

Week 1: Creation

Bible Study at a Glance:

God created man out of sheer goodness. God wants to engage with us in an intimate relationship of love. He desires to incorporate man into the blessed life of the Holy Trinity, which is love itself.

(Explain to the Group) = You don't have to read this word for word, but this is the general idea of what to explain before moving on.

- **Q: These are questions to ask the whole group**
 - *A: Hopefully the group arrives at most of the answers on their own, but if they don't, redirect the discussion towards these answers, and be sure to tell the group the answers if no one quite got it.*

CCC/Verses and quotes to read out loud are in boxes.

CCC 1: God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness, freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life

(Explain to the Group) Pause here and talk about this bible series. In this series of bible studies, we will look more deeply into what this paragraph is saying:

1. Why did God create us?
2. How is it that we became "scattered and divided by sin"?
3. How did he "call together all men"?
4. Who was his Son and how was he our Redeemer and Savior?
5. How do we become his adopted children?

(Explain to the Group) Dig deeper into the first sentence. Have someone re-read that first sentence: "God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life."

- **Q: What do they mean by the words “share in his own blessed life”? What does his “blessed life” mean?**

- *A: The next passage from the Catechism explains what that blessed life is. Have someone read CCC 221*

CCC 221: God’s very being is love. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of love in the fullness of time, God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange.

- **Q: CCC 221 is talking about the Holy Trinity. What does the Church teach about the Holy Trinity? What do we believe about it?**

- *A:*
 - *We believe that God is a Trinity of persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that together love one another perfectly and infinitely. In essence, the Trinity is love itself.*
 - *What’s important for us to understand is that the nature of the Trinity is love, and we are invited to participate in it.*
 - *It’s a mystery in the end, Jesus reveals it to us.*

The Trinity is difficult for anyone to understand. Be careful not to get mired into deep theology that is beyond the scope of this study. It would suffice to acknowledge it as a mystery which requires faith to believe in. The most important point to convey about the Trinity is that God is a relationship of love and he wants to include us in it.

- **Q: How important do you think is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as opposed to other doctrines or beliefs of the Church?**

- *A: The answer is in CCC 234. Allow some discussion, then have someone read it.*

CCC 234: The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the hierarchy of the truths of faith.

- **Q: Why do you think the Holy Trinity is the central mystery, or central doctrine of the Church?**

- *A: Challenge the group to go beyond just repeating the words from the Catechism. Dig into the “why”. It’s about who God is, or the nature of God. From that, everything else flows.*

Genesis 1:26-27: *Then God said: Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth. God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female[ff] he created them.*

Genesis 1:31: *God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good.*

(Explain to the Group) You can point out to the group that before these passages, God created light, the earth, animals, etc., and after each day of creating he looked and said “it was good”, but only after creating mankind did he say it was very good.

- **Q: Why did God create us?**

- *A: Refer back to the first quote of the Catechism at the top of this study: “...[God] in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life”.*
 - *He created us out of love*
 - *He wants to share his blessed life with us*
 - *People can share any other insights*

- **Q: What would us sharing in his blessed life look like practically?**

- **Q: Have you felt times when you were very close to God, very intimate with him?**

- **Q: Are there any obstacles that stand in the way of your becoming closer to God? Conversely, what helps you most to grow closer to God?**

- **Q: Does God want to have an intimate, personal relationship with you? Where can you see that in the quotes and passages cited above?**
 - *A: Emphatically yes! He wants even more than that, he wants to unite us to him, to become one with him, similar to how a husband and wife become one in marriage. He not only wants that, he himself initiates that kind of relationship with us. Here are some quotes from the references in this study that should come out in the discussion:*
 - *“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life.”*
 - *“God draws close to man.”*
 - *“He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength.”*
 - *“...he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children ...”*
 - *“God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange”*
 - *“God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good.” (emphasis on “very” after he made man).*

- **Q: Do you think that when God created man, he knew he would die on a cross to save him?**
 - *A: This is a question intended to make people think. The answer is of course yes. And that is what is so beautiful, that he went through it anyway, despite the cost to himself. This should be a “lightbulb” moment for the participant’s to reflect on just how much God loves them.*