

spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages

issue 43

trinity to pentecost 12
12 june to 28 august 2022

sample

A resource with a Scottish flavour for Worship Leaders, Sunday Schools, Junior Churches and Youth Leaders based on the Revised Common Lectionary.

www.spillthebeans.org.uk
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introduction

Welcome to the penultimate issue of a three year collection of Spill the Beans. We returned to the Revised Common Lectionary for 2019-2022 with new material as we take another tour through that lectionary.

Who Are We?

At the beginning of 2009 a conversation began amongst a couple, then a few, then a group about collaboratively creating resources that enabled us to tell the story of faith in a worship context and within age groups for younger people and teens. Spill the Beans was born as the result of that conversation and has grown and developed over the intervening years.

The ethos has remained the same, however. It is all about story. For we believe story is the lifeblood of faith. In story we can tell the truth and speak with honesty about things for which there are not yet words. Story contains mystery and is the poetry that forms faith. Stories grow as we grow and can reveal new truths at different times in our lives.

So we believe giving stories to people is one of the most important things we can do in sharing our faith. Children and adults hold stories in their being and keep coming back to them throughout life. Our culture is stored in story. The same is true for our faith.

Spill the Beans is a work of love. None of the contributors are paid for their contributions, these contributions are written and prepared with our own congregations in mind. Instead of working in isolation, we bring this work together, give it some spit and polish, and share it with others. This is how we can keep the cost so low.

In addition, we regularly pay it forward by using surplus monies to support other new ministries and projects.

Collaboration

The team is delighted that we are in creative collaborations with Fischy Music (www.fischy.com) and the Scottish Bible Society (<https://scottishbiblesociety.org>).

Archive Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary Resources

We have two Overspill packages that provide complete sets of past issues that give a huge library of resources for both the Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary.

The Revised Common Lectionary Overspill Pack

Issues 1-12

1,536 pages

£50

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/108820>

The Narrative Lectionary Overspill Pack

Issues 13-27 (plus summer extra) in higher quality render

2,082 pages

£60

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/207215>

The Road Less Travelled Overspill Pack

A lectionary created by the team and users, exploring parts of the

Scriptures less frequently travelled in either RCL or NL

Issues 28-32 in higher quality render

806 pages

£25

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/262757>

You are downloading a compressed archive of files which need to be unpacked so we recommend downloading these to a desktop or laptop computer rather than phone or tablet. Note that depending on future years there may not be resources for some Sundays depending on the timing of Easter and changes to the readings as a result.

Using Issue 43

In this issue of Spill the Beans you will find an extensive collection of things to use each week. Because each piece is written with specific congregations in mind there may be the need to be a little creative yourselves in adapting and evolving some of the ideas to suit your own place and culture and congregation. That is entirely purposeful.

Of course, if you are creative and would like to share what you have done, then have a look at our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/spillbeansresources> and the associated Facebook group that provides space for discussion and support. On our blog at <https://www.spillthebeans.org.uk/> you will find PowerPoint backgrounds for most weeks.

Each week we provide a selection of words, ideas and creative moments to take the theme and the passage a little further. We do not provide a ready made service or perfect prayers but ideas and pointers that hopefully scratch at your own creativity and provoke heaven's imagination within you.

Here are some tips to guide your use of the material in age groups:

1. It presumes some introduction to the story will have taken place in worship together or will play a part in the service when children join it later.
2. Depending on the make-up of your own groups of children you will need to remain flexible in how you use the material.
3. Each idea has been given a guide age range to help your planning, but this is only a guide so use your own judgement about what will work with your group.
4. Before the sit-down activities if you have a group of young children or lots of boys, you may want to add a run-around type game to expend some energy.
5. Use the gathering time exercise with the whole group to get into the story together across the ages.
6. We encourage you to retell the story together.
7. Follow that by choosing as many or as few activities your space and time allow. You could offer a number of activities each at different stations all at the same time for all ages to self-select with a teacher staffing each one, or have traditional classes.
8. During activities, ask children to retell the story to you and ask about their week, what was happy and what was sad and if this week's story reminds them of other biblical and personal stories.
9. The intention is not to complete "the tasks" brilliantly, but rather to provide opportunities to begin conversations, build relationships, retell the story of the day, and talk about what it means for us today.
10. There are many websites that provide handout-type sheets that will have images, crosswords and word searches for the story of that week. They can be helpful in an emergency, but try to be more creative as leaders, the rewards are worth it.

Information

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Sleepless Nights Publications

next season contents

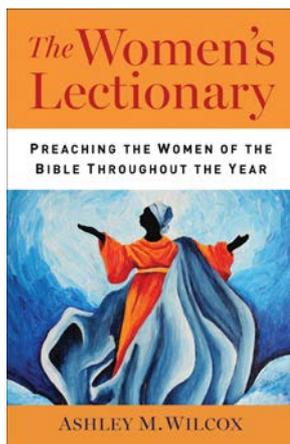
Future Planning: The Women's Lectionary

The next issue of Spill the Beans, Issue 44, will be the final issue in this collection using the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL). This, in turn, will mark the completion of a second cycle of the RCL.

We wanted to do something a bit different thereafter. It helps keep us, as a team, fresh and we hope also expands the horizons of those who use these resources.

There have recently been excellent new lectionaries published by Wilda C Gafney and Ashley M Wilcox. After considering these options, we have decided to use Ashley M Wilcox's "The Women's Lectionary: Preaching The Women Of The Bible Throughout The Year" (2021, Westminster John Knox Publishing) as the basis for the year from Advent 2022 to Reign of Christ 2023.

We look forward to this journey.



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Please remember you can use the bookmark system within Adobe Reader to quickly move around this document.

spill the beans resource team

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Key to Abbreviations

In the worship ideas section the following abbreviations may be used to indicate different sources of worship music:

ATAS	All the Assembly Songs You'll Ever Need
CG	Common Ground
CH4	Church Hymnary, 4th Edition
CH3	Church Hymnary, 3rd Edition
JP	Junior Praise
MP	Complete Mission Praise
SGP	Songs of God's People
WGP	Wild Goose Publications





a summer psalm trail

ideas for inter-generational worship

Introduction

Invite people to have a picnic together and set up this Psalm Trail for them to explore. This could be in your church grounds, or in a local park. It is suitable for people of all ages to travel around and take time to think about some of the verses from Psalm 71.

You can give each participant a bag with the items they need for each part of the trail OR just have the items required at each place. This will depend on where you are holding the trail.

Print off each part of the Psalm Trail and place each one in a different location. There are a few ways you can set up the trail:

- Number the trail sheets and place them randomly, and invite everyone to find the numbers (in any order).
- Design clues for people to find the next part of the Psalm Trail.
- Draw chalk arrows showing the way to the different parts of the trail.
- Place each part of the trail on a route that everyone is invited to follow.

The different parts of the trail can be explored in any order, so if you have a large number of people they can start at different sections, to avoid crowding.

Psalm 71

For reference, here is the text of the psalm from the New International Reader's Version.

- ¹ Lord, I have gone to you for safety.
Let me never be put to shame.*
- ² You do what is right, so save me and help me.
Pay attention to me and save me.*
- ³ Be my rock of safety
that I can always go to.
Give the command to save me.
You are my rock and my fort.*
- ⁴ My God, save me from the power of sinners.
Save me from the hands of those
who are mean and evil.*
- ⁵ You are the King and the Lord.
You have always been my hope.
I have trusted in you ever since I was young.*
- ⁶ From the time I was born I have depended on you.
You brought me out of my mother's body.
I will praise you forever.*
- ⁷ To many people I am an example
of how much you care.
You are my strong place of safety.*
- ⁸ My mouth is filled with praise for you.
All day long I will talk about your glory.*

- ⁹ Don't push me away when I'm old.
Don't desert me when my strength is gone.
- ¹⁰ My enemies speak against me.
Those who want to kill me get together
and make evil plans.
- ¹¹ They say, "God has deserted him.
Go after him and grab him.
No one will save him."
- ¹² God, don't be far away from me.
My God, come quickly and help me.
- ¹³ May those who bring charges against me
die in shame.
May those who want to harm me
be covered with shame and dishonour.
- ¹⁴ But I will always have hope.
I will praise you more and more.
- ¹⁵ I will tell other people about all
the good things you have done.
All day long I will talk about how you
have saved your people.
But there's no way I could say
how many times you've done this.
- ¹⁶ Lord and King, I will come and announce
your mighty acts.
I will announce all the good things that you alone do.
- ¹⁷ God, ever since I was young you have taught me.
To this very day I tell about your wonderful acts.
- ¹⁸ God, don't leave me
even when I'm old and have gray hair.
Let me live to tell my children about your power.
Let me tell all of them about your mighty acts.
- ¹⁹ God, your saving acts reach to the skies.
You have done great things.
God, who is like you?
- ²⁰ You have sent many bitter troubles my way.
But you will give me new life.
Even if I'm almost in the grave,
you will bring me back.
- ²¹ You will honour me more and more.
You will comfort me once again.
- ²² My God, I will use the harp to praise you
because you are always faithful.
Holy One of Israel,
I will use the lyre to sing praise to you.
- ²³ My lips will shout with joy
when I sing praise to you.
You have saved me.
- ²⁴ All day long my tongue will say
that you have done what is right.
Those who wanted to harm me
have been put to shame.
They have not been honoured.

Location 1

"Be my rock of safety that I can always go to." (verse 3a)

You will need: pieces of string (one for every person).

Take a piece of string and think of things that are troubling you just now. Each time you think of one thing tie a knot in your piece of string. Once you have a few (or many) knots, hold onto your piece of string and feel the knots.

Ask God to help you with your troubles. Put your string somewhere safe to use again to talk to God.

Location 2

"Give the command to save me. You are my rock and my fort." (verse 3b)

You will need: sticks, twigs, branches, leaves.

Using natural materials that you find on your Psalm Trail build or contribute to the building of a fort (of any size). Say thank you to God that he is always with us and keeps us safe.

Location 3

"My God, save me from the power of sinners. Save me from the hands of those who are mean and evil." (verse 4)

You will need: sticks and twigs.

Find some little twigs or branches that have fallen off some trees and pretend they are spears. Challenge yourself to see how far you can throw them.

Once you have had fun with this hold your "spear", read the words of this bit of the Psalm, and snap the twig in half. Think of somewhere in the world where there is war, or other evil things are happening, and ask God to make it stop.



Location 4

“You are my strong place of safety.” (verse 7b)

Do the following strength challenges:

- 5 Calf Raises: from standing, lift up onto your tiptoes, hold, then lower down
- 5 Push Ups: get into position, bend elbows and lower chest towards the ground, then push backup
- 5 Jumping Jacks: stretch arms and legs out to the side like a starfish, return arms to your sides, and legs together as you land.
- Balance on your left foot and count to ten
- Balance on your right foot and count to ten
- Hold your arms out at your sides and make circles with them in the air, can you make your arms go in opposite directions at the same time?

Chat together about what you think it means that God is strong.

Location 5

“I will tell other people about all the good things you have done.” (verse 15)

You will need: bunting, string, pens, sellotape.

Take a piece of bunting and design it to show one of the good things God has done. Add it to the string of bunting, perhaps hanging between trees. All our pieces of bunting will show people all the good things God has done.

Location 6

“God, ever since I was young you have taught me. To this very day I tell about your wonderful acts.” (verse 17)

You will need: chalk, ground suitable to be written on by pieces of chalk.

Use chalk to draw pictures on the ground of God’s wonderful acts. As you draw talk to each other about the things God has taught you.

Location 7

“God, your saving acts reach to the skies. You have done great things.” (verse 19)

Lie or sit down and be quiet for 30 seconds (get someone to time it).

While you are quiet, look up at the trees and sky, say the words from the Psalm in your head: “God, your saving acts reach to the skies. You have done great things”.

Location 8

“My lips will shout with joy when I sing praise to you. You have saved me.” (verse 23)

Tell each other your favourite songs to sing to God. Sing some of them together.

Take Home

Print out copies of Psalm 71 for everyone to take home and read. A template is provided on [page 112](#).

Scottish Bible Society

This intergenerational event has been prepared by Jen Robertson. Jen is the Children’s Resource Manager for the Scottish Bible Society. You can find out more about the work of the society at: <https://scottishbiblesociety.org>.



through the season

Introduction

This season's gospel passages contain some of the most well-known stories from the Bible. They each have a challenge in them for us as we think of the way Jesus pushed boundaries. They make us think about our own boundaries and priorities. Some of the challenges set are easier than others. The following is offered as a way of helping people think through the boundaries Jesus pushed.

As a visual focus you could place two baskets at the front of the church. One labelled 'EASY' the other 'HARD'. Each week give people a coloured piece of card (business card size would do.) Invite people to decide if what they heard was easy to hear or hard to hear and to place their card in the appropriate basket. You might want to do this at the end of the service. And it may be that you need to place the baskets at the exit or exits. For those worshipping online you might want to invite them to use the thumbs up or thumbs down on YouTube or a 'like' or sad face emoji on Facebook.

For those who like to use a weekly image for a focus then suggestions are given below. Please remember that you should be careful to use images for which you have the rights to use that image or that are free to use. Good sources of free images include:

Canva https://www.canva.com/en_gb/

Unsplash <https://unsplash.com>

Or perhaps you have a creative person within the congregation who might be willing to create images for you.

If you still have your hanging line from our last issue's Through the Season, then you might want to replace the images from the last season with the new suggestions, adding a new image each week.

Week By Week

12 Jun Trinity

Scripture: John 16:12-15

Title: Spirit Of Truth

Image: Trinity symbol

19 Jun Pentecost 2

Scripture: Luke 8:26-39

Title: What Is Your Name?

Image: A large version of the word 'Tell'

26 Jun Pentecost 3

Scripture: Luke 9:51-62

Title: Foxes Have Holes

Image: Foxes and birds

3 Jul Pentecost 4

Scripture: Luke 10:1-11,16-20

Title: Sending The Seventy

Image: Bare feet

10 Jul Pentecost 5

Scripture: Luke 10:25-37

Title: Who Is My Neighbour?

Image: A person helping another

17 Jul Pentecost 6

Scripture: Luke 10:38-42

Title: The Better Part

Image: A mug of coffee

24 Jul Pentecost 7

Scripture: Luke 11:1-13

Title: Teach Us To Pray

Image: Praying hands

31 Jul Pentecost 8

Scripture: Luke 12:13-21

Title: Where Do I Store My Wealth?

Image: A barn full of harvested crops

7 Aug Pentecost 9

Scripture: Luke 12:32-40

Title: Dressed For Action

Image: The word 'Prepared'

14 Aug Pentecost 10

Scripture: Luke 12:49-56

Title: Not Peace But Division

Image: People shouting at each other

21 Aug Pentecost 11

Scripture: Luke 13:10-17

Title: Set Free

Image: A first aid kit

28 Aug Pentecost 12

Scripture: Luke 14:1,7-14

Title: Places Of Honour

Image: A banquet table





trinity
sunday 12 june 2022

spirit of truth

bible notes

Proverbs 8:1-4,22-31

Psalm 8

Romans 5:1-5

John 16:12-15

How Do We Respond To Life?

This briefest of extracts from Jesus' long closing discourse carries a huge amount of emotional weight and theological significance. Whatever Jesus may or may not have said at the time and however accurately his words had been remembered, John's text is a product of around 70 years of struggle on the part of later generations of believers to make sense of their faith in the light of the rapid growth and geographical spread of the early church, the increasing hostility which they experienced from the Roman authorities, and their slow acceptance that they would have to continue living in the present age until an indeterminate time when Jesus might return in glory.

These four verses have been chosen by the compilers of the Revised Common Lectionary to be read on Trinity Sunday because they are one of very few places in the New Testament where Father, Son and Holy Spirit are mentioned together. They hold the seeds of the fully developed doctrine of the Trinity which was first formulated at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.

John's Jesus speaks with authority about the inner workings of the Trinity, as well he might since "all that the Father has" is his—all understanding of the truth, all knowledge of the future, and full entitlement to divine glory. At the same time, his humanity comes across with real poignancy as he faces his impending death leaving so much of what he wanted to say unsaid and his disciples nowhere near ready to take over the work of the Kingdom.

Like all of us, the fully human Jesus has to accept that his life will not go on forever and despite the confidence with which he assures his friends—and himself—that the Father and the Spirit have everything in hand, there is a strong sense that he is having to leave when everything in him is crying out to stay. It takes great self-restraint not to load more onto his friends than they are ready to handle, and his concern for them, at great personal cost, shows the extent of the divine love and some of what this entails.

The passage relates to every situation of grief and loss, whether individual or shared as family, nation or church community. There is shock, resistance and painful sadness on the part of the person who is dying, the nation that has been invaded, or the church members whose building has been closed, combined with a concern for those left behind.

The grieving friends/relatives or the faithful remnant of the community are in the meantime going through the same process, classically outlined by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (*On Death and Dying*, 1969)—denial, anger, bargaining, depression and, finally, but not quickly or guaranteed to happen, an acceptance of the new reality. During this time of grieving, which takes as long as it needs to and usually longer than we think it should, people are vulnerable and limited in what they can handle. Jesus knew this to be true about his disciples. The camel's back is fully loaded and one more straw might tip them over into despair.

We need to be kind to ourselves and each other. We are doing well to cope with the mundane realities of daily life, never mind ruminating on the mysteries of faith or, one might argue, engaging in ambitious 'mission' campaigns which may be less of a response to the divine calling than a sign that we are stuck in a stage of denial or bargaining.

There is a welcome openness and honesty about this passage, which also gives us permission not to have all the answers about God or about all aspects of our faith. God's self-revelation through Jesus and the 'Spirit of Truth' is an ongoing process, tailored to our ability to absorb it and unlikely to be completed this side of eternity. That is not just okay, but part of what it means to be human. There is always something new to be learnt about God and that is a lifelong process of learning—through the joys and sorrows, triumphs and apparent disasters of life—it is precisely what we are here for. We can safely trust what we do not know with the one who knows us well enough to stretch us without burdening us with more than we can bear.

the story

When I Look Back

When I look back
I begin to understand
how little we understood.

He told us so much about God,
about himself,
and about ourselves too.

We didn't know
how short his time with us
would be.

There was no way
he could tell us everything
and somehow that gave us permission
to go on asking questions

I remember him teaching us about the Holy Spirit:
he tried to tell us that he would be going away
but we didn't want to hear him.

And then he said:
I've got so many things to tell you,
but you can't cope with them now.
I've always remembered that.
I wondered when we would cope. If ever.

And then he told us:
Everything that God has is mine
and the Holy Spirit will go on telling you
about me.

When I look back now
those words made me remember one of Jesus' stories.

It was the story about the two sons.
The younger one
who took the father's money and spent it all,
and when he came home his father threw a party for him.

And the older son
who objected to the party,
and the father said to him:
All that is mine is yours.

That older brother,
he didn't really realise what he'd got,
and sometimes I think I don't either.

But the good thing is
although Jesus isn't around anymore,
the Holy Spirit is.
And I'm still learning.

Retelling For Young People

What Don't You Know?

- What don't you know?
- Strange question, isn't it?

Most of the time we get asked what do we know, usually in school, or at home.

- What do you know about Robert the Bruce?
- What do you know about worms?
- What do you know about the mess in the kitchen?

Those are the usual kinds of questions we have.

- What have you been asked about this week?

And if I asked you:

- What don't you know?... How would you answer?

Here's some things on my list:

I don't know what camels eat.

I don't know what's on the television next week.

I don't know what I'll get for my birthday.

I don't know how to use a chainsaw.

I don't know everything about God.

I don't know how many stars there are in the sky.

I don't know if I could drive a quad bike (but I'd like to try).

- What would be on your list?

Some of these things I could find out about. I love being able to search for information on the internet. When I was in school you had to go and look things up in books. It took ages.

Some of these things I could find out by trying to do them.

Some of them I would need to wait until they happened. I am not always good at waiting.

- Are there things on your list you could find out about?

When Jesus talked with his disciples, he knew that some of the things he was telling them they found it hard to understand. And he told them that when he went back to God he would send the Holy Spirit to them as a friend, to teach them some of the things they did not know.

Sometimes we need help to find out about things.

There are some things that maybe we will never find out.

But it is good to go on asking questions, about the world, about how things work, and about God.

worship ideas

Weekly Imagery And Gathering Activity

The focal image for this week that you could add to your display, as per the Through the Season idea found on [page 7](#), is of a symbol for the Trinity, such as a triquetra.



As you wait for worship to begin, ask yourself:

- If you only had five minutes to tell someone all about yourself, what would you tell them?
- And what would you leave out?

Share with your neighbour if you feel comfortable doing so.

Call To Worship

Creator, Redeemer, Guide.
Wonderful mystery.
Trinity.

We come in awe today,
amazed and bewildered by your love for us.
We offer this time of worship
and seek to know you more.

Responses

Leader: Creator God,

All: we come humbly into your presence.

Leader: Jesus, Son of God,

All: we come gratefully into your presence.

Leader: Holy Spirit,

All: we come quietly into your presence.

Leader: Triune God,

All: we come and offer this time of worship.

Prayer Of Dedication

Gracious God,
you held nothing back
when you shared all that you have with Jesus
and he has shared all of himself with us,
which means that we are rich indeed
no matter how much or how little money we have.

Help us to be equally generous
in sharing ourselves with others:
our time; our skills; our listening;
our vulnerability and our strength.
May your Spirit direct us
to where we are most needed
and give us strength when our self-giving
is as costly for us as it was for him.
Amen.

Prayer Of Adoration And Confession

God, we try to define you at our peril;
our finest metaphors fall woefully short.
You are not our father (or our mother);
you are not king or judge or shepherd;
you are not one or three or, impossibly, both;
you are all of these and none of them
and many more besides.

As we draw ourselves into your presence,
may we stop overthinking and simply allow
you to be in all your mystery and complexity—
'I am who I am', 'I will be who I will be'—
just as you encourage us to be ourselves
and to come, without pride or shame,
exactly as we are, to the one who made us
and who knows us and who loves us,
and that is enough.
It is all we need.

Gracious God, each one of us
has a different story to tell,
but the themes are familiar.
We come with our joys and our sorrows,
astonished at the sheer miracle of being alive
and aware at the same time of how fragile
a thing it is to be human, and to be mortal.

If we love, we will have known the pain of loss;
and if we don't, we might as well not have lived at all,
for love is at the centre of everything
and what makes it all worthwhile.
And if it is true, what Jesus said,
that you and he are one,
and if his life is the measure of your love,
then you also know love's blessing and its cost
and that, strangely, is enough.
It is all we need.

Loving God, we bless you for being part
of our crazy human story from the moment it began,
for showing us in Jesus
how a single life lived well can change the world,
and for your presence with us still,
enabling us by your Spirit to live our lives
to the very fullest and to your eternal glory.
Amen.

Prayers For Others And Ourselves

God-with-us,
you know from the inside what it is to be human.
There is nothing we can tell you
that you do not already know;
none of our joys that do not delight you
or our sorrows that you do not share.
There is nothing we can ask that will
offend you, whether or not you can
give us what we ask for.

You know risky love can be, with loss never far behind.
You know how complicated grief is:
how much deeper it goes and how much
longer it lasts than we ever think it will.

And so we pray today for all who have
been brave enough to follow one of Jesus'
last instructions to his friends:
"Love one another... as I have loved you".

And before going any further, we pause
to reflect just how much he loved and what it cost him.

Pause

We pray for children and their parents,
knowing how important it is for a child
to have a secure, loving start in life,
and how hard it can be for parents
to provide that, especially if they have
not known it themselves.

We pray for youngsters setting out on adult life,
dipping their toes into the waters
of friendship and romantic love,
and pushed too soon—or so it seems—
into more than they can or should have to handle.

We pray for our churches,
proud to speak about sharing the good news of your love,
but not so good at living it out in practice:
torn apart by rivalries and divisions;
unable to cope with the pressures of change
and the realities of loss.

And finally we pray for those for whom
change has come, unbidden, and whose loss
is all too real—and sore:
for those whose much-loved church buildings
have closed, or are about to, and who know
that it should not matter as much as it does...
and yet it does;
for those whose land has been torn apart by war
and who have lost not only people that they loved,
but all that once felt safe and secure;
for those who are waiting—
at an airport, or on a railway platform or by a hospital bed—
for the moment of parting from someone
who is dearer to them than life itself.

May they know the presence and comfort
of the one who said, "Do not be afraid...
for I am with you always... to the end of time."
Amen.

All-Age Prayer

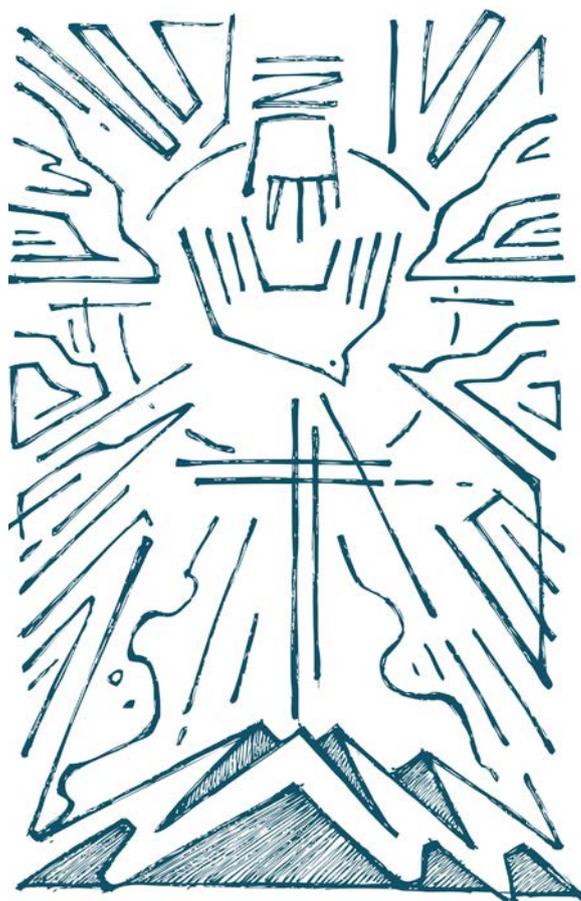
Sometimes, Lord, we are like sponges
or like a thirsty puppy after a long walk:
we soak up new ideas and cannot wait
to find out more.

Sometimes we are like ducks,
or like a tired old donkey with too heavy a load:
the ideas slip away like rain off waterproof feathers;
and however hard we try, we are too tired
to take in a single thing more.

Thank you that you know us so well,
and have all the time in the world to wait
until the time is right.

Teach us to listen when you speak to us
through your Spirit and to follow gladly
when you show us the way ahead,
but may we not panic when that still,
small voice is silent, or rush on anyway
when the way is foggy and dark.

Remind us of who we are: human beings
who can do amazing things with your help,
but who cannot do everything all at once.
We need to rest when we are tired,
and be kind to ourselves when we are sad.
Then we can get up and set off again
on the great adventure of following Jesus
and learning about you, through your Spirit
who is with us always.
Amen.



worship ideas

Reflective Prayer

God beyond time, for us mortals
it is the waiting that we find hardest.

Pause

As children, we 'can't wait' for Christmas
or our next birthday or for the journey
to end and the holiday to begin.
'Are we nearly there yet?'

Pause

When we get 'there'—all grown up—
we can't believe how quickly the time has gone,
and wish we could slow it down.
But still there is waiting
and still, we find it hard.

Pause

Waiting for good news or for bad;
for a diagnosis or for treatment.
Waiting for a new life to begin
or for a precious, well-lived one to end.
Waiting for answers to our questions;
for the pieces finally to fall into place.
It's the waiting that is hardest.

Pause

Mysterious God, not beyond time
but right in the midst of it with us,
you wait with all creation for the time
when all things will be made new.
You know how hard the waiting can be.

Pause

God of time and of eternity,
help us to trust your sense of timing
and to use the waiting times well.
Amen.

Take Home Ideas

This week, may you feel encouraged to ask questions.

- Is there something that has puzzled you lately?
- Is there a bible story that leaves you discombobulated?

Ask questions and talk about the things that trouble you...
You may feel a lot better after you have asked.

Sending

Leader: May God our Maker
All: bless us with wonder.

Leader: May Jesus our friend
All: bless us with stories.

Leader: May the Holy Spirit
All: bless us with wisdom and love.

Leader: May the mystery of Trinity
**All: be our travelling companion
all our days.**

Reflection

I can't take it all in.
It's all too much for my wee finite mind.
How can I understand an eternal infinite God?

Do you ever get so frustrated
because you want to know more about God?

Sometimes I think I know everything
but I cannot grasp the real deep meaning of God:
the meaning of whatever is in my heart;
the meaning of the love of God;
the meaning of the suffering of the world.
I don't have the ability to fathom the mystery of God,
the eternal infinite God.
It is so hard to understand God at times.

The truth is, Jesus said he has much more to say to us
but he also said that we cannot bear or grasp
his words for now.
So let us learn to live, day by day
and word by word
with the help of the Holy Spirit,
piece by piece
like a divine jigsaw puzzle
until the day we can get the full picture of God,
when we meet God face to face.

Praise/Hymns

Eternal Father, strong to save	CH4 260 / MP 122
Father of heaven, whose love profound	CH4 483 / MP 827
Father, we praise you	CH4 209
Glory be to God the Father	CH4 110
God the Father of Creation	CH 4 113
God to enfold you	CG 42
God whose almighty word	CH4 112
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty	CH4 111
I bind unto myself today	CH4 639
Now go in peace	CH4 789
O threefold God of tender unity	CH4 114
Oh, the life of the world	CH4 141
Sing to God with gladness	CH4 150
<i>a lively hymn that would make an excellent anthem for a choir by way of introducing it to a congregation</i>	
Source and Sovereign, Rock and Cloud	CH4 133
<i>not only an excellent hymn for Trinity Sunday, but for expressing many names of God</i>	
This is the day	CH4 194 / CMP 691
Today I awake	CH4 211
Wa Wa Wa Emimimo/Come O Holy Spirit	Many and Great, WGP
Womb of life and source of being	CH4 118
<i>alternate tune is HOLY MANNA</i>	

age group ideas

gathering

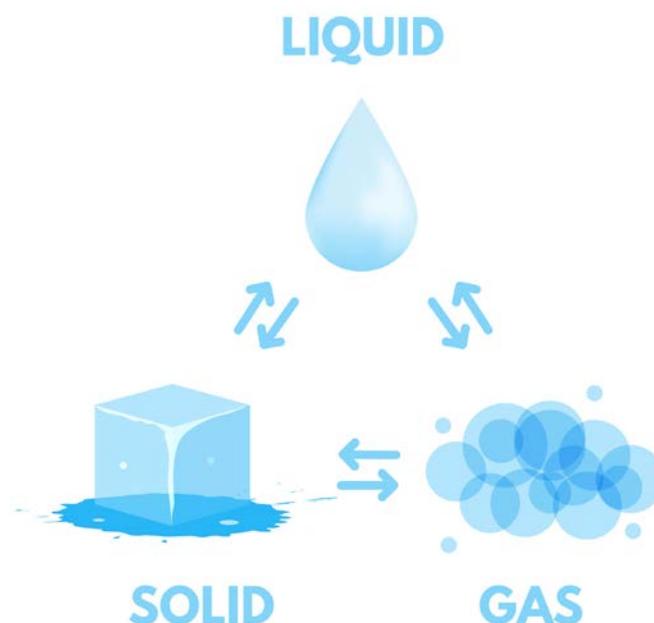
Guess What It Is

all age

You will need: gather together photographs or pictures of different things with which the children will be familiar, for example, kitchen utensils, animals, vehicles, toys, games, local places and so on. Prepare these for this activity by cutting them into several pieces, where each piece only reveals a little part of each item.

Now play a game of 'Guess what it is' together by revealing one part at a time to the children and allowing them to guess what the mystery object might be. Continue to add further parts one at a time and allow guesses with each addition until the whole object is identified or revealed.

Use this as a way into the story today where Jesus has been revealing little parts to the disciples and how one day, he hopes they will be able to put all the parts together and understand.



games

Tri-Tag

age 3-5

You will need: room to move around.

Have the group divide into groups of three. Invite each group to join hands. Designate one group to be 'IT' and have them move together while trying to tag as many other groups as possible.

We speak of God as three in one and one in three. Yet, in mystery, God moves among us in many different ways.

Silly Relays

age 6-12

You will need: room to move around.

Divide the group into groups of five or six. Have the group line up on the other side of the room and stand in line. The first person will run to the leader at the front of the room, who will give them a silly task to do while moving back to the group. The group that finishes first wins.

Trinity Sunday is a day to celebrate all the different ways we know God's love. God loves each of us for ourselves, before all things and beyond all measure.

activities

Water, Steam And Ice

age 9-12

You will need: ice cubes, glass of water, steaming mug of hot water.

As per the activity below, the purpose of this activity is to try to help the children explore how something can exist in different forms, as a way of trying to help them grapple with the mystery of the concept of Trinity, and God existing in three persons/forms. Use the three forms of water to talk about the unity and diversity of God.

The language we construct to describe the mystery of God finally falls short. Use the opportunity to talk to the group about the many ways we each know God in our lives. In all those differences, it is the same God. Explain that the Bible speaks of God in many different ways. Trinity Sunday is a day to talk about and give thanks for the ways we know God.

Apples To Apples

all age

You will need: some apples, knife, cutting board.

Gather the group in a circle and invite them to watch you cut an apple in half.

Rather than trying to explain the Trinity, talk about how we experience or meet God. Share the different parts of the apple with them: the skin, meat and core. Each part is different but still part of the same apple. We meet God in different ways, and the Bible uses different words to talk about God. We know God as one who makes us, one who is with us & for us and the one who is always among us. What are some of the many ways we meet God in our lives?

age group ideas

crafts

Bit By Bit

age 3-8

You will need: jigsaw blanks (available from craft shops), felt tipped pens, envelopes for completed jigsaws.

Try and sit the children a little way apart so they cannot see what each other is doing. Give each child a jigsaw blank and ask them to create a jigsaw by drawing and colouring in a picture of something they know lots about, for example, trains, animals and so on. When complete give the children an envelope and ask them to write their name on it and then break up their jigsaw into pieces and place them inside their envelope. Now ask them to swap their envelope with someone else and see if they can make the other persons' jigsaw. If time, allow a few swaps.

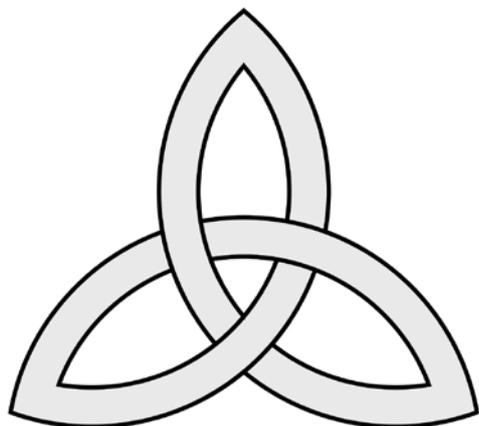
Talk about how easy or difficult it was to make the jigsaw when you didn't have the whole finished picture to copy and so did not know what it was supposed to be. Talk about some of the completed jigsaws and let the creator of the jigsaw share some of their knowledge of what they have drawn so the others can learn a bit more about it. Talk about how we find out about things we do not know. Talk about asking questions. Talk about how we find out about God bit by bit too, sometimes by asking questions, sometimes from other people, sometimes from what Jesus has told us. Talk about how we can help each other learn more of God, just as we helped each other learn more from our jigsaw pictures.

Triquetra

age 9-12

You will need: an image of a triquetra (see page 113) and a sheet of acetate for each child, posca pens, Blu Tack, hole punch and string for hanging if wished.

Give each child their image of the triquetra, a sheet of acetate and a small piece of Blu Tack. Ask them to place the triquetra shape under the acetate and secure it at the corners with the Blu Tack to prevent it from moving while they work. Now ask them to use a posca pen and carefully trace the image of the triquetra onto their acetate. It can be tricky where the lines overlap! When complete they can if they wish colour in the outline of the triquetra. Later the completed triquetra can be attached to a window with Blu Tack or a hole punched in it to allow it to hang if wished.



Talk about the story and some of the things they know, don't know and would like to find out about. Discuss how they might find out the answers to their questions and if any of their questions might never be answered. Talk about God and all the things we know, do not know and would like to find out about God. Discuss how they think they can find out about God. Talk about the stories of the Bible. Talk about Jesus talking to his disciples knowing that they might not fully understand what he was talking about. Talk of Jesus saying that when he went back to God, he would send the Holy Spirit to be a helper to try and help them understand even more. Look together at the triquetra and of it being an image representing God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit all entwined together and if we try to look to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit we might just learn a little bit more and have some of our questions about God answered.

What Do We Know Spinner

all age

You will need: cardboard circles (one per child, 20 cm diameter and divided into three equal parts using a black felt pen), felt pens, a variety of collage materials, small feathers and crosses, paper and scissors, PVA glue, glass beads, small bottle tops, Blu Tack.

Talk with the children about the story and the things they know, do not know and would like to know. Talk about the different ways we find out about the things we do not know. Talk about questions being a good way to find out about things we would like to know and how sometimes we only learn about things bit by bit. Talk about what they know about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit and discuss their answers. Do they think they know everything there is to know? Remind them that sometimes we only learn about things bit by bit.

Give each child a circle and look at the pattern together. Explain that the children are going to use the materials provided to show what they know about God in one third, Jesus in another and the Holy Spirit in the last third, for example, the Holy Spirit was like a dove in one story so they might put a dove on and so on. When complete ask them to glue a glass bead to the centre of the bottom of their circle and glue or use Blu Tack to attach a bottle top to the centre of the top of their circle, this allows it to spin.

Talk about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit together helping us to know more and let them spin their spinner to see them all blending together. Discuss who else might help them learn more or answer their questions and be willing to try and provide some answers if asked.

discussion starters for teens

trinity

Preparation

For the Opening Activity you may want some additional 'impossible questions' which you should be able to find online.

Print or have ready to show on screen some artists' depictions of the Trinity. These may be religious, but you might want to include some secular images too.

For the Activity/Discussion have some different ice-cream flavours and a mixing bowl and spoons.

Opening Activity

Impossible Questions

This Sunday is known as Trinity Sunday which is a concept about God which no one completely understands. Ask some impossible questions:

- What colour is a mirror?
- If you try and fail to succeed, then which have you done?
- Why is a boxing ring square?
- Why is laughing contagious?
- How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were?
- Why is the alphabet in a specific order?
- How can one God be three people living in a trinity?

The Word

Read John 16:12-15 together.

This is a very short passage but part of a much longer part of the Gospel of John called the farewell discourse.

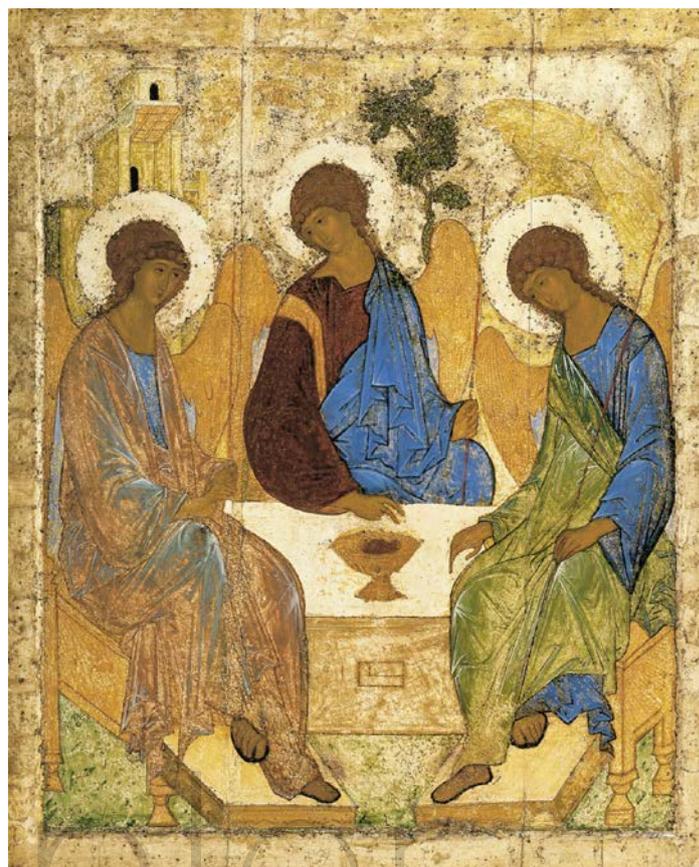
Read it a few times but each time change the gender of the spirit. The passage in the NRSV and most versions today has the spirit as male, 'he'. Read the passage again but change to 'she' and then once more and change to 'it'.

It is only the English version of the bible that make the spirit a 'he'. The Old Testament has the spirit as female. When the spirit broods over creation it is 'she'. And the Greek of the New Testament has the spirit as neutral, 'it'.

- Does this change how people understand the spirit?
- Is it unexpected?
- It is a good thing?
- What gender do you prefer and why?

Activity/Discussion

With this being Trinity Sunday, it is a chance to grapple with a concept that illustrates that it is impossible to understand God. People try and create pictures of God. (Again, as a side question, try describing God as he, she or it?)



Being in trinity is about offering different facets or sides of God.

Show everyone some traditional images of the trinity. There are a number of famous icons imaging the Trinity. An example can be found at <https://i0.wp.com/byzantinepainting.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/icon-of-the-Holy-Trinity-5.jpg>.

It is a bit like ice, water and steam: three forms of the same thing. There are a number of others. Explore some these and create some of your own forms or variants which use three parts.

Suggestions might be:

1x1x1 = 1 while 1+1+1 = 3

A triangle

Three leaf clover

Three parts of an egg: shell, yoke and white

Time: past, present and future

Encourage everyone to come up with their own ideas.

Have some fun making up a three-fold ice cream using the flavours you have brought. This can be a Trinity Sundae! Be creative, and then, if there is any ice cream left offer a wee taste to people after church.

Living It Out

Keep an eye this week for sets of three, reminding you of the Trinity. Remember, we use the idea of the Trinity only because we cannot understand the real thing fully. It is a picture of what we cannot grasp.

Psalm 71

- ¹ Lord, I have gone to you for safety.
Let me never be put to shame.
- ² You do what is right, so save me and help me.
Pay attention to me and save me.
- ³ Be my rock of safety
that I can always go to.
Give the command to save me.
You are my rock and my fort.
- ⁴ My God, save me from the power of sinners.
Save me from the hands of those
who are mean and evil.
- ⁵ You are the King and the Lord.
You have always been my hope.
I have trusted in you ever since I was young.
- ⁶ From the time I was born I have depended on you.
You brought me out of my mother's body.
I will praise you forever.
- ⁷ To many people I am an example
of how much you care.
You are my strong place of safety.
- ⁸ My mouth is filled with praise for you.
All day long I will talk about your glory.
- ⁹ Don't push me away when I'm old.
Don't desert me when my strength is gone.
- ¹⁰ My enemies speak against me.
Those who want to kill me get together
and make evil plans.
- ¹¹ They say, "God has deserted him.
Go after him and grab him.
No one will save him."
- ¹² God, don't be far away from me.
My God, come quickly and help me.
- ¹³ May those who bring charges against me
die in shame.
May those who want to harm me
be covered with shame and dishonour.
- ¹⁴ But I will always have hope.
I will praise you more and more.
- ¹⁵ I will tell other people about all
the good things you have done.
All day long I will talk about how you
have saved your people.
But there's no way I could say
how many times you've done this.
- ¹⁶ Lord and King, I will come and announce
your mighty acts.
I will announce all the good things that you alone do.
- ¹⁷ God, ever since I was young you have taught me.
To this very day I tell about your wonderful acts.
- ¹⁸ God, don't leave me
even when I'm old and have gray hair.
Let me live to tell my children about your power.
Let me tell all of them about your mighty acts.
- ¹⁹ God, your saving acts reach to the skies.
You have done great things.
God, who is like you?
- ²⁰ You have sent many bitter troubles my way.
But you will give me new life.
Even if I'm almost in the grave,
you will bring me back.
- ²¹ You will honour me more and more.
You will comfort me once again.
- ²² My God, I will use the harp to praise you
because you are always faithful.
Holy One of Israel,
I will use the lyre to sing praise to you.
- ²³ My lips will shout with joy
when I sing praise to you.
You have saved me.
- ²⁴ All day long my tongue will say
that you have done what is right.
Those who wanted to harm me
have been put to shame.
They have not been honoured.

sampler

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**Booklet produced by
Sleepless Nights Productions**