

The Trinity - Information

The Father

The idea of God as a Father is the oldest concept in the Trinity. It has its roots in Judaism and in the Old Testament God is often referred to as humanity's father. This implies that God watches over his children and takes an interest in their lives, just like a good parent should with their own children.

Though it would be a mistake to think of God the Father as more powerful than the other persons of the Trinity, the Father is often seen to exercise God's power. An example of this is found in the Christian creation narrative, where the Earth and all things in it are created by God.

Many Christians would think of God the Father when they pray. This is shown in the Lord's Prayer (one of the most commonly used Christian prayers), which starts with the words 'Our Father, Who art in heaven'. Praying to the Father makes sense, as he wields the power to help people and change their lives.

Many Christians believe that we cannot fully understand God the Father. He is so powerful that he is beyond human understanding. There are many alternative Christian understandings. One example would be the perception of God as a mother, due to the use of more maternal language and ideas in the Bible, when describing God.



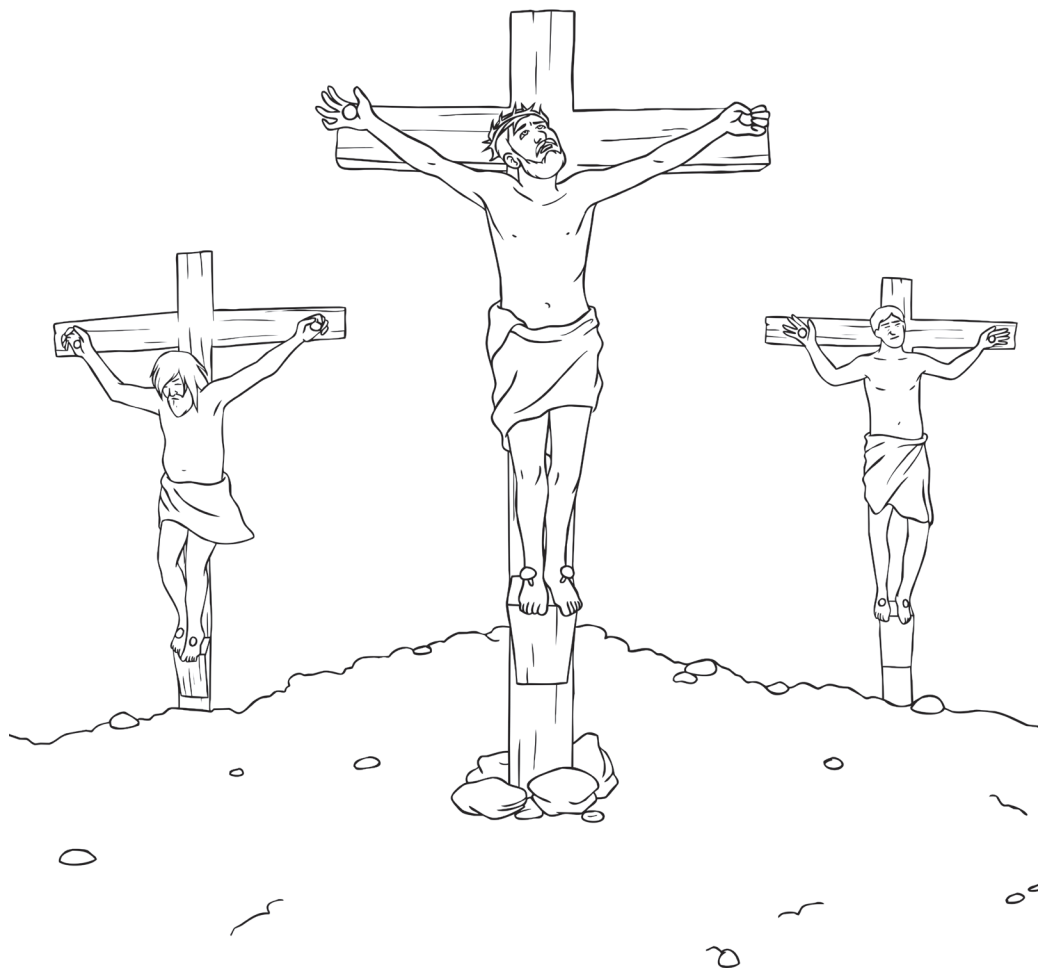
The Son

Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God. Though this seems to imply there are multiple gods of differing importance, this is not the case. All three parts of the Trinity are equally God.

Christians believe Jesus is God in human form. This is possible through a process known as the 'incarnation', which you will look at in future lessons. The incarnation is believed to have occurred when Jesus was born to Mary. Modern scholars now believe this occurred sometime between 6 and 4 BCE.

You will learn more about Jesus' life as you study for your GCSE exam. For now, however, it is enough to note a few key details. Jesus was a preacher who worked in and around the area that now makes up the country of Israel. He was Jewish, but his ideas challenged those held by some Jewish leaders at the time. He was later executed by the Romans (who ruled the area) by being crucified. After his death, his followers claimed he had been resurrected and this created the new religion of Christianity.

The Son has an important role in the Trinity and in God's relationship with mankind. Firstly, Christians believe through Jesus' teachings and example, God has given us a guide by which to live our lives. For example, Jesus' teachings such as 'love thy neighbour' are hugely influential for Christians today. Secondly, by dying on the cross, many Christians believe Jesus has sacrificed himself for our sins. This means all wrongs can be forgiven and humans can enter heaven.



The Holy Spirit

A famous Christian analogy describes the Holy Spirit as being like the wind: You cannot see it, but you can see its effects.

The Holy Spirit is the third part of the Trinity. It is present at several key events in the Bible including the creation of the world and the baptism of Jesus. One of the most famous mentions of the Holy Spirit, however, is when Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to his disciples after his death (during Pentecost).

Many Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is a source of constant guidance in their life. They believe it can always be turned to for hope and guidance. Some Christians believe that the Holy Spirit speaks to them through their conscience. However, others point out that our conscience can tempt us to do bad things. They think that Holy Spirit would never do this and we must be careful to follow its guidance rather than our own selfish thoughts.

Many Christians, including Catholics, believe we can receive the Holy Spirit through special ceremonies. These are known as sacraments and include baptism and confirmation.

Some Christians believe that the authors of the Bible were inspired to write it by the Holy Spirit.

