

## Welcome

Welcome to Summer at Catalyst! This year, we're going on a quest for spiritual transformation. To help us get at that, we're spending our summer with La Familia Madrigal from *Encanto*. The nine magical Madrigals correlate with a tool utilized in Spiritual Direction called the Enneagram.

[Luisa Intro] Today, we're focusing on the second of Mirabel's older sisters, Luisa. Mirabel calls her and her other sister, Isabela, the 'beauty and the brawn'. Luisa is the brawn. She's built like an Amazon and her power is strength. Is the church foundation failing – Luisa will fix it. Your house leaning a bit – Luisa's got you covered. The donkeys escaped their pen – no need to hunt for them – Luisa will find them and carry them home. There is no burden too heavy for Luisa to shoulder and everyone expects her to carry their loads – that's what Luisa does.

She's strong, she's brave, and she's whoever everyone else needs her to be – at least on the outside.

Do you know that person? The strongest, the smartest, the fastest, the “whateverest” person in the room – the one others rely on to get things done and expect to lead the way. Sometimes when you see these people out of whatever context you normally interact with them, you may not even recognize them. They morph into whatever “est” is needed. And while relying on them for their strength or intelligence is super beneficial to those around them, their need to be seen as the best can make them a bit braggy, especially when they are feeling less than successful.

Friends, you may just know an Enneagram Three.

And if you're thinking, “Of course those who can do more should; and even if they can't really do it yet, you fake it 'til you make it” and/or “a little self-promotion never hurt anyone” – you might just be a Three.

Threes are incredible, and they are revered in our do more, be more, accumulate more society. Their drive for success at any cost is what our nation was built on. Their willingness to do whatever it takes to deliver is the stuff that makes a boss' heart sing. If you need to get something done, you want Threes on your team.

But we'll see today what self-aware Three's already know – their need to be seen as successful, to be valuable to those around them can lead them down a path of deception to the point that forget who they truly are and lose sight of their value, instead settling for masks, shortcuts, and half-truths.

So Threes, how can you find freedom to be your true self and enjoy the life God has given you? And how can the rest of us love the Threes in our lives well? Before we go there, let's take some time together to worship the God who loves and values us.

## Message

[Slide: Enneagram] On its surface, the Enneagram looks like a personality profile - like Myers-Briggs or Strengthfinder. In the Enneagram, you identify yourself as one of the numbers 1-9, which then goes on to describe how you interact with the world. Ian Cron, a Spiritual Director, says it like this: “Personality tests tell you who you really are. The Enneagram tells you who you’re really *not*.”

In other words, what the Enneagram helps you identify in yourself is something theologians and mystics call our *shadow self*. Personas we all create to help us cope with the world.

[Slide: Triads] Throughout this series, we’re investigating the type embodied by each member of La Familia Madrigal, allowing them to illustrate for us the various personas. Then we’ll dive into Scripture to see how these personas keep us from being fully who God created us to be.

The end goal is that we come to know our creator better by better knowing God’s creation. Our hope is that by the end of the summer we come together as a spiritual family, closer than ever and a source of healing and hope for our community - just like La Familia Madrigal!

We’re in the shame triad today. We met Julieta, our very healthy Helper who has learned to share her healing gifts with the world without being defined by others’ appreciation or recognition of her generosity. We all need more Julietas in our lives.

[Slide: Luisa] Today let’s spend some time with Luisa, the Three. Luisa the performer. Luisa is the strong, dependable child. Her power provides, builds, and moves whatever the family and village need. But she’s keeping a secret – she’s worried that she’s a fraud, that she’s not as strong as she needs to be or others think she is, and if anyone discovers her secret the whole village will crumble around her like dominoes falling. Mirabel truly sees Luisa and all the weight that has been piled on her shoulders. Mirabel encourages Luisa to rest when she confesses she felt weak when the magic began to falter.

But it’s hard for Luisa to listen. Even when her strength is failing, Luisa answers the call to single handedly move the piano instead of gathering help to get it done. She cannot be seen as weak, even when she longs for rest and relaxation, that would be failure and failure is not an option.

This need to be seen as strong and successful dominates Three’s lives just as it dominated Luisa’s. To fail is to be worthless, and worthlessness is intolerable.

That’s a classic Enneagram Three. In a Three’s view of the world, being seen as successful is what gives them value. If you don’t add value, then you are not worth loving.

The word that rules a three’s life is *success*.

[Average, Unhealthy]

If you, like Luisa, are developing a stressed eye twitch right now, take a deep breath.

It's not all bad. [Healthy]

So here's the deal, Threes: if you want to be healthy, you must recognize that you and every other person are endowed with value simply because God loves you. This value, God's love, cannot be earned and it cannot be lost because of anything that you do. Read this truth with me carefully – “And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” -- Romans 8:38-39

This goes for success and failure, too. No failure and no success can separate us from God's love. You do not earn it through accomplishments, and you do not lose it through failure.

There is a very famous Three in the Bible. For my fellow Threes out there. You're going to see yourself in Jacob.

Long ago, birth order and gender determined the value of a person. That is pretty tough for anyone not born male and first. Our Three had the misfortune of being the second twin born to Isaac and Rebekah. His name was Jacob. Whereas Luisa felt like her worth came from her supernatural gift of strength in Encanto, Jacob's birth order meant he was worthless in the ancient, patriarchal society he lived in. If you weren't firstborn, you had to **earn** your value. Daughters were only as valuable as the men they married and the sons they produced. Yikes!

His father, who controlled everything, loved Esau more. Esau was stronger, larger, hairier, a better hunter. Esau was everything that society valued. But Jacob was smart. He learned to recognize needs and weaknesses in others and exploited them. He knew Esau couldn't resist meeting his own immediate desires, so he traded a bowl of stew for Esau's birthright. (Gasp!)

How could Jacob do that to his own brother? He read the room. He understood what Esau wanted/needed and then met it. Then Jacob tricks his father, Isaac, into giving him Esau's blessing. How could he steal this from his brother? Jacob, like so many unhealthy Three's, can justify almost any deception. Threes are often amazing “spin doctors”. Truth and reality are not fixed, but instead they are simply media to be molded into whatever shape necessary to deliver success. Winning is all that matters.

Of course, deception is unhealthy and dangerous and ultimately fails. For Jacob, it required fleeing his home to avoid Esau's plan to kill him (another unhealthy Three trait – avoid confrontation). Jacob's mom sends him to her brother's home.

On the way there, God gives Jacob a set of promises through a dream. In the dream, God's promises are not dependent on anything Jacob is supposed to achieve. God didn't say – I'll give you this land if you will go become the richest goat herder in history. It's not predicated on accomplishing anything. The promise is not to be earned, but instead it is a gift. Jacob's first step to becoming a healthy Three – accepting God's gift.

God's generous love, unearned, not dependent on any societal rules or notions of success, is good news for everyone and AMAZING news for Threes if we can learn to accept it.

## SONG

God doesn't deliver the gift immediately. There are lessons to be learned before Jacob is ready to receive the gift. These come while Jacob is at his uncle Laban's house. His uncle, Laban, is also an "ends justify the means" kind of guy who is great at manipulating and spinning things to get what he wants. Within this story of Jacob's failure to recognize his uncle's deception, we find some really good news for our Threes: you can learn to be patient and to do things the right way instead of justifying short cuts.

Learning not to avoid conflict took Jacob a little longer. When he realized (because God told him) Laban would never let him go willingly, he took his household and fled in the night. He had nowhere to go but back... to his brother. More good news, Threes! Esau met Jacob with open arms despite their tumultuous history. Learning to accept that others love you as you are, even when they know what you have been and what you have done, is an especially hard lesson for Threes. Jacob didn't do anything to win his brother's favor or forgiveness. The gift of unconditional acceptance is one of the greatest gifts you can give a Three.

Mirabel showed Luisa this unconditional love and acceptance by hugging her (and allowing Luisa to hug her back) after Luisa confessed she felt weak. Mirabel doesn't yell – "why didn't you stand up for me?!?" She doesn't accuse Luisa of acting like a coward. She just hugs her.

Threes, trying to earn acceptance (or salvation) through accomplishment is futile:

God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done so none of us can boast about it." -- Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

You didn't earn it. You can't earn it. It's a gift. And guess what?!? Your drive, determination, ability to see what is needed and deliver it – God knows you bring all of that to the table and can't wait for you to accept the love and salvation freely given so you are free to utilize those gifts to deliver on the great work God planned for you to accomplish from the beginning! That's the follow on to these verses in "Vanessa speak".

*Love and acceptance are already yours.* Not because of what *you* have accomplished but because God has given them to you just because God is God!

And that's good news because if you can relax a little and stop trying to be and do what pleases others and instead listen to God's promises and focus on your own feelings and desires, you can discover the joy and satisfaction that are missing from a life hidden behind masks.

Luisa sings of this desire –

"But wait, if I could shake the crushing weight of expectations  
Would that free some room up for joy  
Or relaxation, or simple pleasure?"

Threes, what would happen if you were honest with yourself and others when the load is too heavy and things keep piling on? Maybe you could have time to feel your own feels and pursue your own dreams. Yes, some things might fall, but maybe they need to.

Can I be honest for a minute – I was angry with the townspeople in Encanto and how they dealt with Luisa. Really, do you need Luisa to go gather up all the donkeys? How about you just fix the fences and hunt the donkeys down yourself? If you know a Three, be careful about overloading them. Most of the time they will not push back.

And Threes, we need to learn to say “No” sometimes and let things fail. I know it is painful and awful and terrible and gut wrenching and anxiety inducing to think of LETTING something fall apart. But, if we don’t, others won’t step into the work God called them to do as well.

The villagers only began taking responsibility for themselves when the magic failed. Failure often leads to the biggest breakthroughs.

Another key to being a healthier Three, learning to be still. It’s hard to hear God or your own thoughts and desires if you don’t take time just to be. That might be journaling or meditating, but it definitely means taking some alone time. And please resist the temptation to add these to your daily “to-do” list so you can feel like you accomplished something when you “check the box” for doing this.

So how do Three’s help the Church and as a church, how can we better love our Threes?

First off, don’t worry, Threes, you don’t have to pick up the building and put it on a new foundation like Luisa (picture of Luisa lifting the church). As a healthy three, you bring a drive to get things done others often find encouraging and inspiring. When all looks lost, you can find a path to hope and that often leads to accomplishing whatever good work God has placed in front of us. Your ability to see what people truly need can help groups focus on what matters most so limited resources are put to the best use possible. Also, your ability to multitask and find efficiencies are skill sets every group needs.

To love our threes better, we need to remind them to take some down time. We also need to give them space to be authentically themselves. This may shock you a bit when a Three trusts you enough to lower whatever mask(s) they typically don in your presence. Let them cry, be tired, be scared, be funny, be serious, be a nerd, be whoever they truly are and then help them be the best version of themselves by loving them as they are.

Can you imagine letting go of your need to be what you think others want and trust that God knows you and loves you as you really are? Then imagine all you can accomplish, all that God has created you to accomplish, when you drop the disguises and just rest in being who God created you to be – you!.

## Communion + Examen

You don't have to be or do anything but yourself. God gave you a spot here. This is a table that welcomes you as you are.

When in the last week have I pretended to be OK when I wasn't?

When in the last week have I prioritized success over honesty or others?

When in the upcoming week might I be tempted to hide who I really am?

How can I let go of my need to achieve and take time to listen to the Holy Spirit this week?

## Assignment + Blessing

Threes: this week, find someone you trust and be honest with them about how you really feel when they really ask.

Threes, when the need to accomplish something and the need to be present for someone conflict, make the conscious decision to be present in that moment.

For those of us who love Threes, it can be easy to overlook the masks they wear/hide behind. Take some time this week to be trustworthy and accepting of your Three so they can just be themselves and feel their own feelings.

Threes want your approval and praise, and they really like it when you verbalize. Beware – they can smell insincerity a mile away. Flattery and praise are not the same thing.