

THE GODHEAD

The Trinity of traditional Christianity is referred to as the Godhead by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. While the same terms are used by Latter-day Saints and other Christians for the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (or Holy Ghost), Latter-day Saint understanding of the three members of the Godhead is significantly different from that of traditional Christianity.

God the Father

God is often referred to in the Church as Heavenly Father, because He is the Father of all human spirits and they are created in His image (Genesis 1:27). It is an appropriate term for a God who is kind and just, all wise and all powerful. Mormons believe He has a human-like body but is immortal and perfected. Heavenly Father instituted the “plan of salvation,” which allows individuals to live in His presence and with their families for eternity. In fact, this is His work — to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His sons and daughters.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is central to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which bears His name. Every prayer in the home and every sermon in a chapel closes in the name of Jesus Christ. The emblems of the sacrament (communion) that are taken weekly in worship services are symbols of His atonement. Latter-day Saints wholly accept the New Testament accounts of the birth, life and

ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He, like His Father, has a physical body — the same body that walked out of the tomb after His resurrection, and which He invited His apostles to “handle ... and see” (Luke 24:39).

As the only perfect man who ever lived, Jesus set the example in His life for all to follow. Because humans fall short, Christ’s atoning sacrifice pays the price of sin on condition of individual repentance. His sacrifice also allows all humankind to be resurrected into immortality. He is the Savior, and in a future time will be the Judge.

Holy Ghost

Church members believe the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit, not a physical being. The special mission of the Holy Ghost — sometimes called the Holy Spirit — is to testify of the Father and the Son, to reveal truth, to comfort and to sanctify. He is a divine guide and teacher.

Latter-day Saints believe that the Holy Ghost can inspire and influence righteous people who are receptive to those promptings. In addition, the “gift” of the Holy Ghost is the privilege of enjoying His constant companionship if God’s commandments are followed. It is given after baptism to members of the Church by a priesthood holder who puts his hands on the head of the baptized person and blesses him or her to “receive the Holy Ghost.”

For a more detailed discussion of this topic, please read an address given at the 177th Annual General Conference in October 2007 entitled “The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He Hath Sent” by visiting www.lds.org and clicking on “Gospel Library”.