Y5 R.E.

The Holy Trinity

WALT: Reflect upon the mystery of the Holy Trinity.
To begin today’s lesson, make the sign of the cross:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Each time we make the sign of the cross, we are recognising the Christian belief in the Holy Trinity – although, as we are so familiar with this short prayer, sometimes we might not stop to really think about what we are saying.
The Holy Trinity is the Christian belief that although there is only ONE God, there are THREE persons - God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. The word ‘Trinity’ means three in one - ‘tri’ ‘unity’.

Confused?

Well, if you are, don’t worry - it’s a really tricky concept and not just for children!

That’s why it is referred to as the mystery of the Holy Trinity.
When we use the word *mystery* in the context of religious faith, we are referring to something about which we have some understanding but are unable to fully understand it unless God reveals it to us.

In our last lesson we read part of St. John’s Gospel in which Jesus, the Son, talked to his disciples about the Father and the Holy Spirit:

*(Chapter 14)*

16 I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. 17 He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God.

26 The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you.
I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God.

The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you.

These statements give us a clue about the relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit but it is still difficult to understand the idea of THREE persons in ONE God.
When we say the Creed at Mass, we begin:

I believe in one God

We then go on to list our belief in:

• the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth
• one Lord Jesus Christ
• the Holy Spirit, the Lord the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son

Over time, many people have tried to help to explain this mystery to people.
None of the models are perfect because we cannot fully understand the mystery without God’s help, but they have tried to explain the idea of 3 in 1.
Perhaps the most well known example is that of St. Patrick (the patron saint of Ireland) who used a shamrock leaf to try to illustrate the idea of 3 in 1.
Below are a range of symbols which are sometimes used to represent the Holy Trinity.
Some people use the idea of water to explain the idea of the Holy Trinity as ONE thing which can exist in THREE forms - solid, liquid and gas.

However, the problem with this comparison is that water can be changed from one state to another by heating or freezing. This is NOT the case with the Holy Trinity - the Father does not change into the Son, etc.
St. Herman used the idea of the sun to try to illustrate the Holy Trinity. He said that there was one sun, but that we can distinguish the discus, the light and the heat of the sun. (HEALTH & SAFETY WARNING - DO NOT LOOK DIRECTLY AT THE SUN)

St. Herman compared the discus of the sun to God the Father, the rays of light to God the Son and the heat, which we can not see but can feel, to God the Holy Spirit.
Remember, that none of these examples can explain perfectly the Holy Trinity but some might help you to understand a little more.

The most important points about the belief in the Holy Trinity are:

- The Trinity is God.
- There is only one God.
- There are three distinct persons - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
- Each person is God but there is only one God.
The Holy Trinity is NOT:

- 3 Gods joined together
- 3 people joined to make one God
- one God split into 3 parts
Task 1:
Look back at the different examples which have been used to try to illustrate or explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

➢ Draw or write which example you think is the most useful.
➢ Explain why you have chosen that example.
Task 2:
Inspired by St. Patrick’s use of the shamrock, have a go at a craft activity to show the Christian belief in the Holy Trinity. (Some examples are provided but you can use your own ideas if you want to).
1. Catholic Icing
   Unfold to see what is revealed!

2. Reveals crown and prayer to God the Father

3. Reveals cross and prayer to God the Son

4. Reveals dove and prayer to Holy Spirit and the Trinity

Just like the leaves on each shamrock I see, there are three parts to the Holy Trinity. First is God the Father, then Jesus, His only Son. With the Holy Spirit, together, they are Three In One.
Task 3 - Think deeply challenge

Try to think of your own example to try to explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity. It could be a diagram, a model or a short piece of writing. If you produce a diagram or model, you will need to write a short explanation of how it illustrates the idea of 3 in 1.