

In this unit, pupils will find out about the baptism of Jesus and where this is found in the Bible. They will study the text in detail and find out about what it means for Christians today. They will investigate how Christians show their beliefs about God and the Trinity and how these impacts upon their lives. Later in the unit, pupils will find out about infant and believer's baptism in the church and what this means for Christians today.

## Key Vocabulary

- Trinity
- Holy spirit
- Messiah
- John the Baptist
- Believer's Baptism
- Father
- Jesus
- Scripture
- Infant Baptism
- Denomination



## Lesson 1: What is the Trinity? What happens in the biblical story of the baptism of Jesus?

**STEP 1:** Talk with pupils about the concept of 'incarnation' (link back to Key Stage 1 units on this topic). Ask: What does incarnation mean? Remind pupils that incarnation means God come to earth as a human and as God. Discuss with pupils where in the Bible this happens. Remind pupils that Christians believe that Jesus was God's son and that he was both human and God.

**STEP 2:** Explain that within this topic, we are going to be finding out about Christian beliefs about the baptism of Jesus and the Trinity. Ask pupils to share any prior knowledge that they already have. Talk to the pupils about water; collect their ideas about when it is life giving/ refreshing/ cleaning etc. Explain that water can be many things but for Christians it is also a symbol of washing away sins.

**STEP 3:** Read the baptism of Jesus as a class (Matthew 3:11-17). Give the pupils their own copies of this and work as a class to unpick unfamiliar vocabulary.

Encourage pupils to highlight and annotate unfamiliar words with their meanings. Talk as a class about the key events.

**STEP 4:** Tell the pupils about John the Baptist, explain that he was Jesus' cousin. Study the words that he says at the start of the text, explain that John is pointing towards Jesus being the one who came to save people. Ask: What else happens in the text?

**STEP 5:** Discuss with pupils the Christian belief that the Trinity was present at the baptism of Jesus. Explain that the Trinity for Christians is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Tell pupils that for Christians, the Trinity is three parts but one God. Ask pupils to identify the Trinity within the story (voice speaking from heaven = Father, Jesus = Son, God's spirit coming down like a dove = Holy Spirit).

## Lesson 2: How is the Trinity shown in the Biblical story of the baptism of Jesus?

**STEP 1:** Recap the last lesson with pupils. Remind pupils that the text that we studied can be found in Matthew's gospel. Explain that Matthew wrote his gospel as an eyewitness account. Re-read the text with pupils and discuss the key events.

**STEP 2:** Remind pupils of what the Christian belief of The Trinity is. Recap that in Christianity, the Trinity is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Tell the class that Christians believe in one God but three parts. Explain that the triangle is one shape that has three vertices, each of these are needed for the shape to be a triangle. Ask: Why might a triangle be helpful in explaining what the Trinity is? If necessary, help pupils to draw parallels between how a triangle might be like the Trinity.

**STEP 3:** With pupils, recap where they identified the Trinity within the text last time. Ask why they think that this is significant for Christians. Show pupils the photographs of the paintings created by Daniel Bonnell and Andrea del Verrocchio & Leonardo da Vinci (both paintings have The Baptism of the Christ in their titles). Ask pupils to explain what they think these pictures are showing. Ask pupils to study the pictures in detail. Which similarities and differences can they see? What evidence of the Trinity can they spot?

Pupils to complete the artwork worksheets that focus on these questions.

**STEP 4:** Ask: Why do you think that people create artwork to show key religious events? What might the artwork we saw help Christians to focus on?

### Lesson 3: Why is the biblical story of the baptism of Jesus important for many Christians?

**STEP 1:** Recap with pupils the main events of Jesus' baptism as recorded in the gospel of Matthew and ask them to explain where many Christians believe the Trinity is in these key events. Show pupils the two pictures that they studied in the last lesson (Verrocchio/Da Vinci and Bonnell), ask pupils to identify where the artists have shown the Trinity in their pictures. With pupils, discuss how these pictures might help Christians to focus on the key events from the text.

**STEP 2:** Explain that this story is important for Christians because it not only shows them about the Trinity, but for Christians, it also shows that Jesus is the one who came to save people, the Messiah. Talk with pupils about the words that John the Baptist says in the text. Ask: who is he describing when he says, 'But after me comes one that is more powerful than I'? Explain that Christians believe that John is telling the people that the Messiah is coming, and that Christians see Jesus as the Messiah.

**STEP 3:** Look again at the image of Jesus' baptism by Daniel Bonnell. Ask pupils to identify the shape that Jesus is standing in. Collect pupils' ideas about why this shape is significant. Ask pupils to discuss their thoughts about how another artist might show the meaning from the story of Jesus' baptism within their artwork. Gather pupils' ideas and make notes for the class. Explain that today the pupils will be creating their own artwork to tell the story and share the meaning of the Trinity for a Christian.

Give pupils A5 paper to create their images. When they have finished, give them a speech bubble and ask them to describe what they have drawn and why. Pupils should ensure that they make clear links to the text and their understanding of the Trinity in Christianity.

### Lesson 4: What are the similarities and differences between infant baptism and believer's baptism?

**STEP 1:** Recap the last lesson with pupils and share some of the images that they created. Encourage pupils to share how they have linked their knowledge of the Trinity and the text to what they have drawn.

**STEP 2:** Talk with pupils about the baptism of Jesus and re-read the text as a class. Ask: What are the main events? Why is baptism so important for Christians? What does baptism mean for Christians today? If necessary and appropriate, link back to work done on baptism in EYFS unit 'Being special, where do we belong?' and Key Stage 1 unit 'What does it mean to belong to a faith community?'

**STEP 3:** Show pupils a picture of an infant baptism and believer's baptism. Discuss whether they know what these are. Explain that baptism is the church's way of welcoming a baby or an adult into the family of the church. Explain that this goes right back to Jesus' baptism and that Christians have been doing this for thousands of years. Read Acts 2:41 to the class. Tell the pupils that in the Bible, after Pentecost (the giving of the Holy Spirit), people were baptised and welcomed into God's family. Explain that in some churches adults promise to try to bring their babies up to know Jesus (infant baptism) and in some churches adult members of the church profess their faith and are baptised (believer's baptism).

**STEP 4:** Show pupils a video of infant baptism\* and believer's baptism\*\*. Encourage pupils to write down the similarities and differences that they see between the two baptisms. Ask: Why do you think that different Christians choose to do different things?

**STEP 5:** Pupils complete the activity sheet, detailing some of the key elements of both types of baptism.

\* A helpful link might be Resources - **RE: Quest** <https://request.org.uk/resource/restart/2014/04/08/infant-baptism-in-an-anglican-church/>

\*\* A useful link might be found at Resources - **RE: Quest** <https://request.org.uk/resource/life/rites-of-passage/believers-baptism/>

### Lesson 5: What might affect a Christian's decisions about baptism?

**STEP 1:** Recap with pupils why many Christians choose baptism (for themselves or their babies) and what they know about infant and believer's baptism. Remind pupils that Christians will either have an infant baptism (and often a confirmation when they are older – if they choose the Christian faith for themselves) or a believer's baptism. Tell pupils that this depends on the denomination of church that Christians go to, and/or their own beliefs.

**STEP 2:** Explain that most Christians in Baptist churches choose to dedicate their babies and the baby can choose whether to have a believer's baptism when they are older. Show pupils a picture of a Baptist church. Explain that in some places (such as small villages) there may not be a Baptist church so Baptist Christians may have to travel to attend a Baptist church or attend a denomination of church that is different to the one that they might prefer. Ask pupils what they think a Baptist Christian might do if they worshipped in an Anglican church and had a baby. Tell pupils that the lived reality of this is that they still might dedicate their babies rather than give them an infant baptism.

**STEP 3:** Read through some of the quotes from different Christians. Ask pupils to explain what influenced their decisions to choose believer's or infant baptism.

Give the pupils the quotes and encourage them to work in groups to set criteria (see slides) and sort them into groups.

**STEP 4:** Bring the pupils back together and look back at the text from Jesus' baptism. Ask: How does baptism for Christians today link to the example that they believe Jesus set?

## Lesson 6: What is the Trinity and why is it important for Christians?

**STEP 1:** Recap with pupils the themes and vocabulary found within the unit using the 'Sticky knowledge quiz' slides.

**STEP 2:** Look back through the text that pupils studied throughout the unit and discuss what this means for Christians today.

**STEP 3:** Pupils to complete the assessment quiz sheet.

### Learning Outcomes

- Recognise what a 'Gospel' is and give an example of the kinds of stories it contains
- Offer suggestions about what texts about baptism and Trinity mean.
- Give examples of what these texts mean to some Christians today
- Describe how Christians show their beliefs about God the Trinity in worship in different ways (in baptism and prayer, for example) and in the way they live
- Make links between some Bible texts studied and the idea of God in Christianity, expressing clearly some ideas of their own about what Christians believe God is like