

The Shack
Week 2: The Trinity
Mar. 1-7



Icebreaker: Why do you think Young kept Jesus just as we might picture him, as a Middle-Eastern man skilled in working with his hands while changing God into a large African-American woman who was a good cook and the Holy Spirit as a small, quick, Asian woman who like to garden. Did you notice any symbolism in these depictions?

1. How would you define community? What elements do you think are essential to make a community? Is there some common goal; some similar interests that unite a group?
2. What were you taught of the Trinity when you were younger; say by your parents, a minister or in your Sunday school classes? Has reading “The Shack” caused a paradigm shift in the way you understood the Triune nature of God?
3. Read Deut 6:4. What does this say about the nature of God? In the ancient language in which the Bible was written, the word “one” is the same used to describe the marriage commitment between a husband and wife. Does this help or hinder your understanding of the nature of the Triune God? How does this verse compare to use of the plural “our” that is used in Gen 1:26?
4. On page 86 of ‘The Shack,’ Papa introduces herself as Elousia. Jon Miller mentioned on Sunday that the Hebrew word for God is “Elohim” which has a plural connotation. Do you think of a hierarchical relationship between God, Christ and the Holy Spirit?
5. In theological circles the definition of the Trinity is found under the Greek term “perichoresis,” which defines each member of the Godhead: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as the co-indwelling, co-inhering, and mutual interpenetration. Alister McGrath writes that it “allows the individuality of the persons to be maintained, while insisting that each person shares in the life of the other two. An image often used to express this idea is that of a ‘community of being,’ in which each person, while maintaining its distinctive identity, penetrates the others and is penetrated by them.” Or in other words, the 3 Persons permeate one another; each has their own personal “I” awareness. But there’s nothing in one of their heads that isn’t in the others’ head. Their wills are completely united. Can you begin to see that the Godhead is not one of hierarchy but of a linear as well as a circular relationship? Did you notice a type of inter-connectiveness between Papa, Jesus and Sarayu in helping Mack during his time at the shack?
6. Jon mentioned in his sermon the strangeness of the members of the Trinity in “The Shack” partaking in meals together. One of the most significant events in

the life of Jesus took place at a table over a meal. What was that event? How important is your own kitchen table? Where do you find your closest community gathered? Do you share meals often? Do you talk about the events of the day? Is it an opportunity for community building?

7. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit share at least two common attributes: they are eternal and are omnipotent. Please read the following Scripture.

For their eternal attributes:

God the Father: Gen 21:33 & Jer 10:10

Jesus the Son: Matt 28:20 & Heb 1:8, 13:18

The Holy Spirit: Heb 9:14

For their omnipotence:

God the Father: Mark 14:36

Jesus the Son: Eph 1:22 & Matt 28:18

The Holy Spirit: Luke 1:35.

8. Some of their different attributes are as follows. God as holy (John 17:11), Jesus was without sin (1 Peter 1:19) and the Holy Spirit is the Liberator from sin and death (Romans 8:2).