

YEAR 4 - LESSON 5 - CATECHIST GUIDE WK. 1



FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

A FAMILY-FOCUSED APPROACH TO FAITH FORMATION

GOD'S SAVING LOVE FOR US: LITURGY AND THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

TOPIC: THE SACRAMENTS OF HEALING: PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Sacred Scripture

PS 79:9; MK 2:5, LK
7:48-50; MT 16:19,
18:18, JN 20:22-23

REFERENCES:

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
nos. 983 & 1422

CREED

nos.

430-33,
457, 545,
551-53,
599-623,
654,
733-34,
976-87

LITURGY

nos.

1127-29,
1420-98

LIFE

nos.

1846-76,
1949-
2029

PRAYER

nos.

2631,
2838-45

Goals: Families will...

- learn about: Sacraments of Healing, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Actual Sin, Venial Sin and Mortal Sin.
- reflect on the mercy of Jesus in Sacred Scripture.
- pray Lectio Divina &/or Visio Divina, meditating on the Parable of the Prodigal Son.
- begin to prepare for the Epiphany Blessing during Week 2.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,
We entrust our family to You and ask for
Your blessing and protection. We love You
Lord Jesus with all our hearts and we ask
that You help our family become more like
the Holy Family. Help us to be kind, loving,
and patient with one another. Give us all the
grace we need to become saints and Your
faithful disciples.

Amen.



ICE BREAKER

HOT POTATO

What You'll Need: An unbreakable item, such as a potato, bean bag, or small ball, and device to play music.

How to Play:

1. Families sit in a circle. You may need to combine families so there are a minimum of 4 players in each group.
2. Start the music, and while the music plays, toss the hot potato from player to player around the circle as quickly as possible.
3. Once the music stops playing, the person holding the item must say a fun, quirky, or unique fact about themselves.
4. Then begin the music again until everyone has had a chance to have a turn.

Adapted from www.connectusfund.org



MATERIALS

- Bibles
- Blessed chalk & Holy Water (supplied by parish to be used during Week 2)
- Prodigal Son coloring pages to be used any time during session ([Option 1](#), [Option 2](#)), Crayons or colored pencils
- Hot Potato Ice Breaker: an unbreakable item, such as a potato, bean bag, or small ball, and a device to play music



BACKGROUND RESOURCES FOR CATECHISTS

Optional Video on [The Authority Given By The Lord: In Persona Christi](#). 1:27 min. See also CCC, nos. 981-83, on the power of the keys and CCC, nos. 1461-67, on the minister of the sacrament.

The Good News: The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is inseparable from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, this sacrament is part of the Good News! It can be challenging to live this out at times for many reasons—whether because of guilt, shame, fear, lack of knowledge—but catechists and parents have a great opportunity to model and hand on this truth, namely, that Jesus “has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members” (CCC, no. 1421). Jesus continues his healing and saving work in the Sacrament of Confession—what a gift! The more we take advantage of it, the more we can be configured to the Lord and His great mercy and encourage others to seek the Lord’s mercy.

Essential Elements: There are two essential elements in the Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation—the acts of the penitent (contrition, confession, and satisfaction or penance) and the act of God through the Church’s minister (bishop or priest) granting absolution. More information can be found in CCC, nos. 1446-67. While each element is important, more attention to the aspect of contrition, as well as the help of a daily examination of conscience for a perfecting of contrition and love of God and neighbor, can help us approach this sacrament anew with greater trust and love.

Eucharist & Confession Go Together: A vibrant, Eucharistic life of discipleship necessarily includes regular participation in the Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation. We are in constant need of the Lord’s mercy and grace, and the Lord loves us and knows what we need. CCC, no. 1457, explains the basic precept of the Church concerning the confession of serious sins at least once a year and how we need to confess mortal sins before receiving the Eucharist, but it is important also to encourage regular and more frequent participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (see CCC, no. 1458).

The Power of Reconciliation: “The whole power of the sacrament of Penance consists in restoring us to God’s grace and joining us with him in an intimate friendship” (CCC, no. 1468, quoting the Roman Catechism). The sacrament reconciles us both with God and with the Church; in addition, as we place ourselves before God’s merciful judgment, we anticipate and prepare for our own judgment at the end of our life (CCC, nos. 1468-70). May we choose, by God’s grace, the road of ongoing conversion in this life so that we might enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

TEACH

1. Hook/Question

Kids Explain the Sacrament of Reconciliation (1min)



2. Introduce Topic

Today, we will focus on the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



3. CONTENT

Ask: So far this year, we have learned about the three Sacraments of Initiation. What are those three sacraments called?

Answer: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist.

Explain: These are the Sacraments that bring us into the family of God, give us the grace to live the life of the Church and deepen our relationship with God!

Ask: Which of these three Sacraments of Initiation cleanses us of the Original Sin that we inherited from our first parents, Adam and Eve?

Answer: Baptism

Ask: After we are baptized, and our souls are washed clean of the stain of Original Sin, do people still sin?

Answer: Yes

Explain: God knew that even after our baptism, we would all still sin. Romans 3:23 says, “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”, and First John 1:8 adds, “If any man says he has no sin he is a liar and the truth is not in him.”

Sin hurts our relationship with God and some sins actually separate us from God. God knew that we would sin, but He still loves us and wants to be as close as He can be to us. The Good News is that, for that reason (i.e., loving us while we were sinners), God the Father sent His Son Jesus to save us from our sins! Jesus’ sacrifice of dying for our sins is the source from where the grace of all the sacraments come. In fact, the Sacraments of Healing, following Baptism, cleanse and heal us of our sins, fill us with God’s grace again and bring us back into a loving, intimate relationship with Him. This makes God happy and it makes us happy too!

There are two Sacraments of Healing. These two sacraments have various names. The first is called the Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation, or Confession, and the second is called the Anointing of the Sick. These two sacraments cleanse and heal us from the sin that we have chosen to commit, which is called actual sin.

Today, we will focus on the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but first we need to talk about “actual sin.”

Ask: What is actual sin?

Answer: Things that we do in which we deliberately are choosing to say “No” to God. Actual sin is a free choice that we make, when we say “No” to God’s commandments, God’s will, and say “Yes” to being selfish and unloving. When we commit sin, we disobey God and turn ourselves away from Him.

Watch:

Mortal Sin vs. Venial Sin (3:56 min)



Or

Mortal vs. Venial Sin (6:30)



Explain: There are two types of actual sin. The first is venial. Venial sins are lesser offenses that injure, but do not destroy, God’s love (charity) in our hearts.

The second type of sin is mortal. There are three conditions that make up a mortal sin: It must be a sin which is serious or grave (see the Ten Commandments), done with full knowledge and deliberate consent (freely and purposely chosen). Choosing to commit a mortal sin is much more serious, because it actually separates us from God’s grace, with the consequence that His love and grace no longer reside in our souls (we are no longer in a state of grace). We need a new act of God’s mercy to be restored in His love. In fact, if a person commits a mortal sin and chooses not to go to the Sacrament of Confession, they can be eternally separated from God if they die without repentance.

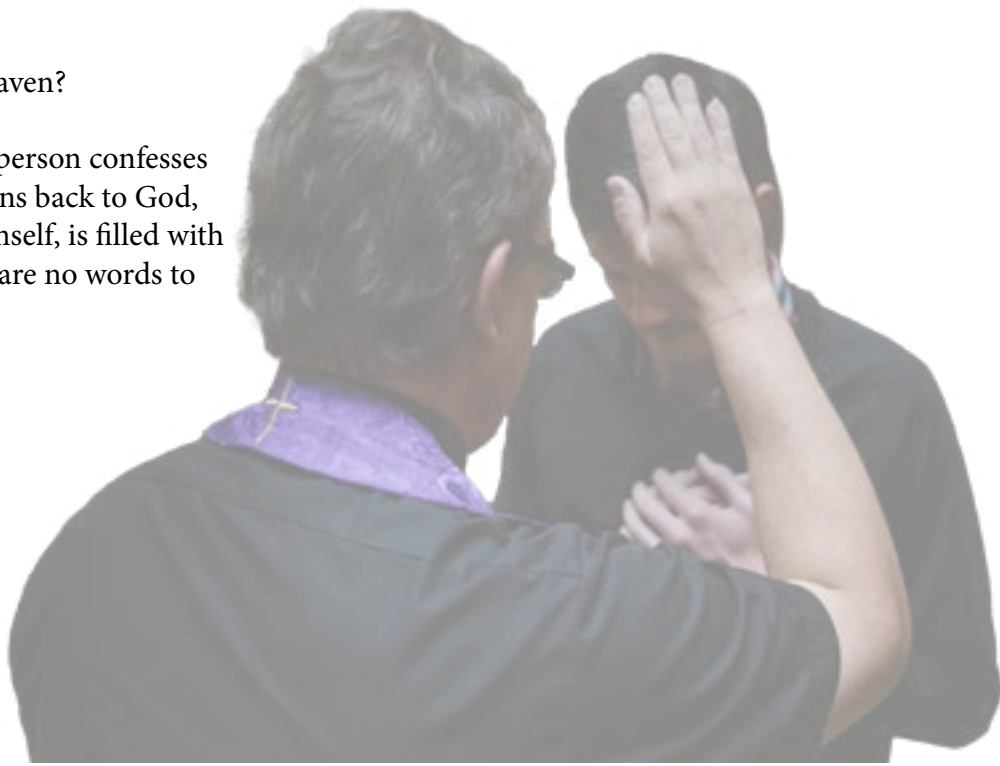
Jesus did not want that to happen to anyone. He shared a lot of stories about His Father’s mercy and forgiveness because, as He said, He came to call sinners back to God our Father.

I am going to read Jesus’ words about His Father’s mercy. Listen for how Heaven feels when we turn back to God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Read: [Luke 15:1-10](#)

Ask: What did Jesus say happens in Heaven?

Answer: Jesus said that when even one person confesses his/her sins, says he/she is sorry and turns back to God, everyone in Heaven, including God Himself, is filled with so much joy, it is overflowing and there are no words to describe it!



LECTIO OR VISIO DIVINA

Ask all the family members to find a comfortable place to sit together as a small group.

Explain: One of the stories that Jesus told to show us the love and mercy of God was The Prodigal Son. I am going to ask you to quietly relax as I say a prayer and then continue to read the story of the Prodigal Son to you from the Sacred Scripture. When I have finished reading, we will sit in silence for a minute and think about what God is saying to us through this story.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, as we read and think about the story of Your life, we ask the Holy Spirit to come and speak to the hearts of all here, from the oldest to the youngest.

Calmly Read [Luke 15:11-32](#) or Watch: [The Prodigal Son – Catholic Kids Media](#) (3:47)

(As time allows, consider reading a second time, slowly or if you first watched the video, follow up with reading the story.) Wait at least 30 seconds in silence.

Explain: Now I am inviting each member of your family to share privately (within your family) about what stood out to him/her.

Share Guidelines:

- a. Respectfully listening to each family member as he/she is sharing his/her reflection is very important.
- b. Avoid interrupting or even correcting what another is saying (we're looking to listen, not critique).
- c. When each family member has had an opportunity to share, please wait quietly for the other families to finish to while we wait for the other families to finish. Give families time to share privately.

Watch: [How do I go to Confession?](#) (4:28 min)

MISSION

1

First, Introduce Mission Activity

Mission Activities are to be done at home during Week 2 and to be shared at the gathering of families on Week 3.

2

Second, Explain Activity

- i. Watch the videos about the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- ii. Then, together as a family, mark the mantle of your front door with chalk (blessed, if possible) and pray the Family Epiphany Blessing. Be ready to share your Family Epiphany Blessing experience, as well as your front door mantle (take a picture) at Week 3's gathering of families. (Family Mission Activities adapted from Catholic Digest.)
- iii. Go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation or make intentional plans to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a family. (Provide dates and times when the sacrament is available at your parish.)

3

Last, model for families!

- i. Show families how you marked your own front door mantle with chalk. (Use a picture or video as necessary.)
- ii. Share with the families your own experience of meeting Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and how, through it, God's grace brings joy and peace to you and your family.

REVIEW & CLOSE IN PRAYER

A Litany of Forgiveness

Adpated from [RCL Benzinger](#)

Leader: Blessed are You, Lord our God. We come before You to ask Your forgiveness for all of our failings both great and small. Generous God, You give us so many gifts in life, yet sometimes we forget to share them.

And so we say...

All: We are sorry.

Leader: Faithful God, You are with us in one another, yet we sometimes refuse to recognize You.

And so we say...

All: We are sorry.

Leader: God of gentleness, You ask us to bring peace to our family and to the world, yet sometimes we spread anger and trouble.

And so we say...

All: We are sorry.

Leader: Gracious God, You give us a voice with which to sing, and words to speak, and yet sometimes our words are hurtful or untrue. And so we say...

All: We are sorry.

Leader: Loving God, You sent your only Son to show us how to love and serve one another, and yet we sometimes are selfish and unloving.

And so we say...

All: We are sorry.

Leader: Merciful God, help us to ask forgiveness when we need to. Help us to forgive others who have wronged us. Let us be peacemakers in our school, our work, our church, wherever we go, and especially in our family. We thank You for the gift of Your forgiveness and love.

All: Amen.

SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 983:

Catechesis strives to awaken and nourish in the faithful faith in the incomparable greatness of the risen Christ's gift to his Church: the mission and the power to forgive sins through the ministry of the apostles and their successors:

The Lord wills that his disciples possess a tremendous power: that his lowly servants accomplish in his name all that he did when he was on earth.

Priests have received from God a power that he has given neither to angels nor to archangels God above confirms what priests do here below.

Were there no forgiveness of sins in the Church, there would be no hope of life to come or eternal liberation. Let us thank God who has given his Church such a gift.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera* (2016), nos. 2 & 5:

Forgiveness is the most visible sign of the Father's love, which Jesus sought to reveal by his entire life. Every page of the Gospel is marked by this imperative of a love that loves to the point of forgiveness. Even at the last moment of his earthly life, as he was being nailed to the cross, Jesus spoke words of forgiveness: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34). . . .

In the sacramental life, mercy is granted us in abundance. It is not without significance that the Church mentions mercy explicitly in the formulae of the two "sacraments of healing," namely, the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. In the first, the formula of absolution reads: "God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace."