

“God Is”—Trinity: One of Two Central Christian Mysteries, Part 1
ECO Essential Tenets Study for BYF - June 28, 2026
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1. Announcements and Prayer

2. Review of Last Week’s Lesson on “God Speaks—Scripture: The Authority for Our Confession”

3. Setting Up the Next Two Sundays’s Lessons on the Trinity:

- Today:
 - Defining the Trinity’s terminology and language to better understand...
 - Discussing the evidence for the Trinity in Scripture and the early church’s life...
- July 5: Take a break from Essential Tenets—Laurien to teach a Bible study
- July 12: resume on Trinity July 12 with characteristics of God and several analogies/mistakes/errors/heresies of importance (especially the really fun ones)

4. Reading Section II.A, ECO Essential Tenets, from *Trinity and Incarnation: The Two Central Christian Mysteries*

The triune nature of God is the first great mystery of the Christian faith. **With Christians everywhere, we worship the only true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who is both one essence and three persons.** God is infinite, eternal, immutable, impassible, and ineffable. He cannot be divided against Himself, nor is He becoming more than He has been, since there is no potential or becoming in Him. He is the source of all goodness, all truth and all beauty, of all love and all life, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. The three persons are consubstantial with one another, being both coeternal, and coequal, such that there are not three gods, nor are there three parts of God, but rather three persons within the one Godhead. The Son is eternally begotten from the Father, and the Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son. All three persons are worthy of worship and praise.

God has no need of anyone or anything beyond Himself. Yet in grace this Triune God is the one Creator of all things. The ongoing act of creation is further manifested in God’s gracious sovereignty and providence, maintaining the existence of the world and all living creatures for the sake of His own glory. He is the Holy One, the ground of all being, whose glory is so great that for us to see Him is to die. Yet He has made the creation to reflect His glory, and He has made human beings in His own image, with a unique desire to know Him and capacity for relationship with Him. Since our God is a consuming fire whom we in our sin cannot safely approach, He has approached us by entering into our humanity in Jesus Christ.

- **Question: What strikes you as the most helpful phrase or sentence in this two-paragraph summary of what ECO believes about the Trinity? The most confusing?**

5. The Story and Language of the Trinity:

- Dilemma:
 - Father is God...
 - Then Jesus the Son is revealed as God...
 - Next the Holy Spirit also revealed as God...

- Yet the definition of God is still One and not worshipping three gods, so what to do?
 - Takes centuries to sort out satisfactorily (Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, Chalcedon)
 - Distinctions of “essence” (being that doesn’t change) and “person” (from “persona” or role)
 - One in essence, yet three persons: sub-distinctions that stand under the essence, are part of the essence, and have the essence of Deity, and yet are distinguishable from one another
 - But not Modalism, as in “Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer” (more July 12 on that and more!)
- **Question: The Essential Tenets describe the Trinity as one of the two central “mysteries” of the Christian faith, particularly because of the “One yet Three” conversation. What do you think about that word “mystery”? How does it help you here? How does it unsettle or confuse you?**

6. Reviewing the Scriptures about the Trinity:

- **NOTE: Less specifically about proof-texts and more about over-all flow and story...**
 - **The life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus in the Gospels...**
 - **The promise, presence, and power of the Holy Spirit in Acts and the Epistles**
 - Genesis 1:1-2
 - Deuteronomy 6:4
 - Psalm 110:1
 - Matthew 28:18-20
 - John 1:1-18, and “I Am” statements by Jesus (6:35; 8:12; 8:58; 10:7; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1)
 - John chapters 14-16 on the Holy Spirit as “Comforter” or “Advocate”
 - Acts 1-2 (Promise of Spirit, Pentecost event, and Peter’s sermon quoting from Joel)
 - 2 Corinthians 13:14
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14
 - 1 Peter 1:1-2
- **Question: What Scripture verse/passage jumps out at you the most from this list as being especially helpful in seeing God as Triune? Why?**
- **Question: How would you start to describe and define the Trinity to a friend who knows very little about Christianity?**

6. Closing Prayer

For Next Time...

July 5	Stand-Alone Study	(4th of July weekend) led by Laurien Hook
July 12	“God Is”	<i>Trinity: One of Two Central Christian Mysteries Part 2</i>
July 19	“God Comes Near“	<i>Incarnation: One of Two Central Christian Mysteries Part 1</i>
July 26	“God Comes Near”	<i>Incarnation: One of Two Central Christian Mysteries Part 2</i>
August 2	“God Saves”	<i>God’s Grace in Christ</i>
August 9	“God Chooses/Sends”	<i>Election for Salvation and Service</i>
August 16	“God Gathers”	<i>Covenant Life in the Church</i>
August 23	“God Entrusts”	<i>Faithful Stewardship of All of Life</i>
August 30	“God Forms”	<i>Living in Obedience to the Word of God</i>
September 6	Stand-Alone Study	(Labor Day weekend) TBD