

Christianity 101

Today's faith and biblical illiteracy in general and among those who attend church and claim to be Christian is staggering. Some alarmists are claiming that the Christian faith is in danger of becoming extinct. We can no longer rely on culture to support the passing on of faith in Jesus Christ to the coming generations. Learning the basics is not a quick fix to this situation. But it is a tool that when used by compassionate, caring, and committed adults, will ignite their imagination for God, the Scripture, the faith community and living a transformed life.

To follow is an exploration of the four things that are essential for new believers and those seeking information about the Christian Faith will need to know.

The Trinity

Sum Up

The concept of the Trinity explains how God is three and also one.

Scripture References: Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:13-17

Key Verse

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."
(Deuteronomy 6:4, NIV)

Theology and the Topic

As Christians, we believe in one God: *monotheism* (see Deuteronomy 6:4). How then do we explain a scene like the one that occurs in Matthew 3:13-17? While the word *trinity* does not appear anywhere in the Bible, it was coined to explain the relationship that God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit share with one another. They are three separate but equal persons; no one person being greater than or less than another. The persons of the Trinity are separate and distinct from one another but also one. While we cannot fully grasp nor clearly illustrate how the Trinity works, plenty of evidence in both Testaments supports the one-but-three God.

The Scriptures and Gospels

Sum Up

The Scriptures were inspired by God and are meant to equip us and point us toward salvation through Jesus Christ.

Scripture References: Genesis 4:7; Romans 6:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Key Verse

Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing mistakes, for correcting, and for training character, so that the person who belongs to God can be equipped to do everything that is good. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Theology and the Topic

2 Timothy 3:16-17

- The Scriptures are inspired by God and exist to equip us and point us toward salvation.
- The Gospels are the climax to the narrative of the entire Bible.
- Sin entered the world through Adam and Eve.
- Sin is personified to Cain as something that will master you or be mastered by you.

Genesis 4:7

Paul explains that we're either slaves to sin or slaves to obedience to God.

Romans 6:16

- God wants Eden again.
- God accomplished this by sending Jesus to the cross to pay our penalty.
- We're given an undeserved, unearned adoption into the family of God.
- We've been set free.

The Church

Sum Up

You need the church and the church needs you.

Scripture References: Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 11:17, 23-26

Key Verse

The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. (Acts 2:42)

Theology and the Topic

Acts 2:42-47

- This is an example of a unified, God-honoring church.
- The church should be unified not homogenous.

1 Corinthians 12

- The Church (the body of Christ) has many parts.
- You need the church and the church needs you.
- The church doesn't always get this right.

1 Corinthians 11:17, 23-26

- Just as we received undeserved, unearned adoption (symbolized in the bread and the wine), so too we're called to extend that to others.
- God calls us to come together, but God also sends us out.

This Life and the Next

Sum Up

Jesus calls us to him, but he also sends us out. We've been reconciled to God through Jesus, and we've been given the ministry of reconciliation.

Scripture References: Matthew 22:34-40; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

Key Verse

He has trusted us with this message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:19-20)

Theology and the Topic

Revelation 21:1–22:5 (This won't necessarily be read, but it will be referenced.)

- There is a glorious and exciting vision of heaven coming to earth.
- As awesome as heaven will be, Jesus spends very little time talking about it.
- More often, Jesus teaches how to live this life well.

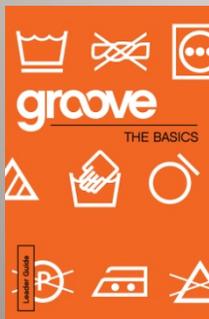
2 Corinthians 5:17-20

- There is a reminder of the gospel.
- God did all of the reconciling through Jesus.
- Reconciliation is every believer's work on earth.
- The Holy Spirit has empowered each of us with a gift to be used "for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7).
- We're meant to contribute to the church and to the ministry of reconciliation.

Matthew 22:34-40

- Love God and love people.
- A lot of Christians are great at the first part (worship) but neglect the second (ministry).

About this article:



This information is an adapted excerpt from the book **Groove: The Basics Leader Guide** by Michael Adkins. If you'd like to explore the basics further with your church family this resource will be a great starting tool.