

# GOD, A COMMUNITY OF LOVE REFLECTION

## SPEAKER PREPARATION MATERIAL

**Speaker:** Adult Team Member

**Time:** First reflection of Rise Day

**Length:** 20-30 minutes

**Scripture:** 1 John 4:7-11

**Previous Reflection:** Metanoia (last reflection on Die Day)

**Following Reflection:** Church: The People of God

### **Setting:**

The participants have had a communal experience of “dying” through the Die Day process. They renewed their baptismal promises in the Paschal Vigil the night before and experienced God’s forgiveness and healing mercy in the sacrament of Reconciliation. They have participated in the Resurrection Prayer Service this morning. They have come to know in faith that Jesus is truly their friend who loves them personally.

### **Progression:**

Participants are again being presented with an invitation, this time into the community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is not an academic explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity, but about a person’s experience and relationship with God. What a difference between talking about a person in general and sharing about someone we love! Through you, the speaker, they will reflect on the times when God’s loving presence in the world was known and felt in creation, in Jesus, in community, and in the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Candidates are invited to accept this invitation to the Trinitarian community.

### **Purpose:**

We desire for participants to know in faith that Jesus is truly their friend who loves them personally. This reflection helps us understand the fullness of God’s love and our invitation to share in it. God is a community of love: three persons in one God. The Resurrection of Christ is the point where God invites us to share in his Divine Life. Your purpose is to remind participants that we have been made part of this community of love through Baptism. Now we are called to choose daily to accept the invitation.

### **Faith Awareness:**

The Trinity is the model of every human community, from the closest, our family, extending to our parish community, out to the universal Church. The agape love which Jesus came to reveal was unconditional and meant to be passionately and selflessly shared with all in the human community. In this way, God’s love creates unity out of diversity.

When we stand in God's presence as Christians, we experience an intimate union with God who shares his life with us. God asks us to respond with commitment and surrender to that love. This is our dignity: to walk in companionship with God. Only Jesus can share with us how it is to live within this joyful circle of love. Each person of the Trinity loves us with a personal love, which is why the waters of our Baptism wash over us as the covenant of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Through Baptism, we enter into the community of love present in the Trinity, lived in the family, the parish, and in the Church.

**Response:**

We all share in God's love. Candidates are now invited to become more fully a part of the community of love, the Church.

**Additional Information:**

For both reflections, God, A Community of Love and Church: The People of God, please read the Covenant Rite in the TEC Manual for a clear understanding of how these two reflections and the Covenant Rite flow together.

**Scripture for further reflection:**

Romans 5:5

John 10:10

# GOD, A COMMUNITY OF LOVE REFLECTION

## OUTLINE

After reading and praying with the scripture for this reflection, please study the outline carefully. Time constraints may require you to be selective. As you develop your stories and examples, consider the points in bold as most essential to the purpose of your sharing and the continuity of the weekend.

**Scripture:** Make sure to read 1 Jn 4:7-11 from the enthroned Bible at the point in your reflection where you feel it is most apropos.

*Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.*

*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. (1 John 4:7-11)*

**Introduction:** You may share a personal story or brief introduction with the group if it will be effective as a lead-in to your reflection as you remind them of what happened the previous evening and Die Day.

### **I. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus invite us into the community of love we call God.**

- A. On Die Day, we deepened our experience of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus. Today, we begin at the heart of this mystery: God, a community of love.
  1. Those who knew Jesus as a friend came to know him as their Lord as they discovered the intimate love he shared with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
  2. Jesus showed a great capacity for friendship and a personal love for all of his disciples and followers (mention examples from the Gospels. For instance: Peter, Mary Magdalene, the rich young man, John, children, his mother Mary, etc.).
  3. How have I encountered Jesus as a friend?

- B. All relationships involve constant sharing at a deeper level, allowing us to discover new things about ourselves and others; this is also true in our relationship with God.
  - 1. What is my experience of going deeper and discovering more about myself?
  - 2. What am I learning about God by knowing Jesus?

**II. In Jesus, God manifested a new form of love in the world: unconditional love, agape love, loving others passionately without any hope of love returned; his was a self-giving love.**

- A. Jesus is our window to God.
  - 1. St. Augustine said, "The greatest act of love of Jesus for us was his revelation of the inner life of God." Jesus came to show us how to live in love.
  - 2. Jesus revealed the fullness of love in this great love of three persons, but only one God, each of them loving us in a personal way.
  - 3. Unconditional love (agape) calls us to:
    - a. Follow Jesus' example of self-giving love, to love passionately as God loves.
    - b. Allow our love to grow in openness and selfless care for others, becoming the family of God.
  - 4. How have I experienced unconditional love in my life?
- B. Jesus enjoys a special love for his Father, and his Father for him, an eternal intimacy.
  - 1. Jesus came to help us know the Father's love continues today.  
(Lk 12: 6-7; 27)
  - 2. Give an example or two of positive child-parent relationships.
- C. Jesus enjoyed an intimate bond of love and life with the Holy Spirit.
  - 1. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus became human, fully like us, formed in the womb of Mary, born into our familiar world, to unfold for us the full mystery of God's life and love for us, in the mystery of the incarnation.
  - 2. The Holy Spirit strengthened Jesus during his life and ministry. (Mt 4:1; Mk1:10)
  - 3. Jesus' final gift to us is the Holy Spirit, who inspires and instructs us to live in intimate union with the mystery of God in Jesus (Jn 14:26).
  - 4. Share a story of your experience with the Holy Spirit that is relatable for participants.

**III. The Trinity, the divine community of love, reaches its deepest fulfillment, expression, and revelation in the paschal mystery of Jesus.**

- A. God's plan of salvation was realized in the incarnation of God's Son, Jesus.
- B. Jesus' love led to death on a cross, but the Father's love raised him to new life.
- C. Out of love, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to sanctify and guide us, to be God
- D. By making the Sign of the Cross, we invoke the Trinity and recall the paschal mystery.

**IV. Jesus established the sacrament of Baptism as the entrance into this community of love.**

- A. Through Baptism, we enter into a unique relationship with God.
- B. We are plunged into the life and love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, becoming children of God and members of his family, the Church.
- C. What a blessing it is to be a part of this community of love!

**Questions for discussion or journaling:**

- 1) How do you understand unconditional love?
- 2) How would you describe God?
- 3) What is God's love like for you? How do you experience God's love? Church – The People of God Reflection