

Maker of Community**I. Slide1 Announce:**

- A. **Slide2 Family Movie Night** on Oct 31 **5:30-8:30**. **Toy Story 4**. Food/dessert trucks will be here for dinner purchase. Movie begins at 6:30 on the softball field. **Bring chairs and blankets and costume contest for kids.**
- Candy donations** fr it would be greatly appreciated!
- B. **Slide3 Men's prayer** - resumes weekly beg this Tues 10/20 *in the courtyard* at 7am.
- C. **Slide4 Children at Risk:** Sun, 10/18, 3-5 pm in courtyard. *Norma Vazquez, Anti-Human Trafficking Director from Operation SafeHouse*. Presentation on the **current myths and misinformation** that is being circulated regarding trafficking. **Come get educated, hear truth, and learn how you can help.**
- D. **Prayer:** *Who is like you among the gods, O Lord - glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders?* Ex.15:11

II. Slide5 Intro: Maker of Community

- A. CSLewis *Friends are like coals in a fire - together they glow; apart, they grow cold*
- B. **Title:** *Importance of Community*
- Subtitle:** *Because of who we are* (identity) *the expectations would be that we would live in community.*
 - Community** (Lt. *common*) = *a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.*
 - Ask:** Why church? Why small groups? Why is community so important?
 - In a small group **is** where we grow best, challenged most. **But it's not** just for social reasons. **Not** just for personal benefits.
 - We begin our discussion about *the importance of community* were all good theology begins: **with God**. This helps us in the way we think about relationships. **They become God-centered and not** people-centered.

- C. Slide 5 weeks include: **Maker of community** (begins w/God). **Molding of Community** (character growth, change). **Messiness of Community** (it takes work, it's challenging). **Multiplying of Community** (including others outside your common interests. includes missions). **Marvel of Community** (joy, fun, destiny in heaven).
- D. Slide 7 Relationships aren't easy right now. Especially for our *online community*. They take work. And, you're probably **tired** of navigating *relationships* through all of this. **Community** is also hard because... *I don't want you to know me!*
1. So, this series is a reminder for all of us... **Community is Important!**
 2. Even throughout Covid, the mantra has been *"We're in this together!"*
 3. Some see community as *optional*.... *don't go it alone - don't do life alone.*
- E. We can say we have been *Created for Community*. Or, we're *wired for community*.
1. Some might think, *I just need me & Jesus*. But it begs the question, *Does He feel the same way? I say NO!*
- F. So I'm going to take us back to the beginning, if we can call it a beginning. What do you call something/someone that didn't have a beginning? **God**. More specifically **The Trinity**. Or, *Trinity, the Ultimate Small Group* :)
- G. What was God doing before he created the universe? St. Augustine's answer: *He was preparing Hell for people who ask questions like that! :)*
1. God was having fellowship within his own being.
 2. Francis Schaeffer emphasized this point in his books. *This*, he says, *is where the human desire for intimacy and communication comes from. We were made to communicate. That design is part of the image of God within each of us.*
- H. A.W.Pink, The Attributes of God, Ch.1 *The Solitariness of God*. [*solus/alone*]
1. *"In the beginning, God". There was a time, if it could be called "time," when God, in the unity of His nature (though subsisting equally in 3 Divine Persons), dwelt all alone. "In the beginning, God." There was no heaven, where His glory is now particularly manifested. There was no earth to engage His attention. There were no angels to hymn His praises; no universe to be*

upheld by the word of His power. **There was nothing, no one, but God; and that, not for a day, a year, or an age, but “from everlasting.”** During a past eternity, God was alone: *self-contained, self-sufficient, self-satisfied; in need of nothing.* Had a universe, had angels, had human beings been **necessary** to Him in any way, they also had been called into existence from all eternity. The creating of them when He did, added nothing to God essentially. **He changes not, therefore His essential glory can be neither augmented nor diminished.**

III. Slide8a **WHAT IS THE TRINITY?**

- A. The formula is *mysterious & even paradoxical*, but it is in no way *contradictory*.
1. **Formula:** **1** in essence/being. **3** in Persons.
 2. **Definition:** There is 1 God and He subsists in 3 distinct persons.
 - a) The Trinity *doesn't* refer to **parts** of God, or even to His **roles**.
 - b) The doctrine of the Trinity *doesn't* fully explain the mysterious character of God, rather it **sets boundaries**, outside of which we **must not** step.
 - (1) It defines **limits** within our finite reflection.
 3. **Slide8b 6 Small Statements:** One God and One Only. Exists in three Persons. Equal and Eternal. Worthy of equal praise and worship. Distinct yet acting in unity. Constituting the one true God of the Bible.
- B. **Prove it by showing 3 specific truths:**
1. **[1]** There is **1** God. **[2]** Father, Son & Spirit are truly **distinct** persons. **[3]** Each has the essential attribute of **Deity**.
 2. **Slide9a Modalism < Trinitarianism > Tritheism** [*modalism: I'm a father/son/husband. Tritheism = that there are 3 beings who together make up God*]
 3. **Slide9b Note:** They are each **called God** in Scripture. **All 3** are involved in the **resurrection**. **All 3** are involved in our **sanctification**. **All 3** are involved in the **baptism formula** *in the name of...* (note *name, not names*).

IV. Slide10a **THE LOVE WITHIN THE TRINITY IS THE LOVE WITHIN THE CHURCH**

A. As we know, **love** is a relational term (love is an action), requiring both **subject** and **object** (someone loves someone else).

1. Slide10b This loving relational dynamic is **personified** in the trinity.

Turning to the Scriptures, we see within the Trinity **humility** and **submission** towards each other, which is born of perfect love.

2. The **love** of the **Father** towards the **Son**:

a) And when Jesus was baptised... a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am **well pleased**. Mt.3:16-17

3. The **loving submission** of the **Son** towards the **Father**:

a) ...Christ Jesus...did not count equality with God something to be grasped, but **emptied himself**, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself... Phil.2:5-8

4. Slide10c It is into this **perfect love** that God **invites us**, **not because** He is lacking and is in need of our love in any way, **but purely because**
*Trinitarian love is **generous, creative, and relational**.

5. God, in His generosity, created us for relationship, **as an extension** and **display** of His Trinitarian nature. This should have a profound impact on **why** and **how** the church, *His body*, **lives and loves**.

V. Slide11a **THREE WAYS THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY SHOULD SHAPE THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.**

A. [1] *Community: Isolation to Intimacy*

1. Because God is **a social trinity**, he demonstrates that we are called to live in community. We are those **made in His image**, **and** are therefore **not** to live in isolation. God intends that we **reflect** his **relational Trinitarian nature** in our lives.

2. This is only possible as we move out of isolation and into relationships with others. The Christian life, therefore, is the **life-in-relationship**, **or** the **life-in-community**. This is at the **heart** of Scripture **and** of NT Christianity.

B. Slide 11b [2] Community: *Unity and Diversity*

1. The doctrine of the Trinity means that our God is uniquely **multi-faceted**, and can be understood as **a God of diversity within His unity**.
2. And so within **the Church**, as a witness to **God's perfect Trinitarian love**, we share a unity and diversity that overcomes all **social, racial, and economic** barriers. We are each **so different yet** we are **one in Him**.
 - a) I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they may also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. Jn.17:20-21
3. The promise of the Scriptures is that our **unity and diversity**, lived out in authentic community; will **shout... God is real**.

C. Slide 11c [3] Prayer

1. **Because God is triune** – **our prayers** ought to be addressed to the 3 Trinitarian persons in line with both the **purpose** of the specific prayer and the **function** of each Trinitarian person. **Trinitarian informed prayer moves from the Spirit through the Son to the Father**.
 - a) We can say it this way, it is *the Father who initiates, the Son who authoritates and the Spirit who activates*.
2. So we **ask the Father, in the Son's name, through the Spirit**.
 - a) **In conclusion**, let us be filled with a **fresh wonder** at the **depth and richness** of the **love** of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; **that** we as believers have been invited to share.
 - b) **Let it shape our living and praying, so that** we may daily *share more of God's perfect love*, with an imperfect world.¹

¹ Adapted from Ross Gillespie, serves on the leadership at Joshua Generation Church.