

Fifth Grade: Lesson 12

Reconciliation Heals Us

Lesson Objective:

Lessons 12 and 13 explore the sacraments of healing. This lesson is an in-depth study of the sacrament of Reconciliation. Although this sacrament is introduced in second grade, fifth graders have the capacity to explore it more deeply. In addition, children should be reminded of the healing power of God and the benefits of this sacrament regularly.

Learning Outcomes: Students will ...

- Define sin as an offense against God, a failure in genuine love of God and others (CCC 1440, 1849, 1853).
- Relate the story of the Prodigal Son to the sacrament of reconciliation (Luke 15:11-32; CCC 1439).
- Explain reconciliation as restoring our covenant relationship with God and the Church community through God's mercy and forgiveness (CCC 1440-1445).
- Compare God's forgiveness of us with our call to forgive others (Mt 6:9-15).
- Identify the elements of a good confession: examination of conscience, contrition, confession, absolution, and penance (CCC 1450-1460).
- List and explain the signs and symbols of reconciliation (CCC 1450-1460).
- Understand the importance of regular participation in the sacrament of Reconciliation (CCC 1440-1442).

Materials Needed:

- Prayer space items, Bible, pencils,
- Copies needed: Signs and Symbols of Reconciliation, The Prodigal Son reflection, Examination of Conscience questions, Act of Contrition, Board Game (if you have enough class time)

As Students Enter Class:

- Have the following prompt on the board for students to think about and be ready to share their thoughts: Why is it important for us to go to confession? Or this one: What does this mean: Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Beginning of Class:

- Invite students to gather around the prayer space and pray the Our Father.

Lesson Order	Implementation Ideas
<p>Lesson 12 Video</p> <p>The Sacraments of Healing are how God bestows His power and grace upon us.</p> <p>For a deeper discussion on absolution, consider using the How Can I Get Clean document in the activities section to serve as a discussion guide for this sacrament.</p>	<p>This video is 4:25 in length.</p> <p>Highlights: We have been learning about the three Sacraments of Initiation. Today, we are going to begin a two-session study on the Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick. Today we will focus on Reconciliation.</p> <p>Going to confession regularly is a great way to keep our souls healthy. In past lessons, we talked about sin and how it is a failure of genuine love of God and others. In fact, sin separates us from God and leads us to death. The Good News is that Jesus gives us ways to put an end to sin and death, by His dying on the cross. Jesus also became our Savior when he died on the cross. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus gives us a way to get clear on the inside.</p> <p>ANALOGY: When you sin, it could be compared to carrying around a backpack with a small number of books inside, everywhere you go. But, if you haven't been to Reconciliation in a very long time, it would be like carrying around a heavy backpack that is full of large rocks, everywhere you go. Jesus wants to remove the rocks and lighten your soul. He does this through God's great forgiveness, the Sacrament of Reconciliation.</p> <p>Through this Sacrament, Jesus restores us into our covenant relationship with Him and with our Church community.</p> <p>The Sacrament of Reconciliation can also be called Confession or Penance. All three names are the same thing and reminds us of the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Just like the father was very happy when his son returned, God is excited for us to return to Him when we are sorry for our sins.</p>

	<p>We confess our sins to the priest, who represents Christ in the confessional. Anything you say during confession is private and the priest cannot tell anyone what you say.</p> <p>Elements of a Good Confession:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Examination of our conscience: how we remember the ways we haven't lived up to God's plan for our life by sinning 2) Contrition: feeling both sorry and sorrow for our sins 3) Confession: We must be honest with ourselves, God, and our feelings 4) Absolution: The priest, through the power of Christ, forgives your sins 5) Penance: The action we are given by the priest which mends and restores our relationship with God and the Church. <p>You can read more about this in CCC 1450-1560.</p>
Parable of the Prodigal Son	<p>This video is 5:22 in length.</p> <p>Highlights: Master Catechist, Jared Deeds, explains this Parable.</p>
Penance: Why We Confess	<p>This video is 5:00 in length.</p> <p>Highlights: This video answers a great question: Why do I have to go to a priest and confess my sins? Can't I just pray to God and be forgiven?</p> <p>Yes, we should pray to God and ask forgiveness anytime we become aware of a sin we committed. However, asking God is only part of</p>

the remedy for our sins. To further understand this, let's look at a core belief of our Catholic faith:

**Just as a body, though one,
has many parts, but all its
many parts form one body,
so it is with Christ...**

**God has put the body
together...so that there should
be no division in the body,
but that its parts should have
equal concern for each other.**

-St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 12

MORE VIDEOS

We are all one body, and we are connected, even though we don't know each other. This theology of St. Paul is known as the Mystical Body of Christ.

It's not all about you or you and God. We are all in this together. St. Paul goes on to say:

**If one part suffers,
all the parts suffer with it...**

St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 12:26

**If one part is honored,
all the parts share its joy.**

-St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 12:26

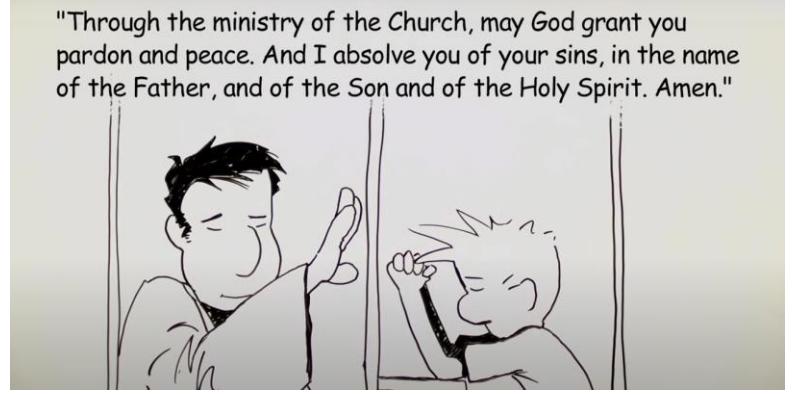
Therefore, we are all one body, in Christ. This is different from a popular cultural belief, of no harm, no foul. Meaning, if we as Catholics, commit a sin, but no one saw it or heard it, then we are okay. But the truth is, we are not okay, we committed a sin.

We are all called to be loving, charitable, and patient. One sin hurts us all, which is why we need to ask forgiveness from God and from other members of the body of Christ as well. (Remember, we are all one body in Christ). Sin creates a separation from God and the sacrament of penance is about mending that separation to reconcile us with both God and community. Therefore, we confess to a priest because he is there as an intermediary of God's grace AND as a representative of the people of God. After we confess, the priest welcomes us back into the community of God.

Excommunication occurs when we commit mortal sins. We remove ourselves from communion with God and the church. That is why we must confess mortal sins before receiving Holy Communion.

MUST BE IN COMMUNION TO RECEIVE COMMUNION. 😊

	<p>Stop and Discuss: Ask students to share their thoughts. If necessary, ask some questions about the content. It is important for students to process this information: That we are one body in Christ and when we sin, it impacts the entire body. This is more abstract and difficult for students to understand.</p>
<p>How do I go to Confession:</p>	<p>This video is 4:29 in length.</p> <p>Highlights: This video quickly reviews why we need to confess and then explains the steps of confession and why we do them. It is well done. Sketch drawings accompany the video.</p> <p>When we are baptized, we are washed free of all sin. However, all people sin, so we need to turn to the mercy of God. Only God can forgive sin. God has given us a place for healing – the Catholic Church. Mass has many prayers asking for God's Mercy. However, we still need the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The goal is to receive God's mercy and be reconciled with Him and the church.</p> <p>Reconciliation first starts within our hearts. We have to look at what we have done or failed to do. This is known as contrition and/or examination of conscience. Once this step is done, we are ready to see the priest. Remember the priest is working "in persona Christi" which is Latin for in the person of Christ.</p> <p>Steps for Reconciliation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Tell father how long it's been since your last confession: Bless me father, for I have sinned, it's been --- since my last confession. 2) Confess your sins, be clear and try not to tell a long story.

	<p>3) Penance – given by the priest 4) Say the Act of Contrition 5) Receive Absolution – Through the power of God, this is when the miracle happens. 6) Satisfaction – we are forgiven and strengthened to go out into the world and do God's will.</p> <p><i>"Through the ministry of the Church, may God grant you pardon and peace. And I absolve you of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."</i></p>  <p>How often should we go to confession? Bishops recommend once a month. The Catholic Church says we must go at least once a year (minimum).</p>
Forgiveness with Fr. Mike Schmitz	<p>This video is 4:42 in length.</p> <p>Highlights: Forgiveness is very difficult to understand. What does it mean?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean you are no longer hurt. • It doesn't mean you have to be friends again. • It doesn't mean you have to trust them. • It is not a feeling; forgiveness is a decision. <p>You don't have to trust the person again in order to know that you've forgiven them.</p> <p>To understand forgiveness, look at justice. Justice is what I owe another person or what another person owes me.</p>

	<p>I release you from your debt. That is what forgiveness is and it has to be coupled with justice.</p> <p>With God's grace, I set you free. Forgiveness is the freedom to move forward.</p> <p>Stop and Discuss:</p> <p>Ask students to share their thoughts about what Fr. Mike says about forgiveness. Provide students with a few minutes of time to think about who they need to forgive and what they need to forgive them for. Then say a silent prayer, asking God to help you forgive this person. If you like, students can write it down in their prayer journals, too.</p>
Signs and Symbols of Reconciliation Activity	This is a handout that you can review with students. Ask if they have noticed some of these items in our church.
The Prodigal Son	Read out loud Luke 15 and then answer the questions on the handout.
Examination of Conscience and Act of Contrition Prayer	<p>Review a few prompts with students and provide some quiet time for reflection. Tell students this is how we perform an examination of conscience. The import, very first step to making a good confession.</p> <p>Then recite the Act of Contrition prayer all together.</p>
Act of Contrition Board Game	Time permitting, play this game. Another idea, as we have done in previous lessons, is to ask a few questions from the game (making it fun, like answering a trivia question) and perhaps providing a piece of candy for correctly answered questions.

Closing Prayer	Model a quick prayer of thanksgiving, thanking God for all the sacraments and grace that come with receiving these sacraments.
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