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| **LESSON 9 - THE CENTER TRIPTYCH**Today we will be discussing the second “story” of the stained glass window as featured in the center triptych. As we learned previously, the Bible and the Christian faith can be summarized by telling the story of three gardens and the three trees at the center of these gardens. The garden featured in the center triptych is where Christianity’s most important redemptive story**, the Cross, the Resurrection and Christ’s Life Story** takes place. John writes in his gospel that Jesus was crucified in a garden, buried in a garden and when he rose from the dead, he appeared to Mary as a gardener. John intends for us to see that Christ has come to restore Paradise and to set the world aright. In this panel, the “tree” is the cross where Jesus died to redeem humanity. Through the cross, God’s saving and redeeming work is accomplished. The course of history is changed. The restoration of Paradise has begun. Christians believe that the curse of sin and death, which was never God’s intent for creation, is reversed by Jesus’ death on the cross and his resurrection We look at the cross as transformational; it’s a message meant to transform our hearts, communicated through the Bible in multiple metaphors. It communicates that God, in the person of Jesus, identified with human suffering – in our darkest moments, we can take comfort knowing that God has fully entered into our suffering on the cross, and transformed it. It is through this cross that God ushers in the healing of the world, *redeeming* what was broken in the first garden. The restoration of Paradise has been set in motion upon this tree, and the defeat of sin, suffering and death has begun. The center triptych features scenes from Jesus’ life and ministry. Framed by the two Marys, the scenes begin with his birth on the left with Jesus’ mother, Mary, and end on the right with Mary Magdalene weeping at his tomb. To the left, Jesus’ baptism, calling Peter and Andrew from their boat, welcoming children and offering living water to the woman at the well. To the right, a woman anointing Jesus’ feet, Zacchaeus in the sycamore, and finally the Last Supper. The garden is Calvary, where Jesus died. The story ends with the empty grave and the central figure in the window, the Resurrected Jesus. Three days after his crucifixion, Jesus was raised from the dead, proving that God’s life and love are more powerful than anything that’s in the world. Notice that the hands of the resurrected Jesus are open, beckoning us into his arms and embracing us with love. Jesus’ hands also send us out with a mission: We are his hands in the world, working to restore Paradise. Jesus gathers us in to heal us, and then sends us out to heal the world. We’ll learn more about this when we discuss the right triptych in an upcoming email. The **Holy Trinity** is depicted in the sky directly to the left and right of the Resurrected Jesus by way of the cosmos and dove. Christians believe in one God, who is revealed in a relationship of three “persons”, which Christians call the Trinity: **God the Father** is represented by the spiraling cosmos, the almighty creator of heaven and earth. **God the Son**, who became human to reveal God’s love to us, is the Resurrected figure of Jesus. And **God the Holy Spirit** is represented by the dove, who speaks through the prophets and equips the church to do the work of God’s kingdom. Notice how Jesus’ hands point to the Father and the Spirit – a picture of the Trinity. To learn more, please go to [http://future.cor.org](http://discipleship.cor.org/wf/click?upn=WsmL8FECnXcfK4MQyD-2FJJB0Zy1QlHr2meJZgnf1ZoMk-3D_Ut-2FMzvqVw04CjoN4KSZ4BsQjcGMJwXoQE-2F6v4CVQtBCVh-2FzJEvWkK9piV9VA2tftrmiNrJr09fIfelKrhX88qoCyADgQlmX1iRSajfqr2XwdIA7rJhxejDUnvatkOSff45MHPqxYsXKbVh3925gllRhmb-2BDhfIIdOAA-2FgQUOZmTNpZgl6V9UBHWRuxTpPHoLQ27F6cgsrtFtY0GLyvke-2FcYGxbngnFQ20BbEF7wwqk8ryQKhf3n7IUVQhZEzez1K80BlIXDFvmCQ-2FBBK-2BTH1-2Fn-2F7FLd7qfjb4p63wngmAFiAnFC3BpzlSGYrkUSBgduz" \t "_blank) and hover over the characters featured in the center triptych.  |

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Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die…”

John 11:25-26

NIV