authority is exercised properly only when it is love's invitation and love's guidance to become what I ought to be in God's plan. When necessary, of course, authority is also love's correction, and even love's coercion.

I can grow properly only when I am lovingly listened to and appreciated, and encouraged to express what is best in me. To listen to me is to be attentive to my whole being, and to receive lovingly all that I am communicating in everything that I am, and do, and say. The listener, however, must be able to distinguish the cry of my true self from the cry of my false self. He must discern what stems from sin in me, and what stems from God's Holy Spirit.

He who does not listen to me is saying that I am not worth listening to, and therefore he is telling me that I am not lovable or worthy of esteem. If I am not lovingly listened to, I cannot have a healthy self-esteem. If I lack self-esteem, I am paralyzed with fears, I am afraid to do anything, and therefore I cannot grow.

Only Love Can Listen

Only if I love can I listen. For only if I love am I interested and concerned enough to listen attentively. If I do not listen, I do not really love. Only if I am lovingly interested in the other and concerned about him and attentive to him can I really hear and understand. Thus only love is capable of listening and understanding.

To love is to go out of myself as the center of interest, and to make the other person the focus of attention.

For I am at home only where listening hearts accept me lovingly, appreciate me fully, reverence me deeply, and thus call forth from me in turn a love which takes me out of my self-centeredness and self-pity, a love in which I am sensitive to the needs of others, and turned toward them in loving concern.

Loving listening is essential in all human relationships. Love listens and understands, and through listening and understanding, loves the more. O Lord, in all our relationships give us hearts with skill to listen. Give us loving hearts, responsive hearts!

Community is "Being at Home"

Two in the Lord – husband and wife- is the basic Christian community. These two, however, are completed only in a family of children who are lovingly accepted. Then it is really home. Home is where God's children are lovingly accepted into the world.

But home, in the sense of one couple and their children, is not enough. Home in this sense is incomplete because each family is completed only through its acceptance and integration into the larger human community. The family is not sufficient unto itself. My fullest growth can be achieved only in relationships which extend beyond the home and reach out into the whole community of mankind.

HOW THIS APPLIES TO MY LIFE

1. Do you believe that there is only one God?_____

What has He told us about Himself? List at least six points.

2. Is God alive? Can I get to know Him?

Give three adverbs from Sacred Scripture that describe the manner in which Jesus acts toward you.

(Example: gently)

3. Since there is only one God, how does this affect your life?

4. Why are you precious to God? What has Jesus done that shows you that He loves you? (Give at least three examples.)

5. What has Jesus given to you? (Give at least five examples.)

6. What does Jesus want for you?

Challenge for the Week:

1. Do *you* really believe that God exists? Do *you* really believe that there is only one God? Ask God to help you to believe if you don't or are not sure. If you do believe, ask God to even strengthen your belief.

The Implications of Faith in One God- Reflection Questions to be followed by Group Discussion, and Challenge for the Week- TEACHER'S COPY

HOW THIS APPLIES TO MY LIFE

Students should be given some quiet time to write their responses on their sheets, and then split up into small groups to discuss their answers. You should pray before picking the groups, which should stay together pretty much for the rest of the year. Please insist that all things discussed in small groups will be completely confidential, and have the teens agree to that.

As you listen to their answers from the sheets, please be respectful of their answers and be encouraging to the young people, while leading the discussion to the appropriate answer.

1. Do you believe that there is only one God? _____

What has He told us about Himself? List at least six points.

Possible points include that God is eternal, infinite, unchangeable, incomprehensible, almighty, ineffable, merciful, kind, faithful; that He is Truth, and light, and loving.

2. Is God alive? Can I get to know Him? Yes

Give three adverbs from Sacred Scripture which describe the manner in which Jesus acts toward you. (e.g. gently) mercifully, kindly, faithfully, honestly, and lovingly.

3. Since there is only one God (This is so important.), how does this affect my life?

I must try to know Him, to live according to His laws, and be grateful to Him for all that He has given me.

4. Why are you precious to God? What has Jesus done that shows you that He loves you? (Give at least one example.)

I have been created in His own image and likeness.

Jesus died on the Cross for me. Jesus, a Divine Person, took on a human nature for me. This is much greater than if you were to become an ant.

5. What has He given to you? (Give at least five examples.)

Everything: life, parents, the earth, food to eat, clothes to wear, a mind, a heart to love others with, His only Son.

6. What does Jesus want for you?

For me to know Him, love Him, to know that He is with me in every difficulty, that He will help me and to be in His perfect love and joy by being with Him in Heaven forever.

Challenge for the Week

1. Do *you* really believe that God exists? Do *you* really believe that there is only one God? Ask God to help you to believe if you don't or are not sure. If you do believe, ask God to even strengthen your belief.