

Session Plan, Reconciliation Session 6

September 24 2018

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Preparation

Session Planning

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Catechist Background

Session Outcomes

Informing the Mind

- Understand that, in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, we are offered absolution—forgiveness of our sins
- Learn that when we forgive others, we are following Jesus' example

- Recognize that, as members of the Body of Christ, we are called to show mercy, compassion, and kindness to others

Forming the Heart

- Deepen our awareness of God's willingness to forgive all of our offenses
- Appreciate that Jesus grants us pardon and peace and sends us to be peacemakers in his Kingdom
- Discover the importance of the words and gestures in the Prayer of Absolution

Church Documents

- *Rite of Penance* 8-10, 19
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 787-794, 1461-1470, 2156-2157

We Are Forgiven and We Forgive

"For in God's design the humanity and loving kindness of our Savior have visibly appeared to us¹⁹ and so God uses visible signs to give salvation and to renew the broken covenant.

"In the sacrament of penance the Father receives the repentant children who come back to him, Christ places the lost sheep on his shoulders and brings them back to the sheepfold, and the Holy Spirit resanctifies those who are the temple of God or dwells more fully in them."

Rite of Penance, 6

When we celebrate the *Rite of Penance*, we are embraced by forgiveness—the forgiveness of God and the forgiveness of the Church, the Body of Christ.

For Christians, the sins that we commit are never merely private. The Church has as her mission the redemption of all humanity, inviting every person into the new creation in which love alone is victorious. Yet, our sins inflict upon the world wounds that set up obstacles to this new creation.

When we sin, we wound Christ's very Body on Earth, the Church. We set up an obstacle to the gift of divine love itself. But when the Church absolves us of our sins, we are reconciled to the love of God and neighbor.

And just as at the end of Mass we are sent forth to bring Christ's Eucharistic presence to the world, we are commissioned at the conclusion of the *Rite of Penance* to serve as signs of reconciliation for the world. In this world, we are meant to proclaim the Good News that sin has been conquered through the love of God. We are to invite others into the hospital of the Church, promising them that they will meet there not with self-concern or self-interest, but with the healing medicine of the self-emptying love of Jesus.

The Church absolves us of our sins so that we can serve as agents of peace and reconciliation to those in need. And so, we must continue to return to these healing Rites of the Church to help form us in self-giving love.

Reflect How can you be a sign of reconciliation to the world? How does participating in this Sacrament prepare you to be a peacemaker?

Risen Lord, please help me teach these children to be a sign of your peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation to others. Amen.

Adaptive Learning & Special Needs

Signs of Community (p. 60)

Children with intellectual/developmental delays (such as autism) might have some difficulty with the questions asked on this page. Try phrasing them in more concrete ways. For example, you could ask, “How is the Church like a family? How do we show kindness and love to each other?” You may also wish to ask these children to tell you what they see happening in each picture. Then state, “This is how we show love to each other in the Church.”

Be Forgiven and Forgive (p.63)

Because this activity already provides the options to either tell or act out ways to offer forgiveness, it accommodates for some special learning needs. However, **children with reading difficulties (such as dyslexia)** may need help with reading the situations described on this page. As you read each situation, point to the one you are reading and instruct the children to listen carefully before placing a checkmark beside the situation they would like to chose.

Steps for Celebrating Reconciliation (p. 66)

Children with intellectual/developmental delays (such as autism) would benefit from a visual presentation of the steps listed in the Child Book. Find photos of each step described, or see if your priest would be willing to role play each step with a catechist and be photographed. Put the photos on separate pieces of paper, and write the correct step beneath each image. Then, read each of the steps as the children look at the corresponding pictures. Ask the children to put the steps in the correct order. **Children with reading difficulties (such as dyslexia)** may need help reading each step so that they are able to number the steps correctly.

Welcome and Gather

Before the session begins gather construction paper, crayons, colored pencils, or markers, and any other craft supplies you’d like to include so that the children can make thank you cards for the priests who will help them celebrate their First Reconciliation. Lay these items out on the tables where the children will be sitting and write some examples of appropriate ways to say “thank you” on the board or on chart paper.

As the children arrive, explain what they’ll be doing and invite them to get started on making their thank you cards. Allow the children the time needed to complete their cards.

Say: *Keep these cards and remember to bring them to the priest who helps celebrate this special Sacrament with you for the first time.*

Opening Prayer Option

Before you begin the opening prayer, pray or sing as a group the “Sign of the Cross” (tracks 1–3) from the [Our Family Prayer Collection CD](#). Most of the children will likely be familiar with the Sign of the Cross, but may not know it is actually a prayer. You may want to have them turn to page 82 in the Child Book to review the words for this prayer. Afterward, follow the Catechist Guide instruction for the opening prayer on page 59.

File: Rec_S6_Prep_Opening_Sign_Cross.mp3

Invite

Catechist Guide Instruction

Invite

♡ Let Us Pray

Practice the response with the children. Read aloud the leader's part. Prompt the children to join in with the response.

Introduce the session.

- *Say:* Today is a joyful day. We will learn about the way God forgives us in the Sacrament and how he wants us to be forgiving of others. Now let's prepare ourselves to hear the Word of God.

God's Word

Guide the children through the process of scripture reflection.

- Invite the children to close their eyes, be still, and be ready to hear what God is saying to them.
- Maintain several moments of silence.
- Read aloud the Scripture.
- *Ask:* What did you hear God say to you today?
- Invite volunteers to share.

► **Opening Video 6** Have the children watch a short video at sacraments.osv.com.

Note If you do not use the video, say the following to transition to the next page: We know that God loves us and is always ready to forgive us. Let's talk about how God's forgiving love heals us and helps us build relationships with him and with others.

Adaptive Learning & Special Needs

Intellectual/Developmental Delays Help **children with autism or other intellectual/developmental delays** with the activity on page 67 by showing them some examples of ways in which children can fulfill the Works of Mercy. Find pictures that depict children doing Works of Mercy. Ask the children what they see in each picture; then guide them to identify which Works are being performed (see page 78). Have them choose two Works of Mercy they could do for others. Ask who they would do them for. Assist the children in writing Works on the boxes and filling in the To and From tags.

🌱 Session activity adaptations to meet various learning needs can be found at sacraments.osv.com.

Signs of Community

Begin the lesson by having the children talk about some of the communities to which they belong.

Summarize the first paragraph.

- Emphasize the last sentence.

Read aloud the second paragraph.

- *Ask: What connects us to our faith community? Possible responses: friendship and involvement, God the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and the Sacraments*
- Answer any questions the children may have.

★ **Disciples Sharing** As a group, discuss love in the Church community.

- Invite volunteers to choose one of the pictures from the tablet shown in their books.
- Have them describe how that picture shows the Church as a community.
- Give the other children a chance to share. Then move on to the next picture.
- *Ask: How is the Church a sign of God's love? The Church is a sign of God's love because it is made up of God's family, which we are a part of. The Church guides and cares for us and helps us share God's love with others.*

Optional Activity

Community Wristbands Explain that wristbands are sometimes worn to show that someone is part of a community. Have the children create wristbands of their own to show that they are members of the Church community and part of the Body of Christ.

- Purchase wristbands through an Internet retailer or at a party supply store. Select a color that will show the children's designs.
- Distribute wristbands and markers.
- Brainstorm some ideas for symbols and words that the children might use. Then have the children decorate their wristbands.
- If time and supplies allow, consider having the children make wristbands for their family members too.

Session Video

View Video: http://sacraments.osv.com/reconciliation/view_video/33656

Discover

Catechist Guide Instruction

Discover

Signs & Symbols

Invite the children to pay attention as you make the Sign of the Cross.

- *Ask: What did I just do? made the Sign of the Cross*
- Summarize the first paragraph content as you discuss this prayer.

Read aloud the second paragraph.

- *Ask: When are some times that we make the Sign of the Cross? at the beginning of Mass, when we pray Have you ever seen the Sign of the Cross being made outside of church or family prayer time? Possible responses: baseball players before batting, some people before they fly Why do you think they do that? Possible response: to ask for God's help*

- Say: The priest will bless you with the Sign of the Cross as you complete your First Penance.

Read aloud the third paragraph.

- Practice making the Sign of the Cross as a group, using the four pictures on this page as a guide.

Meet Jesus

Read aloud the text. Reiterate that after Jesus' Death and Resurrection, he sent the Holy Spirit to make us the Body of Christ.

- Say: The Church is called the "Body of Christ" because God's Holy Spirit lives within us and guides us to live out Christ's mission in the world.
- If time allows, send the children to the Meet Jesus feature at the back of the book to review all of the titles for Jesus they've learned.

Restored Order Connection

Filled with the Spirit During the Sacrament of Confirmation, the bishop extends his hands over those who will receive the Sacrament and prays:

"Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who brought these your servants to new birth
by water and the Holy Spirit,
freeing them from sin:
send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;
give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and fortitude,
the spirit of knowledge and piety;
fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (*Rite of Confirmation*, 25).

Have the children place a Holy Spirit sticker next to a place where they learned about the Spirit in this session.

Sacraments and the Body of Christ

Link the discussion of the Body of Christ with the Sacraments by reminding the children that Jesus is present in the Sacraments.

Read aloud the two paragraphs.

Ask: Why does Jesus want to teach us how to live? Possible responses: because he wants us to be all we were made to be, because he wants us to love one another

God's Word

Proclaim the Scripture aloud.

- Ask: Where does Jesus say that he will be? *where two or three are gathered in his name* Does that mean that Jesus is with us now? Does that mean that Jesus is with your family when you gather in prayer? *yes to both* How does that make you feel? *Accept reasonable responses.*
- Explain that when Jesus tells Peter that we should forgive others "seventy-seven times," this means as many times as necessary.

Remind the children that we are all part of the Body of Christ, so we share the consequences of other people's bad choices. We also rejoice with everyone when people repair relationships that have been broken by sin.

Optional Activity

Songs of Scripture Music CD Use the song "How Many Times, Lord?" (track 13) from *Songs of Scripture*, Grades 1-3, for this lesson.

- Play the song once.
- Give the children written copies of the lyrics to read as they listen.
- Have them draw pictures that convey a thought from the song, such as Peter asking Jesus a question.
- Play the song again, and have the children hold up their artwork at the appropriate point in the song.

Be Forgiven and Forgive

Invite a child to read aloud the first paragraph. Discuss why Jesus' response was so surprising.

Read aloud the second paragraph.

- Tell the children to stand in pairs and shake hands as a sign of forgiveness. Then repeat this six more times. Ask if they should shake hands seventy more times.

Read aloud the third paragraph.

- Say: When we choose to forgive, we allow our love for someone to be stronger than our own bitterness, anger, and pride.

★ Assign each of the six situations to different groups. After they've had time to work together, have each group share their response.

Entering the Mystery

Read aloud the scripture quotation.

- Ask: What does this mean? *You should not keep track of things others have done wrong or think about their sins all the time.*

Continue reading the paragraph.

- Ask: If God forgives our sins, what should we do about wrong actions done to us? *let go and forgive*
- Emphasize to the children that forgiveness does not mean staying quiet when they have been hurt, or accepting the behavior that hurt them. Ensure that they know to talk with people they know and trust to help them and keep them safe.

Optional Activity

How Many Times? Help the children differentiate between seven and seventy-seven.

- Provide each child with a cup full of dried beans and two plastic sandwich bags.
- Have the children count out seven beans and place them into one of the bags. Next, have them count out and place seventy-seven beans into the other bag.

- Invite the children to compare the volume of the bags.
- *Ask:* Is seventy-seven a lot more than seven?

God Forgives Us

Recall that contrition is the feeling of sorrow that we have after we sin.

Read aloud the first paragraph to review the steps of confession and penance.

- *Say:* This is the celebration that opens our hearts to God’s forgiveness and repairs our relationship with him.
- Point out that God responds to our sorrowful confession by welcoming us back into a relationship with him. That is what absolution is about.

Read aloud the second paragraph.

Instruct the children to listen as you read the Prayer of Absolution across the bottom of this page and the next. You can also send the children to page 72 or 75 for the complete version of this prayer.

- Read the prayer in its entirety without stopping; then return to the first line from the prayer.
- *Ask:* What does this picture show? *the father who forgave his son* How is that father like God? *God forgives us, just like the Prodigal Son’s father.* Why does the prayer call God “the Father of mercies”? *God forgives us, so he is “the Father of mercies.”*

Point out the second picture.

- *Ask:* How does this picture connect to the words beneath it? *It is a picture of Jesus on the Cross when he died to make us closer to God.*

Have a volunteer read aloud the third line of the prayer on page 64.

- Briefly retell the Pentecost story, explaining that the Holy Spirit appeared as tongues of fire.
- *Ask:* How does the Holy Spirit help us reconcile relationships? *Possible response: The Holy Spirit helps us know when we have sinned and helps us want to do better in the future.*

Call attention to the picture of the priest and child talking.

- Read aloud the line that goes with the picture.
- *Ask:* Why does this picture illustrate “the ministry of the Church”? *because the priest leads our parish, ministers to us, and helps us receive God’s forgiveness*

Point out the image of the priest giving absolution and read aloud the last line of the prayer.

- *Ask:* What is happening in the photo? *The priest is giving absolution, a sign of God’s forgiveness.* What does this line of the prayer mean? *We are pardoned from our sins.*

Finish reading the text. Emphasize the joyful aspect of absolution and help the children learn the response: “His mercy endures for ever.”

★ **Disciples Sharing** Read the questions and discuss as a group.

- *Say:* God’s forgiveness is a gift that should bring us much joy.

Optional Activity

Songs of Scripture Music CD Play “You’ve Got to Love Them” (track 7) from *Songs of Scripture*, Grades 1–3.

- Display the song’s words: “Forgiveness is a gift that you offer someone. It’s a choice you make to let love overcome all your hurt and all your pride. It helps you let go of bitterness inside.”
- *Ask:* When you give someone the gift of forgiveness, how is that a gift to yourself? *Accept reasonable responses.*
- Use the *Songs of Scripture* DVD to learn the actions that go with the song. Then have the children visit another grade-level group and perform the song with its actions.

Catechist Background

Absolution In the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, the priest, through the power of his ordination, speaks the words of absolution. Immediately after naming God the Father as the source of all forgiveness, the prayer proclaims the core truth of our faith—that forgiveness of sin has been accomplished through the Death and Resurrection of his Son. After each Person of the Trinity is named, the prayer turns to the role of the Church. “[T]hrough the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins ...” (*Rite of Penance*, 46).

Steps for Celebrating Reconciliation

Read aloud the first paragraph. Emphasize the joyful aspect of the Sacrament: it helps us feel cleansed of sins and closer to God.

- *Ask:* Why do we need to celebrate this Sacrament on a regular basis? *Possible responses:* because people are weak and sin again; because it brings us closer to God; because it helps us resist temptation

Tell the children how to find out about Reconciliation opportunities in your parish. Show them listings from your parish bulletin, website, or newsletter.

✪ If the children will be celebrating the Sacrament with several penitents, go to page 70 to review this celebration. If they will be celebrating the Sacrament individually, review that celebration on page 73.

★ Have the children work in groups to determine the correct order for the steps of the Sacrament. Afterward, discuss the correct answers as a large group.

Content Extension

Works of Mercy We are asked to live the Corporal Works of Mercy and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Refer to page 78 for a list of them. Help the children understand that performing these Works of Mercy not only helps the recipient see God’s action in the world, but it also helps the person who performs the actions grow to be more like Jesus.

If time allows, research some of the ways the Church performs Works of Mercy around the world. Share with the children some of the photos and information that you are able to find.

Music Option: "How Many Times, Lord?"

Play “How Many Times, Lord?” (track 13) from the [Songs of Scripture, Grades 1–3 CD](#). Follow the

instruction in the Optional Activity box on page 62 of the Catechist Guide.

HOW MANY TIMES, LORD?

Adapted from Matthew 18:21-22

Verse 1

Peter the Apostle asked Jesus one day,
“If someone does me wrong,
How many times should I say
That I forgive you, that it’s OK?
Is seven enough, Lord? Please tell me today.”

Chorus

**I say to you, Peter, not seven times,
But seven times seven I ask of you.
Even when you are sad and you’ve been hurt,
Forgiving always is the right thing to do.
Forgiving always is the right thing to do.**

Verse 2

Forgiveness isn’t easy to offer someone
If they are unkind
You think something should be done
To get even in return.
If I don’t hold a grudge,
how will they learn?

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Music: John Burland

Words: Jo Ann Paradise and John Burland

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You may also want to play additional songs or prayers from the [Our Family Prayer Collection CD](#) by John Burland.

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Music Option: "You’ve Got to Love Them"

Play “You’ve Got to Love Them” (track 7) from the [Songs of Scripture, Grades 1-3 CD](#). Follow the instruction in the Optional Activity box on page 64 of the Catechist Guide.

YOU’VE GOT TO LOVE THEM

Based on Matthew 5:44-45

Verse 1

When friends are mean and I feel sad,
When some people act really bad,
Jesus tells me what to do and what to say.

I listen to his words and in my heart I pray.

Chorus

**You've got to love them, love them.
Even your enemies, love them.
You've got to love them, love them.
Even your enemies, love them.**

Verse 2

When friends are kind and good to us,
It's easy to be generous.
But I need the Holy Spirit to be
Like Jesus, and love all those who are mean.

Verse 3

Forgiveness is a gift that you offer someone.
It's a choice you make to let love overcome
All your hurt and all your pride.
It helps you let go of bitterness inside.

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You may also want to play additional songs or prayers from the [Our Family Prayer Collection CD](#) by John Burland.

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Additional Activity: Steps of the Sacrament

Before the session begins, print copies of the Steps in the Sacrament crossword puzzle handout (one per child). This handout can be downloaded from the [Games section](#) of this website ([click here](#) to download the answer key). After you've completed the Catechist Guide instruction for page 66 in the Child Book, reinforce the steps in the Sacrament that the children just learned by having them complete the crossword puzzle. They can work individually or with a partner. Review each of the answers as a group.

Say: *At the end of the Sacrament of Penance, we rejoice because we have received God's forgiveness, and because our relationship with God and the Body of Christ, all of the members of the Church, is restored!*

Additional Activity

Print copies of the Word Scramble activity for this session in advance. This page can be downloaded from the [Games section](#) of this website ([click here](#) to download the answer key). Pass out one page per child after you have completed the Catechist Edition instruction on page 25. Have the children

work individually to unscramble words related to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. After all of the children have finished unscrambling the words, go over the correct answers as a group.

Ask: *What is the most important word on this page? (forgiveness)*

Say: *God will always forgive us if we are truly sorry for our sins and if we promise to try to act with love toward our neighbors in the future.*

Then continue to page 26 in the Catechist Guide.

Live

Catechist Guide Instruction

Live

Sent in Christ's Peace

Say: The Church rejoices when we celebrate the Sacrament of Penance because the Church is stronger when its members are stronger.

Read aloud the text.

- *Ask:* How does your participation in Reconciliation help the rest of the world? *Possible response:* You have received the gift of peace from God, so you want to share God's peace with others.
- Point out that we help others by praying for them and through helpful, concrete actions.

★ Help the children with the activity and have volunteers share their ideas.

* If books go home, remind the children to complete page 68 and bring their books back. Distribute copies of the Session 6 **Family + Faith Pages**.

♡ Closing Ritual Prayer

Gather the group in a circle around a table that has a candle and Bible placed on it.

Lead the group in the Sign of the Cross.

Catechist: Jesus, our Lord, thank you for your gift of forgiveness. We trust in your mercy and love.

Reader: "The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. [Jesus] said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you'" (*John 20:20-21*).

Catechist: Gather in a circle. We know that God gives us pardon and peace through the Sacrament of Penance. Jesus asks us to share his peace through our just words and actions and gives us his Holy Spirit to strengthen us for this work. To remember this, turn around, keeping the circle but facing outward. One by one, we will extend our right hand across our body and say, "pardon." Then we will extend our left arm and join hands with the person next to us saying, "peace." We are to be peacemakers: to forgive others; to act with love toward those who have harmed us; to pray and work so that all families have what they need.

All: May the Father bless us, may the Son help us, and may the Holy Spirit guide us to bring peace to all. Amen.

Game Option Instruction

Before you have the children complete the activity on page 67 in the Child Book, have them play the Works of Mercy Matching Game in the [Games section](#) at **sacraments.osv.com**. This game will help them to learn more about how we can live the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.

The children can play this game individually or in groups. If you decide to play the game as one large group, ensure that each child has a turn to match an action to a Corporal or Spiritual Work of Mercy. Then continue with the Catechist Guide instructions for the Child Book activity on page 67.

Additional Activity

After volunteers share some of their responses to the activity on page 67 in the Child Book, tell the children that you are going to do a Work of Mercy together.

Invite the children to help choose a Work of Mercy they would like to do. Try to identify an idea that you can easily do with your group and involve all of the children. If the children need help coming up with a suggestion that can be easily implemented, suggest that the children make greeting cards for a group of seminarians, sick children, or an elderly community.

Say: *Each one of us is called to share Jesus' love and mercy with others. Let's think about this as we begin our closing ritual prayer.*

Closing Ritual Option

Refer to the Closing Ritual Prayer in the Catechist Guide. Follow the instructions up until the point where everyone says "pardon" and "peace" as they join hands to form a circle. With everyone standing together to form the circle, sing the song "How Many Times, Lord?" (track 13) from the [Songs of Scripture Grades 1-3 CD](#). Then say the final *All* response together as a group.

HOW MANY TIMES, LORD?

Adapted from Matthew 18:21-22

Verse 1

Peter the Apostle asked Jesus one day,
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How many times should I say
That I forgive you, that it's OK?
Is seven enough, Lord? Please tell me today."

Chorus

**I say to you, Peter, not seven times,
But seven times seven I ask of you.
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