

Enquiry: Does belief in the Trinity help Christians make better sense of God as a whole?

Theme: Trinity.

Learning Intention: I can explain what a Christian might learn from the Bible about the Trinity

I can apply this knowledge to the enquiry question

Bridge concept: Aspects of the same person

Resources:

Auberon owl

Slides

The three candles used in piece 1

Bibles texts for Let Me Learn. We have provided a number of different Bible texts regarding the Trinity so that the teacher can choose to organise the Let Me Learn activity in any way they choose. (For example, you may wish to challenge some children to look up the Bible references in class Bibles themselves).

You may choose to give all children the first and second as they refer to the Trinity and then the others refer to different persons of the Trinity at different times.

This can allow adaptive teaching and the children can make notes in their journals depending on which texts they have been given. They are grouped according to which person(s) they refer to, so the teacher can give a selection as appropriate. Teacher notes on each script follow the texts themselves.

Key Vocabulary:

aspects

characteristics

consubstantial

difference

scholar

source

substance

version



Teaching and Learning

Ask me this...

Jigsaw Charter

(Slide 1) Remind children of the Jigsaw Charter (displayed on wall)

Connect our learning

Remind the children that consubstantial means the same thing showing itself in different ways or made from the same substance. Ask the children if they think these things are consubstantial to check understanding. They could talk in partners and then do thumbs up and down to check. Discuss their answers.

Chocolate, milk, sugar – no – chocolate is made of the other two but they aren't all made of the same substance.

Sun, moon, stars – no – just because they are all in the space doesn't mean they are made of the same material

Water, ice and steam – yes – they are all water just in different forms

Open my mind

Share learning intention (Slide 2)

Light the three candles from the previous piece so that the children can just watch them calmly for a while. Remind them that the flames are all the same and making one from other doesn't diminish the first one at all. How do you think this relates to our enquiry question?

What is a substance?

Tell me or show me

Auberon Owl would like to ask if any of the children have any idea how the three candles could represent the enquiry question (formative assessment).

Look at the three candles (or **Slide 3**)

Directly teach that many Christians believe in The Trinity - one God is 3 consubstantial persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Link back to the candles.

The 1st, which is too powerful to be touched/held, could represent God the Father because many Christians believe that he is very powerful and made the world. In the Bible he is often referred to as Lord God or simply "the Lord". Sometimes this title is also used for Jesus in the New Testament which Christians may also see as showing them that the Father and the Son are the same person.

The 2nd is in a form that we are comfortable with. It is the type that we may be most used to seeing and can touch/hold (as long as it is safe). This could represent belief in the incarnation – that God came to earth in a human form so that Jesus could live among humans, in a form that wouldn't be too powerful or overwhelming. Humans saw him and touched him and he could communicate with them on a human level.

The 3rd candle that we didn't touch but that they could feel is similar to the Holy Spirit. We felt the warmth of this candle but we didn't touch it. We couldn't see the warmth but we felt it. Many Christians believe that they might feel the Holy Spirit on the earth now, helping people when they pray and sometimes inspiring people to do kind things.

The flame was the same on each candle - burning a wick with a yellow flame - and we made one flame from another. It wouldn't matter which one we lit first, the other two flames could be made from the first without changing the first. They are consubstantial.

This is what many Christians believe about God. It is one person but he can appear or represent himself in these 3 different ways, just like you represented yourself in 3 different ways with the playdough.

Slide 4: We thought about water in the Connect Us: this is also sometimes used to explain the Trinity. Natural ice is made from water but can be vast like the polar ice caps so could be like God the Father who was quite difficult for people to understand as he is just so hugely powerful and different to humans.

We are used to water in liquid form – we see it every day, we can touch it, it is in our homes. This could represent God the Son – Jesus.

Steam is also made from water. We can sometimes see a little but mostly we feel it as heat and this could be like the Holy Spirit. We can sometimes see where it has been, like when we get droplets of water on a cold window, but normally it is pretty invisible.

Slide 5: During the next three pieces, we are going to investigate where these beliefs come from and decide whether we think it helps Christians to understand God in his different roles and persons, God as whole. We are going to be scholars! That means somebody who uses their brain to research and find things out. There are ways of knowing about beliefs and one of these is looking at different sources of information to see if they say the same thing.

Do you understand what consubstantial might mean to Christians?

Does this help you understand the Christian belief in the Trinity? How?

Can you be a scholar?

Pause Point

Have a Pause Point by holding up the owl with wings aloft (and/or by using **Slide 6**)

Invite children to take 3 deep breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth

Ask: Think about how experiencing 3 different forms of God, like the candles, could help a Christian understand more fully what God is like.

Ask the children to take 3 pages in their Jigsaw Journal. At the top of one, write “God the Father”, at the top of the next, write “God the Son” and at the top of the next, write “God the Holy Spirit”.

Explain that scholars may look through lots of different sources, that is trusted places which give them information like books in a library, and they make lots of notes before coming to conclusions. These are going to be our notes pages over the next 3 pieces. Sometimes you may have done this as a whole class (like when you learnt about how Christians may feel about going to church last year and you made a class mind map that you added to each week) but for this enquiry you are going to keep your own notes. They are for you and will help you when we come to our evaluation piece.

Today our source is going to be the Bible. You are going to look at some Bible texts in groups and decide what they tell you about the Trinity.

Let me learn

Put children into groups and give a variety of the texts provided. You may wish to remind them of the Old and New Testament in the Bible, so that only the New would talk about Jesus’ life, whereas the Old Testament might talk about God the Father (or the Lord) or the Holy Spirit. Ask them to discuss the texts as a group and then note down under the relevant heading in their Journal, what it says about the person of the Trinity it talks about. Groups can share their ideas with the class.

Help me reflect

Using the owl, support the children in sitting quietly and take a few breaths to calm and consider their reflection.

I would like you to sit comfortably, close your eyes and take 3 deep breaths.

Think about how knowing different aspects of a person can help us know them more fully.

Today’s Learning sheet (slide 5)

Explain and invite children to complete the ‘Today’s Learning’ self-assessment activity by colouring the appropriate owl. Stick sheet in Jigsaw RE Journal.

What does the text tell you? What aspects or characteristics of God can you find out from it?

Notes

You may wish to invited Christian clergy to speak out their church’s beliefs about the Trinity for the next piece.