

Reconciliation Teaching Guide



**Discover God's
Treasures**



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Welcome

Welcome to *Go Seek Find: Discover God's Treasures!*

We at Saint Mary's Press are excited to partner with you in the important ministry of preparing children for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Through this new and unique program, children are led on an adventure of discovery as they explore the rich and beautiful significance of this sacrament in their lives. *Go Seek Find* will engage and inspire children, creating a spirit of excitement and joy around their journey toward encountering Jesus through the treasure that is the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

This program was developed with the real needs of children at its center. The core text of this program is the Saint Mary's Press® *Catholic Children's Bible*. By using a Bible designed specifically for them and engaging with the Featured Stories within it, children will explore the Sacrament of Reconciliation through the biblical lens of Jesus' life and works and learn more about their faith in language they can understand. They will also experience interactive core activities that bring the chapter lessons to life in a fun and memorable way. And they will learn important information about the Sacrament of Reconciliation and reinforce this new knowledge through a variety of activities and family learning opportunities offered in the activity booklets that accompany each lesson.

Together, you and the children will *Go Seek Find* the incredible treasure that is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. May an ever-expanding awareness of Christ's presence in our lives be the source of faith, hope, and love for all of us!

With hopes and prayers for every blessing,

The Publishing Team at Saint Mary's Press

**"Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find;
knock, and the door will be opened to you."**

(Matthew 7:7)

Program Overview

Program Outline

Chapter Number	Chapter Title	Lesson Goals	Featured Story	Key Words
1	Jesus Is Always with Us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to identify that Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now to recognize that we meet Jesus in the sacraments to express that we confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation 	The Risen Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18)	sacraments, grace, sin, Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, confession, conversion
2	We Trust in God's Mercy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that God is a loving Father to identify that God always forgives us when we are truly sorry for our sins to explain that God's mercy comes to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation 	The Forgiving Father (Luke 15:11–32)	mercy
3	We Follow Jesus' Message of Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to identify that we follow Jesus by loving God and others to recognize that we can learn about love in Sacred Scripture to explain that we can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation when we fail to love fully 	Love Is the Greatest Commandment (Mark 12:28–34)	Greatest Commandment, Sacred Scripture
4	We Follow the Ten Commandments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to express that God gave us rules to keep his people safe and happy to recognize that the Ten Commandments are rooted in God's love for us to explain the difference between a sin and an accident 	God Gives His People the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19:16–20:17)	Ten Commandments, accident

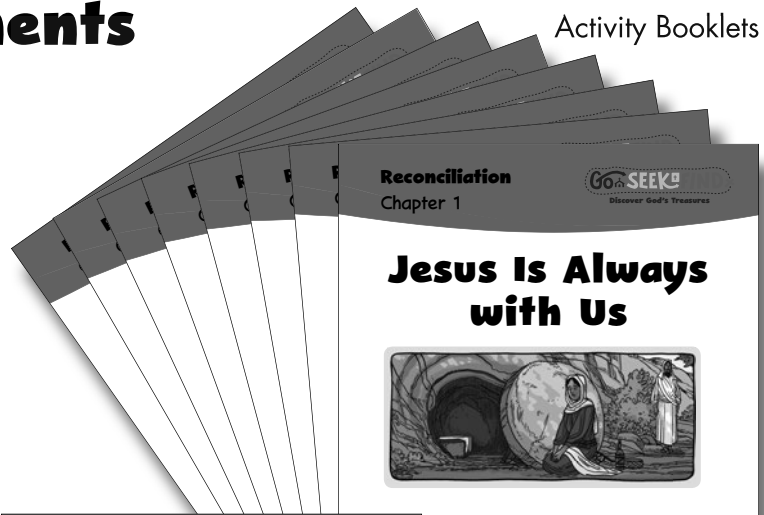
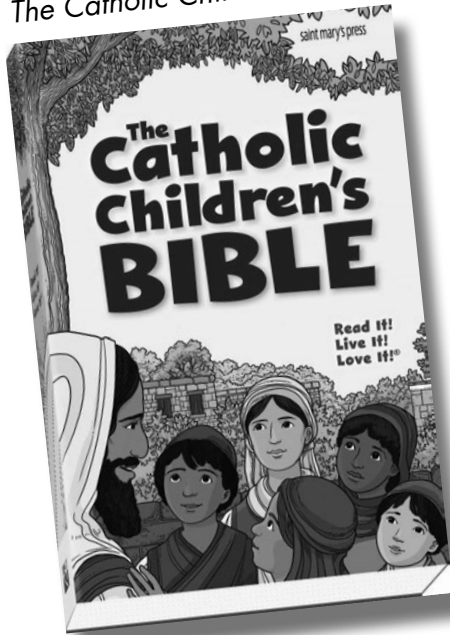
Reconciliation Teaching Guide

Chapter Number	Chapter Title	Lesson Goals	Featured Story	Key Words
5	We Ask for Forgiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that our sins can be forgiven if we are truly sorry to identify that we have more room for love when we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to explain the difference between mortal sin and venial sin 	Jesus Forgives a Woman's Sins (Luke 7:36–50)	mortal sin, venial sin
6	Jesus Loves and Cares for Us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that Jesus loves and cares for us as a good shepherd cares for his sheep to recall that Jesus seeks us out when we stray, and we can return through the Sacrament of Reconciliation to explain that in the Act of Contrition, we express our sorrow for having sinned 	Jesus Is the Good Shepherd (John 10:1–18)	penance, Act of Contrition, contrition
7	Jesus Helps Us Always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize Jesus as the Son of God who is with us in times of trouble to define ourselves as disciples of Jesus who call on him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to explain that our sins are forgiven and we are restored to peace when we receive absolution 	Jesus Helps Us in Times of Trouble (Matthew 8:23–27)	disciple, absolution, conscience
8	The Holy Spirit Teaches Us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that the Holy Spirit is our helper and guide to identify that the Holy Spirit helps us in an examination of conscience as we prepare to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation to review the key words and important concepts of these chapters in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation 	Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit to Help Us (John 14:15–31)	examination of conscience

Program Components

Activity Booklets

The Catholic Children's Bible

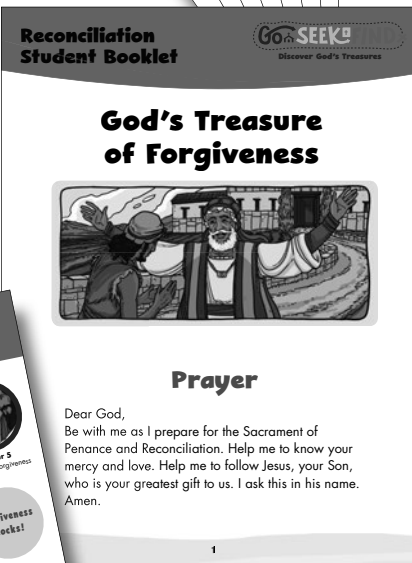


Jesus Is Always with Us



Prayer

Thank you, God, for this time we have together to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Help us understand this sacrament and how it can help us grow in holiness.

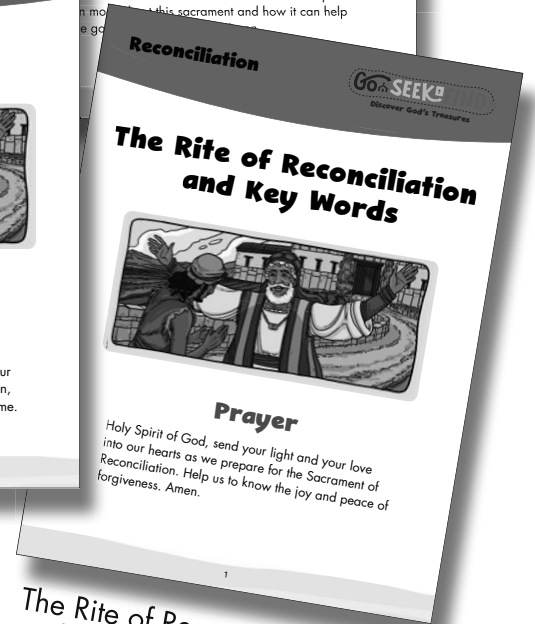


God's Treasure of Forgiveness



Prayer

Dear God, Be with me as I prepare for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Help me to know your mercy and love. Help me to follow Jesus, your Son, who is your greatest gift to us. I ask this in his name. Amen.



The Rite of Reconciliation and Key Words



Prayer

Holy Spirit of God, send your light and your love into our hearts as we prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Help us to know the joy and peace of forgiveness. Amen.

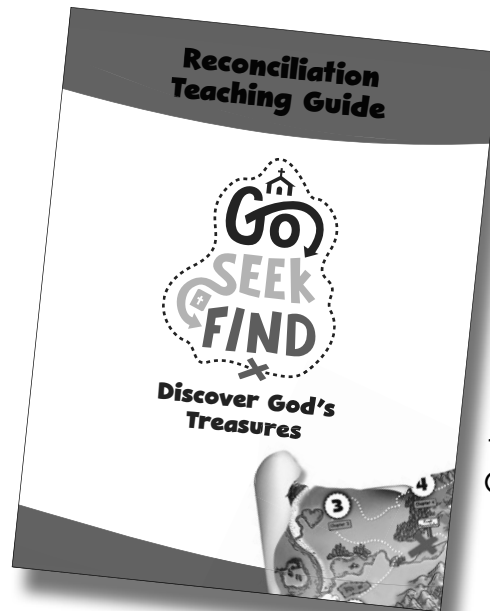
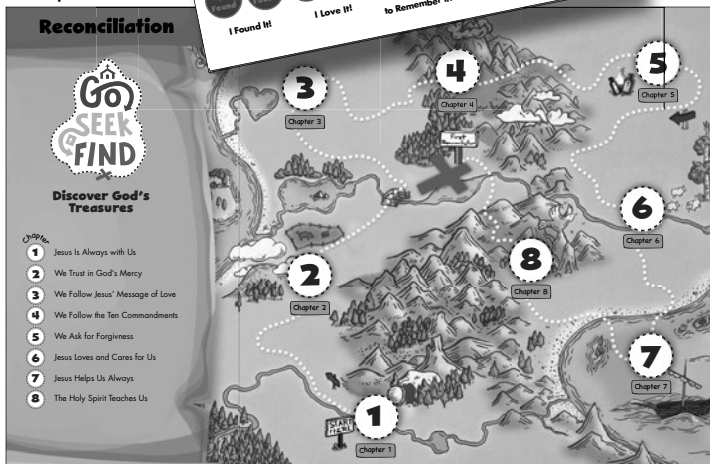
Stickers



Student Booklet

The Rite of Reconciliation and Key Words Booklet

Treasure Map



Teaching Guide

Reconciliation Teaching Guide

Understanding the Components

Teaching Guide


Background Focus provides quick, easy-to-read insights about the theme of the chapter.

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Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Featured Story
The Risen Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18)



Lesson Goals

- to identify that Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now
- to recognize that we meet Jesus in the sacraments
- to express that we confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Lesson at a Glance

Go (10 minutes)
Opening Prayer
Engage Activity

Seek (30 minutes)
Featured Story
Core Learning Activity

Find (20 minutes)
God's Treasure of Forgiveness
Lesson Wrap-Up
Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 1 activity booklet
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- "I Believe in Jesus," by Invitation Music (Invitation Publishing)
- "With Us" (Acoustic) [Live], by Hillsong Live (Hillsong Music)

Background Focus

Every sacrament is a treasure because every sacrament is a gift of the presence of God. Given to the Church by Jesus Christ, the sacraments bring his presence to us through human words and actions and through material elements like water, bread, wine, and oil.

The sacraments use the gifts of the material world to bring us into the realm of the spiritual. The sacraments are "doorways to the sacred." There is a particular place in the Mass in which the water and wine are mingled in the chalice, and the priest prays, "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity" (*Roman Missal*). Our humanity is the water. The divinity of Christ is the wine.

In every sacrament, our lives are mingled with Christ's living and risen presence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the sacraments that does not have an external material or earthly element (like water, bread, or oil) as part of its celebration. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the earthly element is the confession of sins, and the presence of Christ, in his love and forgiveness, is mediated by a hand extended in blessing and the comforting sound of a human voice, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*Rite of Penance*).

GO (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in their chapter 1 activity booklets and locate the prayer on that page.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Ask the children to close their activity booklets for now.

Lesson Goals shows the key desired outcomes of the chapter.

A list of **Materials Needed** helps you adequately prepare for the lesson.

Two **Music Suggestions** are offered for possible incorporation into the lesson.

The **Go** part of the lesson begins with an opening prayer that is found in the activity booklets.

After the opening prayer, an **Engage Activity** will spark interest and create excitement in the children.

The **Find** part of the lesson relays key information about the sacrament the children are preparing for.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to recall everything they know about Jesus and record their answers on the board. Give them some examples if they need help. (Answers might include: born in Bethlehem, is the Son of God, healed people and taught people about God, was crucified on the cross, etc.)
- Emphasize the point that Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead. Remind the children that this is what Christians celebrate each year on a very special and holy day. Ask them if they can name that holy day, the greatest day of the year. (Easter)
- Tell the children that they will read about Jesus rising from the dead and will explore why that is important for us today.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find John 20:11–18 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1701).
- Direct them to turn to page 1702 and place an "I found it!" sticker next to the Featured Story.
- Tell them that the words between the leaves on page 1702 are a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous page.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1702–1703. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork and to predict what the Bible story might be about.
- Invite a volunteer to read the title on the page, and ask the children to share what the words "Risen Jesus" mean. (Jesus was crucified on the cross, but he rose again and is now risen from the dead.)
- Ask the children to share what they know about Mary Magdalene. (She was a friend to Jesus. She loved Jesus very much. That's why she was visiting his grave.)
- Read the Bible story to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Why was Mary Magdalene crying? (She did not know where Jesus was.)

Jesus Is Always with Us 19

Chapter 1

- What did the angels ask her? ("Woman, why are you crying?")
- What did Mary Magdalene answer? ("They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!")
- What happened when Mary Magdalene turned around? (She saw Jesus.)

- Remind the children that this Bible story is the story of the very first Easter Sunday, when Jesus rose from the dead.
- Have the children read the story from the storybooklet and have their Bibles open.

Understand

- Read the story to the children, or invite a volunteer to read it.
- Invite the children to read the story aloud, asking them to read to each other.
- Review these questions:
 - Mary Magdalene was crying because she didn't know where Jesus was.
 - When she saw the stone rolled away, she was very surprised.
 - Then she thought she didn't know who she was talking to.
 - Jesus was talking to her name.
 - She ran to tell the other women.

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read the story to the children, or read it aloud.
- Ask the children to write in their diaries what they learned from the story.
 - What would you feel like if you were Mary Magdalene?
 - How did the angels feel when they spoke to her?
- Explain to the children that Jesus rose from the dead and is always with us today in a special way.
- Pray this short prayer for the children: "Jesus, thank you for giving us the gift of life."

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1703.
- Invite the children to find a partner and use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- Encourage several volunteers to stand and summarize the Bible reading for the group, using the images in Tell It!
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

The Bible Says

- Invite the children to gather in a circle, if there is space, or to stand at their places with their hands at their sides.
- Explain that we will play a game similar to Simon Says.
- Give directions in these or similar words:
 - We will begin by standing with our hands at our sides.
 - When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ has died,'" everyone will crunch down, put their hands over their heads, and repeat, "Christ has died." Then everyone will stand up again with hands at sides.
 - When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ is risen,'" everyone will lift their arms into the air and say, "Christ is risen. Alleluia!" Alleluia means, "Praise God!" Then everyone will put their hands at their sides again and wait for the next direction.
 - If I don't say, "The Bible says," then you are to stand still and do nothing.
 - If you move when I do not say, "The Bible says," you will be out of the game. The last person standing is the winner.

Note: As in the game Simon Says, vary your directions, sometimes saying, "The Bible says," and sometimes omitting it. Remind the children to stand with their hands at their sides while awaiting the next direction. It will be helpful to end the game with, "The Bible says, 'Christ has risen,'" to end on a positive note. You may want to arrange the children into teams. The team with the most members still standing at the end of the game (when you call "time!") is the winner.

Process the Activity

- Remind the children of the Bible story for the day and how happy Mary Magdalene was when she realized that Jesus had risen from the dead.
- Tell the children that Jesus, rising from the dead is Good News that we celebrate each year at Easter. Explain that we rejoice in this and celebrate the fact that Jesus continues to be present to us in a special way today.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on page 22 in its place.

Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Tell the children that Jesus gave us seven great and holy signs of God's love, and that these signs are called **sacraments**. Explain that Jesus is present to us in a special way in the sacraments so that we can follow him more closely. Tell them that the sacraments give us **grace**, the gift of God's life in us, which makes us God's children and helps us to stay away from **sin** and to do good things. Explain that a sin is something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law.
- List the Seven Sacraments on the board for the children, and give a brief description of each. Explain how the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist begin our life in the Church. Ask the children how many of them know if they have been baptized.
- Continue by explaining that in Baptism, we become children of God and all of our sins are washed away. Tell the children that the sins we commit after Baptism are forgiven through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Circle this sacrament on the board.
- Remind the children that this time together is to help them prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Tell them that this sacrament has many names:

The **Seek** part of the lesson invites the children to interact directly with the Bible and learn key sacrament-related themes through important Bible stories.

Each lesson is anchored by a **Core Learning Activity**. This activity presents an aspect of the chapter theme in a fun, engaging, and memorable way.

- > Its official Church name is: the **Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation**. Often this is shortened to "the Sacrament of Penance" or "the Sacrament of Reconciliation."
- > Often we call this sacrament "**confession**," because in it we confess what we have done wrong. We say, "We are going to confession tomorrow afternoon."
- > Sometimes it is called "the sacrament of **conversion**," because this sacrament helps us to convert, or change, for the better.
- Help the children understand that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament in which we meet Jesus in a special way. In this sacrament, we ask God to forgive us. Explain to them that after we confess our sins and are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we will be filled with new life again.
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity.
Answers: 1. Forgive, 2. conversion, 3. Baptism, 4. confession, 5. better. Word at bottom: grace

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now.
 - We meet Jesus in the sacraments.
 - We confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 1 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to come to you, one by one. Make the Sign of the Cross on each child's forehead as you say: "____, God calls you by name. You are God's child. You belong to God." Encourage the child to respond, "Amen."
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that speaks about belonging to God, being children of God, being called by name, or following Jesus.
- End with the Glory Be prayer (see page 1990 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*). Then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Chapter 1

The Lesson Wrap-Up encourages the children to recall what they learned and mark their progress on their interactive treasure map.

Chapter 1

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- none

God Calls Me by Name (15 minutes)

- Invite the children to gather in a circle. Introduce yourself first, saying, "My name is ____ and I like ____." (Name something that starts with the first letter of your first name. For example, "I am Sara and I like sassafras.")
- Instruct the child next to you to say your name and add his or hers. (For example: "She is Sara and she likes sassafras. My name is Lucy and I like licorice.")
- The next child will say all three names and likes, including his or her own. (The group may help as needed, because the game will get more difficult. Keep the atmosphere light and fun, so no one feels inadequate for not being able to remember all the preceding names and likes.)
- At the end of the game, ask the children: "Did we have trouble remembering everyone's name and what they liked? (Yes) Does God have trouble remembering our names and what we like and don't like? (No) Why not? (God is all-knowing and all-loving. He loves us and knows us best of all.)"
- Remind the children that they became children of God at Baptism.

Materials Needed

- plastic spoons
- plastic Easter eggs

Easter Egg Relay (15 minutes)

- Arrange the children into groups of four. Give each child in the group a plastic spoon.
- Invite the children in each group to stand together in a line, and give the first child in each line a plastic egg to balance on his or her spoon.
- Explain that this is a relay race and that the first person in the line will carry the egg on their spoon to the other end of the room and back. Tell them that if they drop the egg, they must come back to the front of the line and start over (this rule can be skipped if this proves too difficult for the children).
- Continue by telling them that when they return, they should move the egg, without using their hands, to the next person's spoon. Explain that this person will go to the other end of the room and back and will continue until the last person in each group returns.
- Tell the children that the first group to have all members return wins.
- Explain that the Easter egg reminds us that Jesus rose from the dead. Just like a baby chick breaks out of an egg, so Jesus left the tomb and is with us today.

Materials Needed

- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector

Jesus Loves Me (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Hey, Jesus Loves Me," by StJohnKIDSChurch, available on YouTube (3:53). This video, with lyrics, can be used to emphasize how much Jesus loves each one of us and how he is always ready to show us mercy.
- Invite volunteers to recall some of the ideas in the song.
- Remind the children that Jesus died and rose again to show us how much he loves us.

Additional Activities offers substitute options for the core learning activity. These additional activities also may be used to extend the lesson.

Activity Booklets

Reconciliation

Chapter 1



Jesus Is Always with Us



Prayer

Thank you, God, for this time we have together to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Help us learn more about this sacrament and how it can help us be good followers of Jesus. Amen.

Each activity booklet begins with a **Prayer** that is used as the opening prayer for that chapter's lesson.

12 Reconciliation Teaching Guide

Page 2 (on left) features an activity that relates to content the children are learning about in the Bible.



Use the Bible passage on page 1702 of *The Catholic Children's Bible* (John 20:11-14,16) to find the answers. Write the number of the correct word or phrase on the line.

1. Mary Magdalene	3. Jesus
2. tomb	4. two angels

____ She stood crying outside the tomb.

____ The place where the body of Jesus had been

____ They stood where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

____ They asked her why she was crying.

____ She answered, "They have taken away my Lord."

____ She turned around and saw Jesus.

____ He said, "Mary!"

2

Complete each sentence with one of these five words. Write one letter on each line and in the circle to spell the correct word.

better	Baptism	forgive
conversion	confession	

1. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we ask God to _____ _____ us.

2. The word _____ _____ means "change."

3. In the Sacrament of _____ _____, we became children of God.

4. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also called _____ _____.

5. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we change for the _____ _____.

Now write down the letters in the circles, in order. What do they spell?

_____ _____ _____

What is it? God's life in us!

3



Page 3 (on right) features an activity that relates to the sacrament content the children are learning about in the chapter.

The **Family Page** provides parents with helpful information about the chapter and key ideas to bring the lesson to life at home.

Family Page



Background Focus

Every sacrament is a treasure because every sacrament is a gift of the presence of God. Given to the Church by Jesus Christ, the sacraments bring his presence to us through human words and actions, and material elements like water, bread, wine, and oil.

The sacraments use the gifts of the material world to bring us into the realm of the spiritual. The sacraments are “doorways to the sacred.” There is a particular place in the Mass in which the water and wine are mingled in the chalice, and the priest prays: “By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity” (*Roman Missal*).

Our humanity is the water. The divinity of Christ is the wine.

In every sacrament, our lives are mingled with Christ’s living and risen presence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the sacraments that does not have an external material or earthly element (like water, bread, or oil) as part of its celebration. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the earthly element is the confession of sins, and the presence of Christ, in his love and forgiveness, is mediated by a hand extended in blessing and the comforting sound of a human voice offering absolution and forgiveness of sins, in God’s name.



Family Strategies

Our first community is the family, and learning to live in harmony at home is a first lesson in living in harmony with others. Harmony often involves following rules and procedures for the good of all. Present and enforce these rules and procedures as a source of family pride and identity. For example: In our family, we do not use electronics during meals; in our family, we do not call names; in our family, we serve guests first. You may soon hear a child explaining proudly to friends, “In our family . . .”

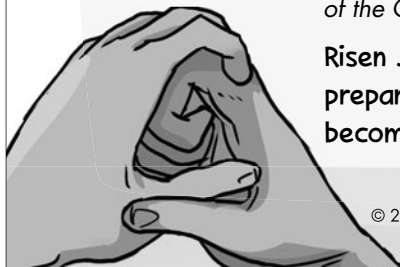
[The quotation on page 4 of this activity booklet is from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation [ICEL] [Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011], page 529. Copyright © 2011, USCCB, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved. Used with permission of the ICEL. [Texts contained in this work derived whole or in part from liturgical texts copyrighted by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) have been published here with the confirmation of the Committee on Divine Worship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. No other texts in this work have been formally reviewed or approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops].



Family Activities

- Congratulate your child on beginning to prepare for Reconciliation. Talk about the sacrament together, and present the sacrament as an opportunity to experience God’s love and forgiveness and a chance to start over.
- Read the Scripture passage from this lesson together, either the shorter version (John 20:11–14, 16) or the longer one (John 20:11–29). Remind your child that the Risen Jesus will be present at the Sacrament of Reconciliation but will not be seen.
- Watch the YouTube video “In Good Hands (Baby Dedication Song),” by Ben Chilcote (5:04), which expresses a parental perspective on caring for “God’s child.” Emphasize to your child that we are precious to God and are in God’s good hands our entire lives.

Pray It!

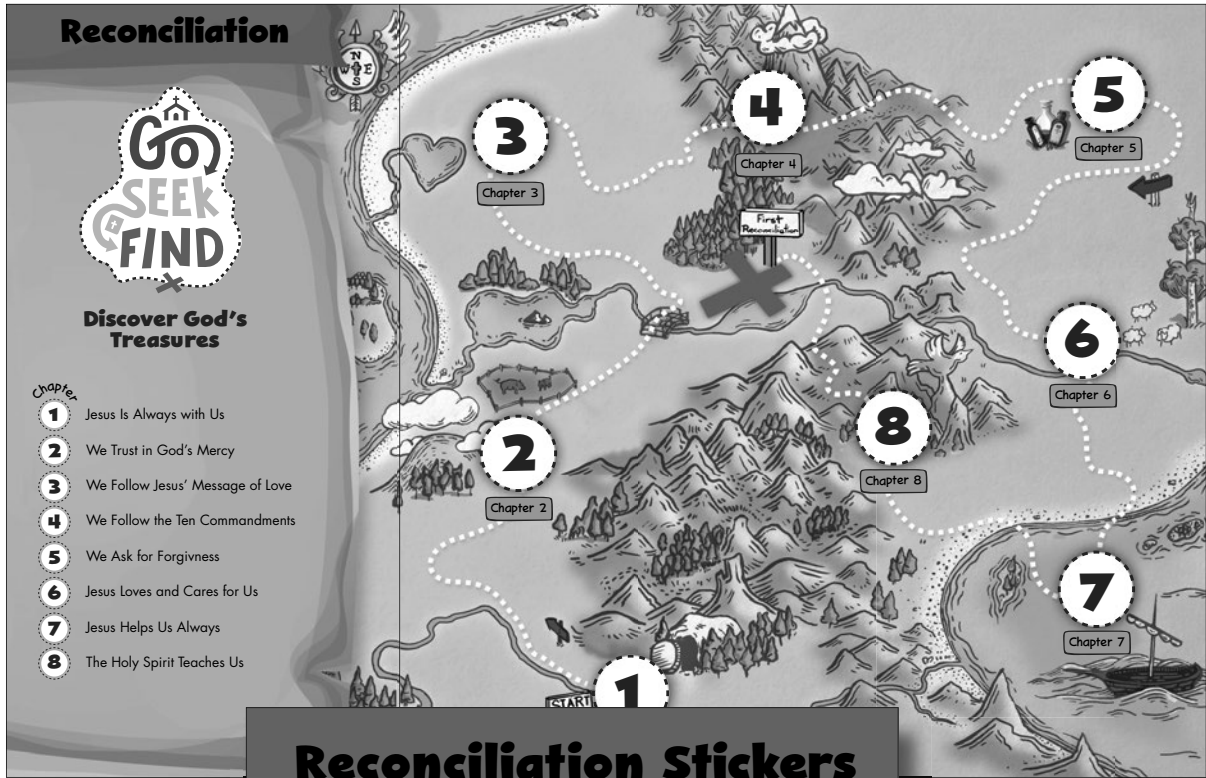


Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

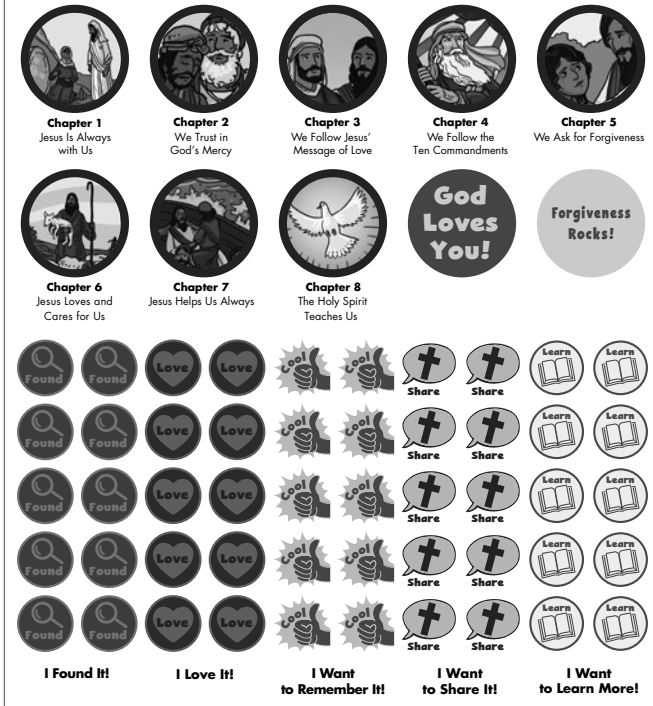
Risen Jesus, be with us each moment, especially as [name of child] prepares to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Help us all to become good followers of Jesus. Amen.

Treasure Map and Stickers

A **Treasure Map** helps the children track their progress through the chapters in a fun and engaging way that also reinforces what they learned.



Reconciliation Stickers



Stickers are also provided to encourage the children to engage with their Bible and mark verses and other content that are meaningful to them.

Stickers are provided that contain key images from the different chapters. The children will use these stickers to track their progress on the treasure map.

Key Elements of the Program

Teaching Guide

The teaching guide divides each chapter into three main parts: “Go,” “Seek,” and “Find.” The “Go” section begins with an opening prayer and continues with a short activity to engage the children in the topic of the day. The “Seek” section involves exploring Scripture related to the sacrament of focus and a core learning activity centered on the chapter theme. The “Find” section provides the children with a deeper look into the meaning of the sacrament and concludes the lesson with a summary and a closing prayer.

Activity Booklets

A fun and colorful activity booklet is provided for each chapter. Although intended for use as supportive group-learning activities, these booklets also may be completed at home with the family. They include the opening prayer used for each lesson, two activity pages that support the learning of the chapter, and a family page that offers families background on the chapter topic, strategies to integrate the values of Christian life into family life, and suggested activities related to the lesson to be done at home.

God’s Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet

This booklet contains a child-friendly presentation of the Church’s teaching on the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each chapter in this booklet connects to a chapter in the teaching guide and reinforces the core content presented in the lessons.

This booklet can also be used as:

- leader background, to help leaders present the content in child-friendly language
- a make-up resource for children who miss lessons
- family reading, so parents or guardians can read and discuss each chapter with their child
- a refresher for the children, reviewing key teachings about the Sacrament of Reconciliation just before receiving First Confession

The Rite of Reconciliation and Key Words Booklet

The Sacrament of Reconciliation resources include an additional booklet that contains all of the key words used in the program, an outline of the Rite, and an examination of conscience.

Treasure Map

The Sacrament of Reconciliation has its own treasure map. This unique and colorful resource is designed to build excitement as the children journey through the various chapters on the way to their first celebration of the sacrament. Using stickers with key images from the Bible stories to be read in each chapter, the children track their progress on a fun, engaging treasure map as they recall the key themes and lessons offered throughout the program.

Stickers

A sticker sheet is included in the resources for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In addition to the stickers that allow the children to track their progress on the treasure maps, there are stickers that allow the children to mark Featured Stories or key verses in the Bible that have special significance to them. This immerses children in the Bible and helps them retain key lessons and messages throughout.

Music Suggestions

Music can add another wonderful dimension to this program. Each chapter includes two song suggestions that correspond to the chapter theme. These songs can be purchased and downloaded online. For a complete list of all of the songs for the program, please visit the online resources for this program at www.smp.org/resourcecenter/books. Of course, you may also wish to add your own favorite hymns or songs such as those that are popular in your parish community.

Videos

Options for activities that incorporate fun and engaging videos are provided throughout the program. Settings with the necessary technology can utilize this additional media to further enliven learning. These video suggestions are also included on the family page in the children's activity booklets, so if they are not used within the formal learning environment, they can be enjoyed at home with the family. Quick links to the video resources that are referenced throughout this program are available as part of the online resources for this program at www.smp.org/resourcecenter/books.

Additional Support Information

Teaching with *The Catholic Children's Bible*

Go Seek Find is a unique sacrament-preparation program, as it immerses children directly in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and introduces key themes involved in sacrament preparation through Bible stories. This focus on Scripture builds important biblical literacy as it roots the themes of the sacraments in God's Word. It is important, therefore, that you are familiar with *The Catholic Children's Bible* in order to help children become comfortable and confident with its navigation and use. To this end, *The Catholic Children's Bible Leader Guide* was created. This invaluable resource will help you introduce *The Catholic Children's Bible* to children, as well as provide you with essential insights into how to help children read and understand Scripture. You can learn more about this helpful resource by contacting your local Saint Mary's Press representative or by visiting www.smp.org.

Home Guide

For those programs that encourage parents to become the key educators of sacrament preparation in the home, *Go Seek Find* offers a Home Guide. This guide presents the core content of *Go Seek Find* in a way that is adapted for teaching and learning in the home. Clear instructions, accessible language, and activities that work in a home setting are the focus of this guide, making sacrament preparation at home an easy, fun, and engaging possibility. This free resource is offered online at www.smp.org/resourcecenter/books.

Optional Yearlong Program

Some parishes and schools prefer to devote the entire year to preparation for the first reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. *Go Seek Find* can be adapted to a yearlong program by adding appropriate seasonal and liturgical lessons presented in *The Catholic Children's Bible Leader Guide*. Chapter 10 of this leader guide offers thirteen Scripture-based lessons that include an opening prayer, the reading of a Featured Story, an activity, and a closing prayer, and can easily supplement the lessons in the *Go Seek Find* program.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Featured Story




The Risen Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18)



Lesson Goals

- to identify that Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now
- to recognize that we meet Jesus in the sacraments
- to express that we confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Lesson at a Glance

-  **Go** (10 minutes)
Opening Prayer
Engage Activity
-  **Seek** (30 minutes)
Featured Story
Core Learning Activity
-  **Find** (20 minutes)
God's Treasure of Forgiveness
Lesson Wrap-Up
Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 1 activity booklet
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- "I Believe in Jesus," by Invitation Music (Invitation Publishing)
- "With Us" (Acoustic) [Live], by Hillsong Live (Hillsong Music)

Jesus Is Always with Us

Background Focus

Every sacrament is a treasure because every sacrament is a gift of the presence of God. Given to the Church by Jesus Christ, the sacraments bring his presence to us through human words and actions and through material elements like water, bread, wine, and oil.

The sacraments use the gifts of the material world to bring us into the realm of the spiritual. The sacraments are "doorways to the sacred." There is a particular place in the Mass in which the water and wine are mingled in the chalice, and the priest prays, "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity" (*Roman Missal*, page 529). Our humanity is the water. The divinity of Christ is the wine.

In every sacrament, our lives are mingled with Christ's living and risen presence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the sacraments that does not have an external material or earthly element (like water, bread, or oil) as part of its celebration. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the earthly element is the confession of sins, and the presence of Christ, in his love and forgiveness, is mediated by a hand extended in blessing and the comforting sound of a human voice, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*Order of Penance*).

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in their chapter 1 activity booklets and locate the prayer on that page.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Ask the children to close their activity booklets for now.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to recall everything they know about Jesus and record their answers on the board. Give them some examples if they need help. (Answers might include: *born in Bethlehem, is the Son of God, healed people and taught people about God, was crucified on the cross, etc.*)
- Emphasize the point that Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead. Remind the children that this is what Christians celebrate each year on a very special and holy day. Ask them if they can name that holy day, the greatest day of the year. (Easter)
- Tell the children that they will read about Jesus rising from the dead and will explore why that is important for us today.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find John 20:11–18 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1701).
- Direct them to turn to page 1702 and place an "I found it!" sticker next to the Featured Story.
- Tell them that the words between the leaves on page 1702 are a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous page.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1702–1703. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork and to predict what the Bible story might be about.
- Invite a volunteer to read the title on the page, and ask the children to share what the words "Risen Jesus" mean. (*Jesus was crucified on the cross, but he rose again and is now risen from the dead.*)
- Ask the children to share what they know about Mary Magdalene. (*She was a friend to Jesus. She loved Jesus very much. That is why she was visiting his grave.*)
- Read the Bible story to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Why was Mary Magdalene crying? (*She did not know where Jesus was.*)
 - What did the angels ask her? (*"Woman, why are you crying?"*)
 - What did Mary Magdalene answer? (*"They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!"*)
 - What happened when Mary Magdalene turned around? (*She saw Jesus.*)

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1703 to the children, or invite a volunteer or volunteers to read.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points with them:
 - Mary Magdalene was very sad when Jesus died. She did not expect to see him again.
 - When she went to the tomb, she did not find his body. She thought someone had taken it. She was very upset.
 - Then she turned around and saw Jesus! At first she didn't know it was Jesus. But then he said her name, and she knew who it was.
 - Jesus was alive after all! Mary was so happy! She ran to tell the other disciples. (See John 20:18.)

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read Live It! on page 1703 or read it aloud to the group.
- Ask the children to share what they would write in their diary for that first Easter Sunday if they were Mary Magdalene, using these questions:
 - What would they say they were thinking or feeling as they went to the tomb?
 - How did they feel after they saw Jesus and he spoke their names?
- Explain to the children that we are happy that Jesus rose from the dead because it means that he is always with us. Explain that he is still with us today in a very special way.
- Pray this short prayer with the children: "Thank you, Jesus, for rising on that first Easter Sunday."

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1703.
- Invite the children to find a partner and use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- Encourage several volunteers to stand and summarize the Bible reading for the group, using the images in Tell It!
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

The Bible Says

- Invite the children to gather in a circle, if there is space, or to stand at their places with their hands at their sides.
- Explain that we will play a game similar to Simon Says.
- Give directions in these or similar words:
 - We will begin by standing with our hands at our sides.
 - When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ has died,'" everyone will crunch down, put their hands over their heads, and repeat, "Christ has died." Then everyone will stand up again with hands at sides.
 - When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ is risen,'" everyone will lift their arms into the air and say, "Christ is risen. Alleluia!" *Alleluia* means, "Praise God!" Then everyone will put their hands at their sides again and wait for the next direction.
 - If I don't say, "The Bible says," then you are to stand still and do nothing.
 - If you move when I do not say, "The Bible says," you will be out of the game. The last person standing is the winner.

Note: As in the game Simon Says, vary your directions, sometimes saying, "The Bible says," and sometimes omitting it. Remind the children to stand with their hands at their sides while awaiting the next direction. It will be helpful to end the game with, "The Bible says, 'Christ has risen,'" to end on a positive note. You may want to arrange the chil-

dren into teams. The team with the most members still standing at the end of the game (when you call "time!") is the winner.

Process the Activity

- Remind the children of the Bible story for the day and how happy Mary Magdalene was when she realized that Jesus had risen from the dead.
- Tell the children that Jesus, rising from the dead is Good News that we celebrate each year at Easter. Explain that we rejoice in this and celebrate the fact that Jesus continues to be present to us in a special way today.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on page 22 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Tell the children that Jesus gave us seven great and holy signs of God's love, and that these signs are called **sacraments**. Explain that Jesus is present to us in a special way in the sacraments so that we can follow him more closely. Tell them that the sacraments give us **grace**, the gift of God's life in us, which makes us God's children and helps us to stay away from **sin** and to do good things. Explain that a sin is something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law.
- List the Seven Sacraments on the board for the children, and give a brief description of each. Explain how the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist begin our life in the Church. Ask the children how many of them know if they have been baptized.
- Continue by explaining that in Baptism, we become children of God and all of our sins are washed away. Tell the children that the sins we commit after Baptism are forgiven through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Circle this sacrament on the board.
- Remind the children that this time together is to help them prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Tell them that this sacrament has many names:

- Its official Church name is: the **Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation**. Often this is shortened to “the Sacrament of Penance” or “the Sacrament of Reconciliation.”
- Often we call this sacrament “**confession**,” because in it we confess what we have done wrong. We say, “We are going to confession tomorrow afternoon.”
- Sometimes it is called “the sacrament of **conversion**,” because this sacrament helps us to *convert*, or change, for the better.
- Help the children understand that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament in which we meet Jesus in a special way. In this sacrament, we ask God to forgive us. Explain to them that after we confess our sins and are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we will be filled with new life again.
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity.
Answers: 1. Forgive, 2. conversion, 3. Baptism, 4. confession, 5. better. Word at bottom: grace

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God’s Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 1 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under “Things to Remember” to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.

- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now.
 - We meet Jesus in the sacraments.
 - We confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 1 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, “Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to come to you, one by one. Make the Sign of the Cross on each child’s forehead as you say: “____, God calls you by name. You are God’s child. You belong to God.” Encourage the child to respond, “Amen.”
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that speaks about belonging to God, being children of God, being called by name, or following Jesus.
- End with the Glory Be prayer (see page 1990 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible*). Then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Materials Needed

- none

Materials Needed

- plastic spoons
- plastic Easter eggs

Materials Needed

- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector



Additional Activities

God Calls Me by Name (15 minutes)

- Invite the children to gather in a circle. Introduce yourself first, saying, "My name is ____ and I like ____." (Name something that starts with the first letter of your first name. For example, "I am Sara and I like sassafras.")
- Instruct the child next to you to say your name and add his or hers. (For example: "She is Sara and she likes sassafras. My name is Lucy and I like licorice.")
- The next child will say all three names and likes, including his or her own. (The group may help as needed, because the game will get more difficult. Keep the atmosphere light and fun, so no one feels inadequate for not being able to remember all the preceding names and likes.)
- At the end of the game, ask the children: "Did we have trouble remembering everyone's name and what they liked? (Yes) Does God have trouble remembering our names and what we like and don't like? (No) Why not? (God is all-knowing and all-loving. He loves us and knows us best of all.)
- Remind the children that they became children of God at Baptism.

Easter Egg Relay (15 minutes)

- Arrange the children into groups of four. Give each child in the group a plastic spoon.
- Invite the children in each group to stand together in a line, and give the first child in each line a plastic egg to balance on his or her spoon.
- Explain that this is a relay race and that the first person in the line will carry the egg on their spoon to the other end of the room and back. Tell them that if they drop the egg, they must come back to the front of the line and start over (this rule can be skipped if this proves too difficult for the children).
- Continue by telling them that when they return, they should move the egg, without using their hands, to the next person's spoon. Explain that this person will go to the other end of the room and back and will continue until the last person in each group returns.
- Tell the children that the first group to have all members return wins.
- Explain that the Easter egg reminds us that Jesus rose from the dead. Just like a baby chick breaks out of an egg, so Jesus left the tomb and is with us today.

Jesus Loves Me (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Hey! Jesus loves me!," available on YouTube (3:48). This video, with lyrics, can be used to emphasize how much Jesus loves each one of us and how he is always ready to show us mercy.
- Invite volunteers to recall some of the ideas in the song.
- Remind the children that Jesus died and rose again to show us how much he loves us.

We Trust in God's Mercy



Background Focus

The parable commonly known by the title Prodigal Son or Lost Son is called The Forgiving Father in the Featured Story of *The Catholic Children's Bible* on page 1620. This change of emphasis from the son to the father is deliberate and reflects the main point of the story. Although it is important that the son recognized his self-destructive ways and decided to repent and return home, it is even more important that he was received with mercy and compassion by his father.

Jesus' story here is not only about our human weaknesses but about God's loving kindness, or mercy, for all of his children. This is the message of this chapter. Future chapters will explore our human tendency to take the wrong path, and our need to be honest with ourselves, to be sorry, and to ask for forgiveness. But in this chapter, the emphasis is on God's mercy. God's mercy always welcomes us home.

GO (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in their chapter 2 activity booklets and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Invite four volunteers to read the prayer in the activity booklet to the group, each reading one sentence. Invite all of the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have the children put their activity booklets away for now.

Engage Activity

- Remind the children that running away from home is never a good idea, and could be very dangerous. Tell them that they will be hearing a story today that Jesus told about a young man who ran away from home.

Chapter 2




Featured Story

The Forgiving Father
(Luke 15:11–32)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that God is a loving Father
- to identify that God always forgives us when we are truly sorry for our sins
- to explain that God's mercy comes to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Lesson at a Glance

-  **Go** (10 minutes)
Opening Prayer
Engage Activity
-  **Seek** (30 minutes)
Featured Story
Core Learning Activity
-  **Find** (20 minutes)
God's Treasure of Forgiveness
Lesson Wrap-Up
Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 2 activity booklet
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- "God Is Love," by The Praise Baby Collection (Flicker Records/Big House Kids)
- "Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)" (NRUMC Kids; available on YouTube, 4:34)

- Ask the children: “How would your parents feel if you ran away from home? How would they feel when you came back?” Invite the children to share their responses.
- Explain that in the story they will read today, they will find out how this young man’s father reacted when his son left, and when his son finally came back.

† Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find Luke 15:11–32 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (pages 1619, 1622).
- Direct them to turn next to the Featured Story on page 1620 and place an “I found it!” sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves are a shortened version of the Scripture story on pages 1619 and 1622.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1620–1621. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork.
- Invite a volunteer to read the title on page 1620, and ask volunteers to describe what *forgiving* means. (*not holding a grudge against someone; not bringing up someone’s past mistakes or hurts*)
- Read the full story to the children as noted (Luke 15:11–32), beginning on page 1619. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - What did the younger son ask his father for when he wanted to leave? (*his share of the property*)
 - Where did the son go? What did he do with all the money? (*The son went to a far country and spent all the money in foolish ways.*)
 - Why did the son decide to go back home? (*He was hungry.*)
 - What did the son say to his father? (*“I have sinned against God and against you.”*)
 - What was the father’s reaction when he saw his son coming? (*The father was filled with love and pity, and called for a celebration.*)
 - Did the father scold the son? Did he tell him what a bad son he had been? (*No. The father welcomed the son back and forgave him.*)

- Have the children turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bibles open. *Answers: sinned, son, ring, shoes, dead, found*

Understand It!

- Invite three volunteers to read the paragraphs of Understand It! on page 1621, one reading the first paragraph and the remaining two dividing the second paragraph.
- Ask the children to summarize what they just heard in the reading, and review these key points with them:
 - The son asked his father for a lot of money and then left home.
 - He spent the money foolishly and had nothing to show for it.
 - When he was hungry, he decided to go home. Even before he could say he was sorry, his father hugged him and welcomed him back.
 - Our Father in Heaven is like this father. God will always love us, welcome us back, and forgive us when we are sorry.
 - Jesus told this story so that we would always trust in God’s forgiveness and **mercy**. God’s mercy is God’s loving-kindness toward all people.

Live It!

- Read the content in Live It! on page 1621 aloud to the group, or invite a volunteer to read it.
- Ask the children to share their responses to the questions.
- Ask the children to describe what the paragraph says God is like. (*a loving parent who always welcomes us back, even when we have disobeyed his commandments*)
- Pray this short prayer with the children: “Thank you, God, for loving us like the father loved his son in the story. Thank you for your mercy and forgiveness. Amen.”

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1621.
- Invite the children to describe what is happening in each of the images.

- Encourage several volunteers to stand and summarize the Bible reading for the group, using the images in Tell It!
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

What Happens Next?

- Explain that when we do wrong, we hurt others. Ask the children to share how the son in the story hurt the father. (*The son not only wasted money but hurt the father's feelings by leaving home.*)
- Emphasize to the children that even though the father was hurt, he still forgave the son because he loved him. Remind them that this is what God does: he forgives us because he loves us.
- Ask the children to listen as you read the following scenarios. Discuss the "What happens next?" with the group.
 - Sylvie is mad because her family has plans to visit her grandmother on the same weekend as a friend's birthday party. Sylvie won't be able to go to the party. She goes to her room and shuts the door in anger. Later, she feels badly and tells her mother that she is sorry. What happens next?
 - Trevor sees a basketball at the curb. He knows it belongs across the street. But he has always wanted a basketball. He takes it home. Later, he feels badly. He goes across the street and knocks on his neighbor's door. What happens next?
 - Lisa and Elvira are friends. Kaylee wants to be friends with Elvira, so she tells a lie about Lisa. Later, Kaylee feels badly. She talks to both Lisa and Elvira and says she is sorry for lying. What happens next?
 - Darren waits at the bus stop with Josh, who is in kindergarten. Darren upsets Josh every morning by telling him that he dresses funny and no one likes him. Darren feels badly about it. He tells Josh he is sorry and won't tease him again. What happens next?

- Arrange the children in small groups so that each group gets a scenario to act out. Duplicates are okay. Tell the children to add words and actions to the outline of the story. Ask the children to have the actor playing the part of the mom, the neighbor, the friends, and the kindergartner to do what God would do (that is, forgive the hurt).
- Give the groups some time to plan and practice their scenes. Then invite the different groups to present their scenes to the larger group.

Note: Preparing and presenting four scenarios may not be possible due to your time frame. If that is the case, ask the group to vote on which of the above scenes they would like to see presented. Then ask volunteers to create that scene for the entire group.

Process the Activity

- Invite the children to share the character or scene they remember best from this activity. (*Responses will vary.*) Elicit reasons for their responses.
- Tell the children that God is our Father who forgives us when we are sorry. People can act like God and forgive us when we are sorry. When we forgive others, we are being like God.
- Remind the children that sometimes people will not forgive a hurt and do not always act like God. Tell them that sometimes people hold grudges and will not forgive, but God will always forgive us if we are truly sorry.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on pages 27–28 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Ask the children to recall what sacrament they are preparing for in this group. (*the Sacrament of Reconciliation*) Remind them that this is the sacrament in which we ask for forgiveness and our sins are forgiven. Tell the children that a sin is something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law.

- Explain to the children that at the very beginning of the sacrament, the priest will greet us and welcome us. Tell them that we then pray together the Sign of the Cross. Explain that making the Sign of the Cross reminds us that we are baptized and that we belong to God. Tell the children that the priest will usually say something like, “May God, who has shone his light in our hearts grant that you may truly know your sins and his mercy” (*Order of Penance*).
- Remind the children that they learned about God’s mercy in the Bible story about the Forgiving Father. Recall that Jesus taught us that God was like the forgiving father in the story. Explain that God is full of mercy and will always love us and forgive us.
- Ask the children to share what mercy is. (*Mercy is the loving kindness of God toward all of his children.*) Tell them that when we go to confession, we trust in God’s mercy, and we trust that if we are truly sorry for our sins, God will forgive us.
- Ask the group some questions to check for comprehension:
 - What happens at the beginning of the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (*The priest greets us; we make the Sign of the Cross.*)
 - What does the priest remind us to do? (*to trust in God’s mercy*)
 - What do we confess in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (*our sins*)
 - What is mercy? (*the loving-kindness of God toward all his children*)
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity.
Answers:
1. Reconciliation, 2. mercy, 3. Father, 4. forgives, 5. grace

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God’s Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 2 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under “Things to Remember” to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - God is a loving Father.
 - God always forgives us when we are truly sorry for our sins.
 - God’s mercy comes to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 2 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



Closing Prayer

- Begin the prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Ask the children to turn to page 1990 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us, the Our Father. Encourage those who know it by heart to pray it without looking at the page.
- Pray aloud: “God our Father, help us to be good and loving sons and daughters. Help us to be like you in our words and actions. Amen.”
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.



Additional Activities

Action! The Parable of the Forgiving Father (15 minutes)

- Invite the children to act out the Parable of the Forgiving Father by arranging them in groups of three. Each child in a group will be one of the following: Jesus, the father, or the son. Use the verses on page 1620 (the Featured Story in *The Catholic Children's Bible*) as the basis for the action.
- Give the groups some time to go over the verses together. Each character has a line to say, which can be memorized, read from the Bible, or paraphrased. Give each group a chance to present their mini-play.
- Conclude by asking the groups to tell the meaning of their mini-plays. Emphasize that God is our loving Father and will always forgive us and welcome us back when we are sorry.

A Forgiveness Party (15 minutes)

- Announce that the group will be having a forgiveness party today. Tell the children that they will be celebrating the forgiveness and mercy of God.
- Distribute colorful construction paper (8½-by-11-inch), and ask each child to construct a party hat. Instruct the children to lay the paper flat, horizontally, then take the top two corners and hold them together. Staple these ends together. Ask the children to write their names on the hats and to place the hats on their desks.
- Use a piece of yellow construction paper to make a ring for each child. Cut the paper in strips (about 3-by-½-inch) and tape with cellophane tape, adjusting the size for each child. Instruct the children to place the rings next to the hats.
- Ask the children to take off their shoes and leave them on the floor next to them.
- Invite the children to line up at the front of the room. For each child, go to his or her desk and pick up the hat, the ring, and the shoes. Bring these to the child and say:
 - My dear son [or daughter], I am so happy you have come home. Here is your party hat and your ring. Here are the shoes for your feet. You were lost, but now you are found, and we are going to celebrate!
- Put the hat and the ring on the child, and help the child put on his or her shoes. The child may then go back to his or her desk.
- Conclude by distributing napkins and party snacks to celebrate God's forgiveness!

Materials Needed

- none

Materials Needed

- multicolored construction paper
- yellow construction paper (cut in strips ahead of time)
- tape
- stapler
- crayons or markers
- napkins
- party snacks (preferably in individual bags)

Materials Needed

- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector

Toon Time: The Parable of the Prodigal Son (15 minutes)

- As a group, view “The Parables of Jesus 6 – The Prodigal Son,” available on YouTube (3:37).
- Invite volunteers to recall some of the ideas in the video, encouraging the children to follow the chronological order of the events.
- Remind the children that the father in the parable represents God, and we are the son who runs away. But God will always welcome us back and forgive us. You may want to link the viewing of this video with a forgiveness party (see above).

We Follow Jesus' Message of Love



Background Focus

Today's chapter focuses entirely on the Greatest Commandment as Jesus taught it: to love God and to love others as we love ourselves. In teaching this commandment, Jesus summarized and simplified the Law of God in terms that anyone, even a child, can understand. This demonstrates his insight and brilliance as a teacher. Of course Jesus makes clear that this love includes the Ten Commandments and other teachings of God's Law. (See Matthew 23:23–24.)

This chapter also introduces the term *Sacred Scripture* as an alternative for *the Word of God* and *the Bible*. We look to Scripture for our knowledge and understanding of God and his plan for us. If we want to follow Jesus, we will listen to his Word in Scripture and then love as he loved.

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in their chapter 3 activity booklets and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have the children put their activity booklets away for now.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to think of all the people they love. Record their answers on the board. (*Possible responses might be: Mom and Dad, brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, etc.*)
- Encourage the children to expand their answers by asking: "Who else does Jesus tell us to love?" (*Possible responses might be: those who are poor, hungry, homeless, alone, friendless, etc.*)

Chapter 3




Featured Story

Love Is the Greatest Commandment
(Mark 12:28–34)

Lesson Goals

- to identify that we follow Jesus by loving God and others
- to recognize that we can learn about love in Sacred Scripture
- to explain that we can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation when we fail to love fully

Lesson at a Glance

-  **Go** (10 minutes)
Opening Prayer
Engage Activity
-  **Seek** (30 minutes)
Featured Story
Core Learning Activity
-  **Find** (20 minutes)
God's Treasure of Forgiveness
Lesson Wrap-Up
Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 3 activity booklet
- two large, red precut paper hearts for each child
- white construction paper, one piece for each child; red pencils; gold or yellow crayons or markers
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- "Love Your Neighbor as Yourself," by Wonder Kids (Wonder Workshop)
- "Love One Another (Lullaby Mix)," by Little Praise Party and Yancy (Yancy Ministries, Inc.)

- Ask the children to read over the list and add any other people they can think of. (*Suggestions: people who are disabled in some way, people who are gravely ill, people in prison.*)
- Congratulate the children on thinking of so many people to love. Explain that in this chapter they will learn more about the greatest commandment that Jesus gave us: the commandment of love.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find Mark 12:28–34 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1554–1555).
- Direct them to turn the page to the Featured Story on page 1556 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves on the page are a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1556–1557. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork.
- Read the title of the Featured Story and then the Bible story to the children. After reading, ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Who came to Jesus with a question? (*A teacher of the Law. "The Law" is God's Law that he gave to Moses on Mount Sinai.*)
 - What question did this teacher ask? (*"Which commandment is the most important of all?"*)
 - Jesus replied with two important commandments. What was the first one? (*To love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.*)
 - What is the second important commandment? (*Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.*)
- Have the children turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bibles open. *Answers: 1. 6, 2. 5, 3. 9, 4. 3, including infant, 5. hanging clothes on a line, 6. a baby, 7. orange, 8. a bundle of sticks*

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1557 to the children, or invite a volunteer or volunteers to read.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points with them:
 - At the end of our lives, Jesus will not care how much money we made or how smart we are. He will ask us, "How much did you love?"
 - The greatest thing we can do in life is to love God with all our heart, and to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves.
 - When we love, we are like God. Loving God and others is so important that God made it a law.
- Follow the suggestion in the last paragraph of Understand It! Lead the group in a spontaneous prayer in these or similar words:
 - "God, fill our hearts with your love more and more. Help us to grow in love for you. Help us to grow in love for our families, our friends, our neighbors, and all people everywhere. Amen."

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read Live It! on page 1557, or read it aloud to the group.
- Distribute two red paper hearts to each child, and ask the children to follow the directions in Live It!
- Encourage volunteers to share their responses, and allow the children to take the paper hearts home.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1557.
- Choose two volunteers to act out the Tell It! frames by speaking the short dialogue pictured.
- Ask volunteers to retell the Bible story for the group, using the images in the Tell It! frames.
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

The Greatest Commandment Booklet

- Explain that because we follow Jesus we want to follow the Law of Love he gave us, the **Greatest Commandment**. We can make a reminder of this law to take home. We can make it look like a page from the Bible.
- Distribute 8½-by-11-inch white construction paper and red pencils. Ask the children to fold the paper in half lengthwise. On the left half of the folded paper, have them write "LOVE GOD" in capital letters on the first line. Have them continue with the words "with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." On the right half, have them write "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR" in capital letters on the first line and continue with "as you love yourself."
- Ask them to fold the page to create a cover. On the cover, have them print in gold or yellow crayon or marker, "THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT." They may draw an outline in red around these words.

Process the Activity

- Ask the children to share why loving God and our neighbor is so important. (*Responses might include: Because Jesus gave us this commandment; because when we love we are like God; because when we love we follow God's Law.*)
- Invite the children to consider how this Bible-page reminder might help their families at home. (*Responses might include: They will know what Jesus teaches about love; when we see it we will remember not to start fights with our brothers and sisters; we will remember to share.*)
- Conclude by reminding the children that if we want to follow Jesus, we will love God, ourselves, and others as he taught us. Remind the children that love is a decision and an action. It is not something we do for one day, but something we do for the rest of our lives. Jesus will help us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that we can love God, ourselves, and others more fully.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on pages 33–34 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Remind the children that we learn about God in the Bible. Explain that another name for the Bible is **Sacred Scripture**. Tell them that when we read Sacred Scripture, we are reading God's Word. Give them the example of today's reading from the Bible, in which we learned that Jesus gave us the greatest commandment of all, the commandment to love.
- Explain to the children that they will likely hear God's Word in the Sacrament of Reconciliation as well. Tell them that after the priest greets us, we make the Sign of the Cross with the priest and he says a few words to encourage us to trust in God's mercy. Next we may hear God's Word from the Bible. Explain that the priest may read a short passage from Sacred Scripture, or he may ask us to read.
- Tell the children that reading from the Bible—both in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and in our daily lives—allows us to hear about God's love and forgiveness and helps us to love God and one another more fully.
- Recall for the children that Sacred Scripture can help us see when we may not have loved as fully as we are called to do, or we may have sinned. Remind them that the Good News is that we can trust in God's loving-kindness, and we can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Remind them that in this sacrament, we receive God's grace, God's new life, to help us love God, ourselves, and others.
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers: 1. Bible, Sacred Scripture, 2. God, 3. neighbor, 4. God's Word, 5. Reconciliation*

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God's Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 3 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under "Things to Remember" to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Ask the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - We follow Jesus by loving God and others.
 - We learn about love in Sacred Scripture.
 - We can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation when we fail to love fully.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 3 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



Closing Prayer

- Begin the prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to turn to page 1993 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and read together "A Prayer to Jesus."
- You may want to play a piece of music, if you have time, on the theme of loving one another.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.



Additional Activities

Jesus Teaches about Love (15 minutes)

- Explain to the children that the Bible includes many teachings of Jesus about love. Tell them that you will now give a Bible passage to each child. If there are more children than Bible passages, duplicates are okay. Or, arrange the group into partners or small groups so that the children can help one another. Each child or group should find the Bible verse and be prepared to read it to the large group.
- Use the following suggested Bible verses:
 - John 13:34–35
 - John 14:15
 - John 14:21
 - John 14:23
 - John 15:10
 - John 15:12
 - John 15:13
 - John 15:17
 - Romans 12:9
 - Romans 12:10
 - Romans 13:8
 - Romans 13:9
 - Romans 13:10
 - 1 Corinthians 13:1
 - 1 Corinthians 13:2
 - 1 Corinthians 13:3
 - 1 Corinthians 13:4
 - 1 Corinthians 13:5
 - 1 Corinthians 13:6
 - 1 Corinthians 13:7
 - 1 Corinthians 13:8
 - 1 Corinthians 13:13
 - 1 Corinthians 16:14
- Invite the children to read their Bible verses. Explain the Bible verses briefly if needed.
- Continue by asking the children what they have learned from reading God's Word in the Bible. (*Responses might include: We learned that God wants us to love others; we learned that love is the most important commandment.*)
- Conclude by reminding the children that if we want to follow Jesus, we must love God, ourselves, and others as he taught us.

A Circle of Forgiveness (15 minutes)

- Explain that the Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us to grow in love. Tell the children that we ask forgiveness for the times we have failed to love God, ourselves, or others. But we can ask forgiveness of others, and receive the forgiveness of others, at other times as well. Explain that we can do this at home or with our friends, and that this is what we will do now.
- Arrange the group in two circles, one inside the other, with the children facing each other. Each child should be standing across from and facing a partner. An even number is preferred. If there is an odd number, ask the extra child to stand in the outer circle.

Materials Needed

- slips of paper with a Bible verse on them, one for each child

Materials Needed

- none

Materials Needed

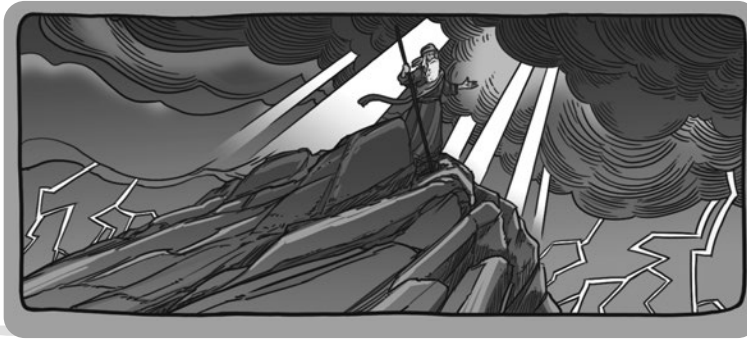
- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector

- Explain that we all do things we regret, and sometimes we hurt others without knowing it or intending it. Tell the children that they are going to form forgiveness circles, and they will practice asking for forgiveness and giving forgiveness.
- Direct the children in the inner circle to speak first: "Please forgive me." Direct the children in the outer circle to respond, "I forgive you." Then have the children in the outer circle say, "Please forgive me," to which the inner circle children respond, "I forgive you."
- Ask the inner circle to move to the right after both circles have asked for and given forgiveness. Then, with a different partner, the inner circle children ask forgiveness, and the responses continue as before. When both partners have finished, the inner circle moves to the right again. If there is an odd number of children, the inner circle should move one more time so that the extra child can be included.
- Conclude with this prayer: "Lord Jesus, we are preparing to meet you in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Help us to ask forgiveness and to receive your forgiveness. Amen."

Song Activity (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Help Each Other & Love Each Other. Never Stop Sharing," available on YouTube (5:43).
- Ask the children what characters or actions they remember from the video. Point out that each time someone in the video did a small act of love, the person who was helped did something to help someone else.
- Explain that because God loves us, we can share his love with others, even in little ways. When we share God's love, and love one another as Jesus asks us to do, we become part of a chain of love.

We Follow the Ten Commandments



Background Focus

In the last session, we learned that Jesus expects that his disciples will keep his commandment of love. This commandment of love also includes following the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments, given to us by God out of love, articulate what is called “natural law”: an innate and universal understanding within human beings of what is right or wrong. God’s gift of the Ten Commandments codifies these innate human understandings. Saint Thomas Aquinas summarized the first principle of the natural law as: “Good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided” (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 94).

The Ten Commandments formed the basis of the governance of God’s people as they wandered in the desert and in the more than three thousand years since. The Ten Commandments are the backbone of society as we know it. This session helps the children understand that God’s rules are given out of love, to help us live safe and happy lives as his children and as loving brothers and sisters to one another.

GO (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in their chapter 4 activity booklets and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Ask the children to read the prayer together. Invite them to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have the children put their activity booklets away for now.

Engage Activity

- Arrange the children in groups of three. Ask them to write down three good rules for this sacrament preparation group. Explain that these may be rules that are already followed (like raising hands before speaking) or they might be new rules.

Chapter 4




Featured Story

God Gives His People the Ten Commandments
(Exodus 19:16–20:17)

Lesson Goals

- to express that God gave us rules to keep his people safe and happy
- to recognize that the Ten Commandments are rooted in God’s love for us
- to explain the difference between a sin and an accident

Lesson at a Glance

-  **Go** (10 minutes)
Opening Prayer
Engage Activity
-  **Seek** (30 minutes)
Featured Story
Core Learning Activity
-  **Find** (20 minutes)
God’s Treasure of Forgiveness
Lesson Wrap-Up
Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and chapter 4 activity booklet
- ten scrolls (rolled-up construction paper, but not tied)
- a prize, such as a holy card or a prayer card, for each child
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High,” by Cedarment Kids (Cedarment Music, LLC)
- “The Ten Commandments Song,” by The River’s Voice (The River’s Voice)

- Ask the groups to share the rules. Write them on the board. If there are duplicates, put a check mark next to the rule that was mentioned more than once.
- Conclude with the following or similar words:
 - We have rules for school and rules for home. God has rules too! God has rules for us because he wants to keep us safe and happy. Today we will learn more about some of the rules from God.

+ Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find Exodus 20:1–17 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 131 and 134).
- Direct them to turn the page to the Featured Story on page 132 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves on the page are a shortened version of the Scripture story on pages 131 and 134.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 132 and 133. Point out the man standing on the mountain. Tell the children that this is Moses. When God's people were slaves in Egypt, God chose Moses to lead them out of slavery.
- Invite a volunteer to read the title of the Featured Story. Explain that long before God sent his Son, Jesus, to teach us and help us, God was teaching his people the best way to live. Tell them that God gave us the rules we call the **Ten Commandments**.
- Before reading the Bible story on page 132 to the children, read aloud Exodus 19:16–24 on page 131. Ask the children to follow in their Bibles. These verses set the scene for the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses. Then read the Bible story to the children and ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Who was Moses? (*Moses was the leader of God's people.*)
 - What did God give to Moses? (*the Ten Commandments*)
 - What are some of the commandments that God gave us? (*Worship no god but me. Do not use my name for evil purposes. Observe the Sabbath. Respect your father and your mother.*)

➤ Why did God give us the Ten Commandments? (*He wants us to love him and to love ourselves and others. He wants us to be happy and peaceful together.*)

- Have the children turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bibles open. *Answers: 1. Worship, 2. generations, 3. evil, 4. Sabbath/holy, 5. Respect, 6. steal, 7. accuse, 8. house/donkeys*

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 133 to the children, or invite a volunteer or volunteers to read.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points with them:
 - Rules keep us safe and happy.
 - God gave Moses, and us, the Ten Commandments so that we could be safe and happy.
 - The first three commandments teach us how to love God.
 - The next seven commandments teach us how to love other people.
- Ask the children to turn to the Ten Commandments on page 1988 in the back of *The Catholic Children's Bible*. Ask volunteers to take turns reading each of the commandments. Point out the first three commandments about loving God and the next seven commandments about loving other people.

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read Live It! on page 133, or read it aloud to the group.
- Invite the children to pray with you: "Dear God, help us to follow your commandments today and every day. Help us to love and respect you, to love and respect ourselves, and to love and respect others. Amen."

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at and describe the images in Tell It! on page 133. (*The first frame is Moses on the mountain; the second is the people worshipping God alone; the third is a child respecting and helping his parent.*)

- Direct the children’s attention to the third frame and ask, “If you could put a picture of yourself in the third frame, respecting and helping your parent, what would it show?” (*Accept reasonable responses.*)
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

A Ten Commandments Relay

- Prepare by writing one of the Ten Commandments, found on page 1988 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible*, on each of the ten scrolls.
- Arrange the children into ten teams with the same number of children on each team, if possible. Line the teams up next to each other. Establish a starting line in front of each team and a finish line across the room.
- Give one scroll to the first team member in each line. If some teams are larger, give commandments with fewer words to those teams.
- Explain that the object of the race is not to finish first, but to learn the commandment by heart. When the leader says, “Ready, set, GO!” the team members will run to the finish line, open the scroll, read aloud the commandment, roll up the scroll, turn around, and run back to give the scroll to the next team member. That team member will do the same thing. When all team members have returned to their line, they are to raise their hands in the air and keep them up to show that they have completed the relay. The last person to return to the line will hold up the scroll.
- Ask each team—in commandment order—to share their commandment by reciting it from memory.
- Have a prize ready for each child—perhaps a child-friendly holy card or prayer card—because everyone who learned a commandment is a winner.

Note: If there are too few children to make ten teams, you can divide the group into five teams, distribute the first five commandments on scrolls, hear the recitations at the end, and then run the race again with the next five commandments. If time permits, you can scramble the teams and run

more races, thus allowing the children to run with and learn a different commandment.

Process the Activity

- Review the significance of the Ten Commandments by asking the children to share why God gave them to us. (*Responses might include: out of love; because God wants us to be safe and happy.*)
- Conclude by reminding the children that if we want to follow Jesus, we will love God, ourselves, and others as he taught us. The Ten Commandments were not just for Moses and God’s people long ago. They are still God’s rules today. They are the best way for us to love God, ourselves, and others.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on pages 39–40 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God’s Treasure of Forgiveness

- Remind the children that Jesus wants us to love God, ourselves, and others, and that the Ten Commandments show us how to do this in ten different ways. Explain that when we fail to love as God calls us to and we sin, we can confess our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Recall the steps covered so far in the Sacrament of Reconciliation: the priest greets us, we make the Sign of the Cross, the priest reminds us of God’s mercy, and we hear the Word of God. Explain to the children that the next step is to confess, or tell, our sins to the priest.
- Help the children understand that we confess our sins to the priest because Jesus gave the power to forgive sins to the Apostles. Tell them that the Pope and bishops are the successors to the Apostles, and they receive this same power to forgive sins. A priest receives the authority to forgive sins from his bishop.
- Explain that we confess sins, not accidents, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - To commit a sin, you must *know* it is a sin (something against God’s Law and against love), you must *want to do it*, and you must *do it freely*.
 - An **accident** is something that you do by mistake, that you *did not intend* to happen.

- Give an example of the difference between sins and accidents.
 - If we break something in the house, like a lamp, while we are dusting the living room, that is an accident. But if we break the lamp because we are throwing a ball in the house, which a parent has told us we may not do, then we freely and deliberately disobeyed by throwing the ball.
 - We may not have wanted to break the lamp, but we did want to throw the ball. The broken lamp was a direct result of our decision to throw the ball. We may need to help replace the lamp. We always need to make up in some way for any damage we cause because of our sins, whether it is hurt feelings or damaged property.
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers:*
 1. Yes, Sam disobeyed. No, this was an accident, but it was a consequence of throwing the ball. Sam should confess the entire incident and will need to make up for the broken lamp in some way.
 2. Yes, Crissie disobeyed.
 3. No, this was an accident.
- If time permits, you may want to discuss the following two situations with the children:
 1. After supper it was homework time. Lydia told her mom, "I don't have any homework." Even though Lydia had a spelling pretest tomorrow, she wanted to play video games instead of studying. Did Lydia commit a sin?
Answer: Yes, she lied to her mother.
 2. Jill walks home from school every day with her sixth-grade neighbor, Jason. Jason saw some flowers in a yard. Jason said, "Hey, Jill, go over there and pick those flowers so I can give them to my mom." Jill said, "I don't want to! That's stealing!" Jason said, "If you don't, I won't walk you home anymore and you will have to cross the highway by yourself." So Jill picked the flowers that Jason wanted. Did Jason commit a sin?
Answer: Yes, he bullied Jill and told her to do something wrong.

Did Jill commit a sin?
Answer: No, she was coerced by Jason. She told him it was wrong, but he threatened her. She did not make a free decision to pick the flowers.

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God's Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 4 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under "Things to Remember" to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - God gave us rules to keep his people safe and happy.
 - The Ten Commandments are rooted in God's love for us.
 - There are differences between a sin and an accident.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 4 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



Closing Prayer

- Begin the prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to turn to page 1993 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and pray the Act of Contrition together.
- You may want to play a piece of music, if you have time, on the theme of listening to God or the Ten Commandments.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.



Additional Activities

The Ten Commandments Tablets (15 minutes)

- Recall Jesus' teaching on the Greatest Commandment, to love God and to love others. Tell the children that the Ten Commandments are God's Laws that help us to love God and others. Explain that because we follow Jesus, we want to follow the Ten Commandments.
- Tell the children that they are going to make a reminder of the Ten Commandments to take home. Explain that this reminder will look like the tablets that Moses brought down from the mountain.
- Distribute the construction paper "tablets." On the left-hand tablet, have the children write LOVE GOD in capital letters at the top. Under this, have them write the numbers 1, 2, and 3 in a row down the tablet. On the right-hand tablet, have them write LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR in capital letters at the top. Under this, have them write the numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 in a row down the tablet. If time permits, ask the children to turn to page 1988 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* to review each of the Ten Commandments. Read a number aloud and ask a volunteer to read the commandment; then read a commandment aloud and ask a volunteer to say what number it is.

Ten Commandments Puzzle Cards (15 minutes)

- Give each child ten half-pieces of paper. Ask the children to turn to page 1988 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and copy the commandments onto the paper, one commandment on each piece. The printing should not stay only at the top, but should spread over the entire half-piece of paper.
- Ask the children to decorate each commandment with crayons or markers.
- Instruct the children to cut each commandment pieces into four or more pieces. Direct the children to cut larger rather than smaller pieces. They may cut them evenly or at odd angles. They should then scramble their set, and turn all the pieces upside down.
- Invite the children to turn all the pieces over when you say, "Ready, set, go!" and put them back together in order from one to ten. Both the words and the colors will help them find matches for their pieces.
- Conclude the activity by having the group recite the Ten Commandments together from their puzzles.
- Distribute a large plastic sandwich bag to each child so that puzzle pieces can be taken home.

Materials Needed

- black markers
- white construction paper, precut to look like two attached Ten Commandments tablets, one for each child (Fold each piece of paper lengthwise. At the top, cut an arc. When opened, this will look like two commandments tablets.)

Materials Needed

- enough pieces of plain white paper, cut in half, to make ten half-pieces for each child
- crayons or markers
- scissors
- large plastic sandwich bags

Materials Needed

- white drawing paper
- crayons

The Ten Commandments Song (15 minutes)

- Show the video “The Ten Commandments Song,” by Christine in Action, available on YouTube (1:14).
- Play the video several times and invite the children to sing along as they become familiar with the song.
- Remind the children that the Ten Commandments help us live as God wants us to live. Explain that they are not just rules to follow, but ways we can love God and others more.
- Distribute the drawing paper and crayons. Ask the children to think about one commandment and then illustrate that commandment, either in one main picture or in a row of pictures, as in video scenes. Suggest that they use the Tell It! frames on page 133 in their Bibles as an example of this kind of illustration.

We Ask for Forgiveness



Background Focus

Identifying ourselves as sinners is not easy, but it is the honest truth. With this truth comes the humble realization that no one—not even the person I call *me*, *myself*, and *I*—is perfect. This truth can be humbly liberating, especially when we realize that God still loves us and wants to forgive us. As sinners, our imperfect love is met by perfect love. We are forgiven!

The expansion of the definition of sin presented in this lesson is very important and includes the distinction between serious sin (mortal sin), which completely breaks our relationship with God, and less-serious sin (venial sin), which nonetheless harms our relationship with God and others.

In this lesson, the truth of sinfulness and forgiveness is gradually opened up to the children through the account of the sinful woman who poured her perfume and her tears over Jesus' feet.

GO (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in the chapter 5 activity booklet and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have the children put their activity booklets away for now.

Chapter 5




Featured Story

Jesus Forgives a Woman's Sins (Luke 7:36–50)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that our sins can be forgiven if we are truly sorry
- to identify that we have more room for love when we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- to explain the difference between mortal sin and venial sin

Lesson at a Glance

-  **Go** (10 minutes)
 - Opening Prayer
 - Engage Activity
-  **Seek** (30 minutes)
 - Featured Story
 - Core Learning Activity
-  **Find** (20 minutes)
 - God's Treasure of Forgiveness
 - Lesson Wrap-Up
 - Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 5 activity booklet
- an empty square tissue box for each child, seven construction-paper "jewels" for each child, one envelope for each child, one-half of an index card for each child, tape, markers or crayons, paper and pencils for closing prayer (*optional*)
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- "Jesus Heal Us," by Sr. Kathy Bettencourt (Sr. Kathy Bettencourt)
- "We Are Marching," by Invitation Music (Invitation Publishing)

Engage Activity

- Ask the children to think about everything they own—their clothes, their toys, their books, their electronic devices. Have them share what their most treasured possession is and where they keep it. Record their answers on the board.
- Explain that some people keep their most treasured possessions at the bank, in a special box. Continue with the following points:
 - People sometimes keep their jewelry at the bank so the jewelry will be safe at all times.
 - People sometimes keep important papers at the bank so that they will not be lost or burned up in a fire.
 - Other people keep special boxes at home for their most treasured possessions.
- Tell the children that today they will learn about a woman who was so sorry for her sins that she gave her most precious possession to Jesus.
- Ask the children if they would be willing to give their most precious possession to Jesus. Remind them that Jesus does not really want or need what we have. Explain that he wants us to love God, ourselves, and others. Tell the children that Jesus wants us to be truly sorry, to not sin again, to do our penance, and to follow his command of love.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find Luke 7:36–50 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1595).
- Direct them to turn the page to the Featured Story on page 1596 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves on the page are a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous page.
- Ask the children what they think the woman in the artwork on pages 1596–1597 is doing.
- Invite a volunteer to read the title of the Featured Story.
- Read the Bible story to the children (either the short version on page 1596 or the longer version, Luke 7:36–50, on the previous page). Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:

- Where was Jesus in this story? (*eating at the house of a Pharisee*)
 - Who came in with a special alabaster jar? (*a woman*)
 - What was in the jar? (*perfume*)
 - What was the woman doing at first? (*crying and wetting Jesus' feet with her tears*)
 - What did the woman do next? (*She dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured the perfume on them.*)
 - What did she show by doing this? (*her great love*)
 - What did Jesus say to her? (*"Your sins are forgiven."*)
- Explain that like the woman in the story, we have room in our hearts for two things: love and sin. Remind the children that sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against God's Law, especially the commandment of love. The more love we have, the less room we have for sin. The more sin we have—the more meanness and selfishness—the less room we have for love. When we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we have more room for love.
 - Have the children turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bibles open. *Answers: "In that town was a woman who lived a sinful life. She heard that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee's house, so she brought an alabaster jar full of perfume and stood behind Jesus, by his feet, crying and wetting his feet with her tears. Then she dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured the perfume on them. [Jesus said] 'The great love she has shown proves that her many sins have been forgiven. . . .' Then Jesus said to the woman, 'Your sins are forgiven.'"*

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1597 to the children, or invite a volunteer or volunteers to read.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.

- Review these key points with them:
 - Jesus is a friend to sinners and forgives them.
 - This woman was sorry for her sins. She had true contrition, true sorrow for her sins.
 - She showed her sorrow and love with her tears, kisses, and gift of perfume.
 - Jesus forgave this woman's sins.

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read Live It! on page 1597 or read it aloud to the group.
- Explain that the Jesus Prayer can be said any time or in any place, and that some people carry a circle of ten beads with them, called "Jesus beads," so that they can move their fingers from bead to bead as they pray.
- You may want to ask the children to say the Jesus Prayer now, ten times, using their fingers as "beads."
- Assure the children that Jesus will always forgive them if they are sorry.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1597.
- Invite the children to find a partner and use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

A Treasure Box of Love

- Remind the children that the sinful woman gave her greatest treasure to Jesus to show her sorrow and love. Explain that Jesus forgave her sins, not because she gave her treasure, but because she had great love. Help the children understand that her love was a greater treasure than her perfume. Tell the children that we too can have the great treasure of love and offer this love to Jesus by doing good things for others.

- Distribute a tissue box, one-half of an index card, a small envelope, and seven paper "jewels" to each child. Cut out the "jewels" ahead of time. Each should be about 2 inches long or about 2 inches in diameter. Of the seven jewels, two should be "diamonds" (a diamond shape cut from white paper), two should be "rubies" (a round shape cut from red paper), two should be "turquoise stones" (an oval shape cut from turquoise paper), and one should be a "gold bar" (a rectangle cut from gold or yellow paper). Ask the children to write their names on the envelopes, and to keep the paper jewels in the envelopes.
- Ask the children to write "My Treasure Box" on the one-half index card. This should be taped to the front of the tissue box.
- Explain that each paper jewel represents a real jewel. Tell the children that there are seven of them, one for each day of the week. Name each jewel with a day of the week. Ask the children, starting today, to write something good that they did for someone else on a jewel each day. (*Suggestions: "I helped clear the table without being asked"; "I read a storybook to my baby cousin."*) Explain that they may make more jewels at home if they want to put more "treasure" into their boxes.

Process the Activity

- Invite the children to give examples of good actions they might write on their jewels. (*Responses will vary. Encourage the children to be alert to small things they can do to help others. Explain that love is often expressed in small and helpful ways.*)
- Remind the children that the more we love, the less room we have for sin in our hearts. Tell them that Jesus will always forgive our sins if we ask him.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on pages 46–47 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Explain that the sinful woman gave her greatest treasure—her love—to Jesus, so he forgave her all of her sins. Recall that sin is doing something that is against love. Remind the children that sin is a thought, word, or action that goes against God's Law, especially the commandment of love.
- Tell the children that there are two kinds of sin: **mortal sin** and **venial sin**. Write both of these terms on the board, leaving space for examples to come.
- Introduce the definition of *mortal sin*, giving examples:
 - Mortal sin is a serious sin, committed on purpose, that completely breaks our loving relationship with God. Mortal sin is a serious sin against the Ten Commandments and against God's Law of Love. Mortal sin is a sin like murder. *(Write this on the board.)* We sin by taking another's life. Or, we can sin against God by refusing to worship him as he deserves. We can refuse to go to Mass on Sunday or on Holy Days of Obligation. *(Write this on the board. The Holy Days of Obligation can be found on page 1989 in The Catholic Children's Bible.)*
 - Mortal sin cannot be committed by accident. It is very serious. To commit a mortal sin, you must first *know* it is a mortal and serious sin, you must *want to do it*, and you must *freely* do it.
 - If we commit a mortal sin and are sorry for it afterward, we must go to confession as soon as possible. We have broken our loving relationship with God, and we must ask forgiveness.
- Introduce the definition of *venial sin* by explaining that a venial sin is a less serious sin that weakens, but does not completely break, our loving relationship with God.

- Expand on this definition with the following explanation and examples:
 - Venial sin cannot be committed by accident. We must know something is a sin, must want to do it, and then do it freely. Venial sins are the kinds of sin that we might commit in our everyday lives. Some examples are: talking back to our parents and being sassy and rude, fighting with our brothers and sisters, cheating on a test, taking something that does not belong to us. *(Write these on the board and others that may apply to your group.)*
 - Even though venial sin is "less serious," we want to avoid it, because we do not want to harm our loving relationship with God or others the least little bit.
- Explain that venial sin is something that we can confess in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and we can ask God to forgive us. The sacrament helps us to be better and to follow Jesus more closely.
- Tell the children that there are other ways that venial sin is forgiven. We can also ask God to forgive us at the beginning of every Mass, in the Penitential Act. We can ask God to forgive us in our private prayer. Emphasize that the best way to receive God's forgiveness is in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, because the grace we receive from this sacrament helps us to grow in God's love.
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers:* 1. *freely*, 2. *as soon as possible*, 3. *weakens*, 4. *Reconciliation*, 5. *grace*

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God's Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 5 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under "Things to Remember" to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - God will forgive our sins if we are truly sorry.
 - We have more room for love when we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - There is a difference between mortal (serious) sin and venial (less serious) sin.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 5 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to open their Bibles to Romans 12:21 (page 1786). Invite a volunteer to read this verse. Remind the children to conquer evil with good by working on their treasure boxes this week.
- End with the "Morning Prayer." Write it on the board so that all can pray together, or if there is time, distribute paper and pencils so that the children can copy it for use at home. Pray the prayer together, then close with the Sign of the Cross.

Morning Prayer

O my God, I offer you this day
 All I do and think and say,
 In union with what was done
 On earth by Jesus Christ, your Son.
 Amen.



Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- a vial, spray bottle, or small bowl of perfume or essential oil
- tissues
- an index card for each child
- markers
- hole-punch, ribbon (optional)

Materials Needed

- instrumental music, both sorrowful and joyful (suggestion: "We Are Marching")

The Sweet Fragrance of Christ (15 minutes)

- Make sure that the children don't have any allergies to perfumes or essential oils. Direct the children to open their Bibles to 2 Corinthians 2:14–15 (page 1820). Explain that in these verses, Saint Paul is comparing the knowledge of Christ to a sweet fragrance. Tell them that just like the sweet fragrance of perfume spreads everywhere, so the followers of Christ bring the knowledge and love of Christ everywhere.
- Read aloud these verses to the children. Then ask the children to form a line. Sit in a chair and, as each child stands before you, say: "I mark you with the sweet fragrance of Christ in the sign of the cross. Spread the knowledge and love of Christ everywhere!" (*Spray or dip the perfume or essential oil on a tissue or on your thumb, and mark the child with the Sign of the Cross.*)
- Give each child an index card. Ask the children to draw a simple cross on it. Under the cross, ask them to write "The Sweet Fragrance of Christ." Again, using a spray, your finger, or a tissue, mark each card with the perfume or essential oil.
- You may want to punch two holes at the top and run a ribbon through the holes so the card can be hung over a doorknob at home.

Praying Our Sorrow, Dancing Our Joy (15 minutes)

- Explain to the children that we can pray with our bodies as well as with words. Explain that when we genuflect before we go into the pew in church, we are honoring God with our bodies. When we make the Sign of the Cross, we also are honoring God with our bodies.
- Play the sorrowful music for a few moments, and invite the children to move with it. Then ask them to hold still in a position that will let God know how sorry they are for doing wrong.
- Ask them to breathe quietly, in and out, and talk to God for a few moments. Instruct them to tell God what they are sorry for, and to ask for his forgiveness and strength to avoid sin from now on.
- Give them a few moments to say their thanks to God for his forgiveness and love. Then say aloud: "Thank you, God, for your forgiveness and love. We can be joyful in your forgiveness!"
- Play the joyful music and allow the children to march around the room, move, or dance to it. Remind them that when our sins are forgiven, we rise with Jesus to new life.

Jesus Forgives Sins (15 minutes)

- Show the video, “Jesus and the Sinful Woman,” available on YouTube (3:16). This cartoon is a retelling of the Gospel account in Luke 7:36–50.
- Tell the children that Jesus told a story to explain love and forgiveness to Simon the Pharisee. Ask volunteers to retell the story and/or recall scenes that they remember from the video.
- Explain that the woman’s actions showed her great love for Jesus and how sorry she was for her sins. Jesus forgave her for those many sins.
- Share that we are also called to show sorrow for our sins and our love for Jesus. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will give us the grace and strength to continue to follow Jesus and his way of love as this woman did.

Materials Needed

- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector

Chapter 6

Featured Story

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd
(John 10:1–18)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that Jesus loves and cares for us as a good shepherd cares for his sheep
- to recall that Jesus seeks us out when we stray, and we can return through the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- to explain that in the Act of Contrition, we express our sorrow for having sinned

Lesson at a Glance

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer
Engage Activity

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story
Core Learning Activity

Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of
Forgiveness
Lesson Wrap-Up
Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 6 activity booklet
- a stuffed toy lamb
- one white balloon for each child, already blown up and decorated with a sheep's ears, eyes, nose, and mouth, drawn with a black marker; a ruler or stick for each child
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- "I Am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11)," by Paul McIntyre (Paul McIntyre)
- "The Baa Baa Song," by Sibling Harmony (Sibling Harmony)

Jesus Loves and Cares for Us



Background Focus

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are not simply confessing our sins to the priest. We are confessing them to God. The priest is God's representative, who has the power, in God's name, to forgive our sins. In every sacrament, the priest acts in the name of Jesus. Getting to know Jesus as the Good Shepherd helps the children to understand that the priest, who acts in the name of Christ, will welcome them with love and care.

You may want to remind the children that we have many shepherds in our lives. Parents and teachers are shepherds; police and firefighters are shepherds who risk their lives each day to care for the community; and children themselves are shepherds when they look out for younger children or animals. All people who love and care for others are signs of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who loves and cares for all.

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in their chapter 6 activity booklets and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have the children put their activity booklets away for now.

Engage Activity

- Begin the lesson by using the stuffed lamb as a puppet. Walk the lamb along the front desk or on the desks of the children as you say, in the voice of the lamb: "Baaa! Baaa!"

- Tell the children that the lamb is lost, and then continue with these or similar words:
 - This lamb should be with his flock, but here he is, wandering around this room.
 - This lamb needs someone to find him! This lamb needs a shepherd!
- Ask a volunteer to be the shepherd, and have him or her come forward.
- Continue with the following words:
 - What should the shepherd say to this poor little lost lamb? *(Take suggestions. Tell the shepherd to repeat some of the better suggestions and say them to the lamb, "Poor lamb. Come with me. I will take you home," etc.)*
 - Yes, that is exactly what a good shepherd would say to a lost lamb! This is what Jesus, our Good Shepherd, says to us. He says: "I am here to find you again. I will bring you home." When we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are coming home again to the flock of the Good Shepherd, Jesus.
- Allow the shepherd to take the lamb to his or her desk. Explain that you will name a new shepherd every few minutes, so that all the children get a turn at being a shepherd to the lamb.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to open their Bibles and to find John 10:1–18 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1675 and 1678).
- Direct them to turn the page to the Featured Story on page 1676 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves on the page are a shortened version of the Scripture verses on the previous page and on page 1678.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1676–1677. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork and to predict what the Bible story might be about.
- Invite a volunteer to read the title of the Featured Story, and then to look at the vocabulary words at the bottom of the page. Ask a volunteer to read each word, and another volunteer to read the definition.

- Introduce the Bible story to the children by explaining that where Jesus lived, there were a lot of sheep and a lot of shepherds. Continue with the following points:
 - People saw shepherds all the time. They knew it was hard work being a shepherd and taking care of sheep all day and all night too.
 - Today we might compare being a shepherd to a rancher taking care of cattle or even to those of us who take care of a pet.
 - Many animals are totally dependent on us for their food, their water, and their well-being. We can't let them down. In this story, Jesus tells us that he will never let us down.
- Read the Bible story on page 1676 to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Who is the Good Shepherd? *(Jesus)*
 - What does the Good Shepherd do? *(He takes care of the sheep and is willing to die for them.)*
 - There is a wolf in this story. What could the wolf do to the sheep? *(He might snatch the sheep and scatter them.)*
 - If we are the sheep of Jesus, what do you think the wolf is? *(The wolf is anyone who wants to harm us or to lead us on the wrong path.)*
- Have the children turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the maze by drawing a line from the shepherd to the lost sheep.

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1677 to the children, or invite a volunteer or volunteers to read.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points with them:
 - Sheep need to be cared for.
 - A good shepherd loves his sheep and knows each one.
 - A good shepherd risks his life to save his sheep.

- Jesus called himself “the good shepherd.”
- Jesus knows us, loves us, and died for us. He is a shepherd worth following forever!

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read the left-hand column of Live It! on page 1677, or read it aloud to the group.
- Pray the verses of Psalm 23 with the group.
- If time permits, you might want to play one of the Good Shepherd hymns noted in “Music Suggestions” at the beginning of this lesson.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1677.
- Encourage several volunteers to stand and summarize the Bible reading for the group, using the images in Tell It!
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

Leading the Sheep

- Set up chairs in a circle to designate the sheep pen.
- Explain that today we will play a game to remind us that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, leads us and guides us.
- Gather the children at one end of the room, and ask the children to listen to the following instructions:
 - Each of you will be given a sheep. You will be the shepherd. Hang on to your sheep by the little knot at one end. (*Distribute a balloon to each child.*)
 - I will also give you a ruler or stick. (*Distribute a ruler or stick to each child.*) When I say, “Go!” drop your balloon sheep and use the ruler or stick to gently guide your sheep into the sheep pen on the other side of the room. You may not use your hands!
 - Get ready! Get set! Go!
- Ask the children to return to their seats when the sheep have been led to the sheep pen.

Note: If your group is large, allow a few children at a time to take turns shepherding their sheep into the pen. Do not distribute the rulers or sticks until right before their use.

Process the Activity

- Invite the children to share what they learned about their balloon sheep. (*They are not easy to lead and guide with gentleness. Sometimes they go anywhere but where they should go!*) Remind the children that Jesus leads and guides us with gentleness, even when we want to go every which way.
- Invite the children to share their experiences of being a shepherd in the activity. Explain that being a shepherd is not an easy job. But Jesus never gives up. He wants us to stay with him and follow him because he is the Good Shepherd.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on page 52 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God’s Treasure of Forgiveness

- Invite the children to recall the different steps of the Sacrament of Reconciliation that have been covered up to this point. You may want to point them to *The Rite of Reconciliation and Key Words* booklet to read through the steps of the individual celebration on page 2, stopping them when they get to the confession of sins.
- Continue with these or similar words:
 - After we confess our sins, the priest may give us some words of advice or encouragement. He will then give us a **penance**. A penance is a prayer or good action that shows that we will do better. Doing a penance shows, in a small way, that we want to make up for what we have done. Sometimes a penance is a prayer to pray. Sometimes it is an action to do. Sometimes it is a kind act to help someone that we have hurt in some way. It is important to do our penance as soon as possible.

- The priest will then invite us to pray an **Act of Contrition**. The Act of Contrition is a prayer that tells God that we are sorry and will not sin again.
- The word **contrition** means “true sorrow for sin and a desire to avoid sin in the future.” Our Act of Contrition in the Sacrament of Reconciliation tells God that we are sorry for our sins. In the sacrament, we can say the Act of Contrition by heart or we can read it from a card. We should practice ahead of time, so that we know what we are saying to God and can say it with our whole heart.
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers:*
 1. *Contrition*, 2. *sin*, 3. *encouragement*,
 4. *penance*, 5. *possible*

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God’s Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 6 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under “Things to Remember” to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Jesus loves and cares for us as a good shepherd cares for his sheep.
 - Jesus seeks us out when we stray and we can return through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - In the Act of Contrition, we express our sorrow for having sinned.

- Ask the children to place the chapter 6 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Play a Good Shepherd song or hymn from the list of “Music Suggestions” at the beginning of this lesson.
- End by praying an Act of Contrition (see page 1993 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible*). Then close with a final Sign of the Cross.



Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- a large piece of green poster board
- a picture of Jesus the Good Shepherd (pictures for this activity can be found by searching through Good Shepherd and sheep clipart on the Internet)
- a small picture (one-fourth of a page) of a sheep for each child
- cotton balls
- glue

Materials Needed

- none

Materials Needed

- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector
- four pieces of paper with the lyrics for each part of the song: refrain, verse 1, verse 2, and verse 3

A Poster of the Good Shepherd (15 minutes)

- Explain that Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and each one of us is a sheep. Tell the children that the entire Church, including the Pope and bishops, is the flock of Christ. Explain that today we will make a poster showing that we belong to the Good Shepherd.
- Write “We Are the Sheep of His Pasture” at the top of the green piece of poster board. Tack the poster to a bulletin board or tape it to a wall.
- Distribute a sheep to each child. Distribute the cotton balls and glue. Tell the children to glue the cotton balls on the sheep, covering it except for the face.
- Tape each child’s sheep to the poster. As you do so, say: “_____, the Lord Jesus is your shepherd. May you follow him all of your days.” Then put your right hand on the child’s head and make the sign of the cross on the forehead with your thumb.
- Display the poster, if you wish, in the vestibule of the church on the day of First Reconciliation.

Run, Sheep, Run (15 minutes)

- Move the desks and chairs to the sides of the room, or find a space where there is a clear area.
- Choose four or five children to be “wolves.” The rest of the children are sheep. The goal for the wolves is to “capture” as many sheep as possible. They do this by tagging the sheep, at which point the sheep freeze in place.
- Explain that sheep that haven’t been tagged can free the frozen sheep by simply tagging them. This unfreezes the sheep and puts them back into play.
- Allow the activity to continue for 5 minutes or so, and then choose new wolves and restart the game.

Video Song (15 minutes)

- Show the video “The Baa Baa Song (He’s the Good Shepherd) - Sibling Harmony,” available on YouTube (2:06). Gather the children in a circle as they watch, then play the song again and let the children clap and dance along.
- Invite the children to form four groups after you have sung the song several times. Assign each group a part of the song—refrain, verse 1, verse 2, verse 3—and give them the lyrics to that part.
- Ask each group to create hand motions that go with the lyrics of the refrain or the verse assigned to them. When finished have the small groups teach the whole group.

Jesus Helps Us Always



Background Focus

The brains of second graders are still developing, and so their interpretation of events is often very literal. This lesson bridges the gap between a literal and a metaphorical understanding of an event. Understanding the storm at sea metaphorically, we can help the children understand that Jesus is with them during their own stormy times.

We may not realize how often we speak in metaphors. Accepting a drink, we say, “Thanks. That hits the spot.” (What spot? Where?) Speaking of an obstacle we have encountered, perhaps a difficulty with another person that was resolved, we say, “She gave me a run for my money.” (This metaphor comes from horse racing.)

In today’s lesson, with its scriptural account of Jesus calming the sea, we see Jesus actually quieting the Sea of Galilee—but this is also a metaphor for his presence and help with us always, especially in times of trouble, and especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in their chapter 7 activity booklets and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer together, then invite all of the children to say, “Amen.” Close with another Sign of the Cross. Have the children put their activity booklets away for now.

Chapter 7




Featured Story

Jesus Helps Us in Times of Trouble (Matthew 8:23–27)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize Jesus as the Son of God who is with us in times of trouble
- to define ourselves as disciples of Jesus who call on him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- to explain that our sins are forgiven and we are restored to peace when we receive absolution

Lesson at a Glance

-  **Go** (10 minutes)
 - Opening Prayer
 - Engage Activity
-  **Seek** (30 minutes)
 - Featured Story
 - Core Learning Activity
-  **Find** (20 minutes)
 - God’s Treasure of Forgiveness
 - Lesson Wrap-Up
 - Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and chapter 7 activity booklet
- a plastic tub of water; at least three plastic boats; a towel
- a piece of newspaper for each child, tape
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- “Help Me, Jesus (Hebrews 13:6b),” by Jay Stocker (Group Publishing, Inc.)
- “Just Give Me Jesus/’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus,” by New Life Worship Kids (Integrity Music)

Engage Activity

- Place the pan or tub of water on a desk, preferably on top of a plastic tablecloth.
- Invite each child (or three volunteers) to place a boat in the water. Ask the children to share what they think would happen if a storm came up and the wind blew hard. (*The boats would be in danger. They might sink.*)
- Ask a volunteer to make waves in the tub with their hands and sink the boats. If possible, take turns and offer several volunteers this opportunity.
- Explain that something similar happened to Jesus and his followers. Tell the children that a storm came up on the sea, but Jesus saved them!

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find Matthew 8:23–27 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1466).
- Direct them to turn to the Featured Story on page 1468 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves on the page are a shortened version of the Scripture verses on page 1466.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1468–1469. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork.
- Read the title of the Featured Story and then point to the vocabulary words at the bottom of the page. Ask a volunteer to read each word, and another volunteer to read the definition.
- Introduce the Bible story to the children by explaining that many of the disciples were fishermen. Include the following information:
 - The disciples fished on the Sea of Galilee, which is a large body of water in Israel.
 - Sometimes Jesus and the disciples used a boat to travel from one side of the sea to the other. And sometimes there were storms on the sea.
- Read the Bible story to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - What happened while Jesus and the disciples were crossing the sea in the boat? (*a storm came up*)
 - What was Jesus doing? (*He was asleep.*)

- What did the disciples do? (*They woke up Jesus.*)
- What did they ask Jesus? (*to save them*)
- What did Jesus do? (*He ordered the winds and the waves to stop.*)
- How did the disciples feel? (*They were amazed. They wondered who Jesus was.*)
- Conclude by reminding the children that we know who Jesus is: Jesus is the Son of God!
- Have the children turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers: 1. b, 2. c, 3. b, 4. b, 5. c, 6. c, 7. c*

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1469 to the children, and then invite them to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points with them:
 - Jesus is with us, not only in the good things of life but also in the storms.
 - When the disciples are in a storm, they wake Jesus and ask for help.
 - Jesus wants us to have faith and trust in him.
- Expand upon these points as follows:
 - Sometimes we are in storms. These storms can be outside of us or inside of us.
 - A storm is anytime we need help. A "storm" is not only a thunderstorm or a hurricane. A hard time in our lives is called a "stormy time."
 - Jesus is more powerful than any storm, because Jesus is God.
 - Jesus is our friend, who is with us in any trouble. He is especially with us when we confess our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read Live It! on page 1469, or read it aloud to the group.
- Ask the children how they might feel if they were out in their boats and a storm came up. Assure them that it is normal to be frightened sometimes. Remind them that Jesus is with them.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1469.
- Direct the children's attention to the third frame. Ask the children to read what Jesus says to the storm. (*"Be still."*) Ask the children why Jesus could stop the storm. (*Because Jesus is God.*)
- Invite the children to find a partner and use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapter.

Core Learning Activity

Sailing with Jesus

- Explain that Jesus is the Son of God, and each one of us is a **disciple**. Remind the children that a disciple is a close follower of Jesus. Today we are going to take an imaginary boat ride with Jesus, and we will make sailor hats to wear on the boat.
- Distribute a half-piece of newspaper to each child, and direct the children to fold the piece in half. Then fold one corner down to the center, leaving about an inch at the bottom. Then fold the other corner down to meet the previous corner in the center. This will make a triangle. Fold the bottom flaps up on one side and then the other. Use tape as needed. (There are YouTube videos to guide you if necessary.)
- Ask the children to wear their sailor hats and to sit in their desks, fold their arms, and close their eyes.
- Take the group through a guided meditation using the following prompts:
 - Imagine that you are in a boat with Jesus and the disciples. The boat is rocking gently back and forth. Keep your eyes closed but rock gently back and forth. Jesus is tired, so he falls asleep in the back of the boat. You and the other disciples are talking together quietly.
 - Suddenly the wind begins to blow! The disciples quickly pull down the sail. "Hang on!" Peter says. "It looks like we're in for a storm!" The thunder rolls and the lightning flashes. Suddenly the boat starts to tip violently back and forth. You are nearly thrown out of your seat! You are thrown to the right! You are thrown to the left! (*Encourage the children to act this out while seated.*) Hang on tight! You hear the disciples say: "Jesus! Jesus! Wake up! We are about to sink!"
 - Jesus wakes up. He hears the thunder and sees the lightning. He sees the frightened faces of his friends. He sees the big waves and feels the boat tip one way and then the other. He puts out his hand. "Peace! Be still!" he says. (*Pause.*)
 - Everything is still. The disciples are so thankful! They go up, one by one, and say, "Thank you, Jesus." Now it is your turn to go up to Jesus. What will you say to Jesus? Say it quietly now in your heart. (*Pause for a few moments.*)
 - Does Jesus say anything back to you in the quiet of your heart? (*Pause for a few moments.*)
 - The boat is heading to shore now. All is calm and peaceful. The disciples look forward to another day with Jesus. And you do too! You may open your eyes now and come back to land!
- Ask volunteers to share what they said to Jesus and what Jesus said to them. Remind the children that Jesus is always ready to help us when we are in trouble.

Process the Activity

- Ask the children to share what they felt as the storm raged.
 - What was it like to be in the boat with Jesus and the disciples during the storm?
 - How did you feel when Jesus said, "Peace. Be still"?

- Explain that Jesus knows us and loves us, using the following points:
 - Jesus cares about us. He knows when we are going through a hard time. He even knows all of our sins, even before we confess them in the Sacrament of Reconciliation!
 - Even when we have made wrong choices, Jesus knows and, if we are sorry, he will bring us peace.
- Invite the children to draw a picture of a scene from this event, and then invite volunteers to share their drawings with the group.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on pages 58–59 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Explain the meaning of today's story as follows:
 - Today we learned that Jesus is the Son of God. He is with us, in good times and in scary times. He is with us during storms, whether they are storms outside or even our storms inside, when we feel bad about what we have done.
 - We are the disciples of Jesus. We are his close followers. He wants to take care of us and to save us, just as he saved the disciples in the storm.
- Link the story to the Sacrament of Reconciliation in these or similar words:
 - Jesus saves us by forgiving our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. After we confess our sins and are given a penance, we are given **absolution**, or forgiveness of our sins, through the words and actions of the priest. He extends either both hands or his right hand as he says the prayer of absolution. We give thanks to God and then the priest sends us forth, saying this or another similar prayer: "The Lord has forgiven your sins. Go in peace" (*Order of Penance*).
- We give thanks to God, and then the priest sends us forth in peace. Pardon and peace are two great gifts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Just as Jesus calmed the storm, Jesus calms the storms in our lives and gives us peace. We are given peace with ourselves, with God, and with others. Following are other gifts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation:
 - Grace, God's own life in us.
 - We grow closer to God and to all God's people, the Church.
 - We are given a peaceful **conscience**. (Our conscience is the knowledge we have within us of right and wrong.)
 - We are given grace and strength to avoid sin and live as a Christian.
 - We are able to repair some of the harm done to our relationships that our sin caused.
 - We are helped to stay in friendship with God in this life so that we can be happy with him forever in Heaven.
 - We are saved, if we have confessed a mortal sin, from being separated from God forever after we die.
 - We are more ready than ever to follow Jesus as his disciples!
- Conclude by explaining that there are three things necessary for the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be complete: (1) we must have true sorrow for our sins (contrition), (2) we must promise not to sin again, and (3) we must do our assigned penance. Ask the children to hold up their fingers with you as you repeat these three necessary actions.
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in their activity booklets and complete the activity. Alternatively, you may want to work on the page as a whole group, or to allow the children to work in pairs. *Answers: Across: 2. grace, 4. disciples, 6. sin; Down: 1. peace, 3. absolution, 5. life*

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God's Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 7 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under "Things to Remember" to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Jesus is the Son of God who is with us to save us in times of trouble.
 - We are disciples of Jesus who call on him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - Our sins are forgiven and we are restored to peace when we receive absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 7 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Play a song from the list of "Music Suggestions" at the beginning of this lesson.
- End by praying an Act of Contrition (see page 1993 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*). Then close with a final Sign of the Cross.



Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- none

Materials Needed

- white drawing paper
- crayons for each child

Lights, Camera, Action: The Storm at Sea (15 minutes)

- Ask the children to act out the account of the storm at sea.
- Arrange the children into groups of at least six (and at most thirteen, to represent Jesus and the twelve disciples). Ask each group to choose one person to represent Jesus.
- Arrange a “boat” at the front of the room, with as many chairs as each small group has participants. Arrange the chairs facing across from each other in rows, to represent the seats along the sides of a boat.
- Tell the groups that they may use the dialogue from the Gospel account as well as improvise their own.
- Allow each group to present its version of the Gospel account.
- Conclude by playing a song or hymn from the “Music Suggestions” for this chapter.

A Split-Screen Picture (15 minutes)

- Distribute a piece of white drawing paper and a pack of crayons to each child. Tell the children that they will be drawing a split-screen picture.
- Ask the children to draw, with a black crayon, a diagonal line across their drawing paper, from the bottom left-hand corner to the top right-hand corner.
- Ask the children to draw, on the upper left-hand side, a picture of the Gospel account of the storm at sea. They might draw the boat, the sea, the lightning and the sky, Jesus asleep, or any other part of the Gospel story. On the bottom right, they should draw themselves at a stormy time in their lives. They might draw coming to a new school or a new house, having to admit to doing something wrong, or saying good-bye to a friend who is moving away.
- Suggest, after the drawings are finished, that the children write a prayer on the back and then sign their names. For example: “Dear Jesus, thank you for being with me when I came to my new school. Love, Lydia.”

Jesus Calms the Storm: A Video and Meditation (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Jesus Calms the Storm,” by KidsHubTV and available on YouTube (2:09). This account follows the longer version found in Mark 4:35–41.
- Discuss the following questions:
 - Because we are all baptized, we are all “in the same boat” with Jesus. How do you feel to be in Jesus’ boat?
 - When the disciples got into the boat, they did not yet know Jesus very well. What did they ask at the end of the boat ride? (*“Who is this, even the wind and the waves obey him?”*)
 - The disciples were slowly coming to realize something. What were they slowly coming to realize? (*That Jesus was God.*)
- Remind the children that Jesus is God and is with us always and will always be with us when we are in trouble. Explain that Jesus is always ready to forgive us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Materials needed

- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector

Chapter 8

Featured Story

Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit to Help Us (John 14:15–31)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that the Holy Spirit is our helper and guide
- to identify that the Holy Spirit helps us in an examination of conscience as we prepare to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- to review the key words and important concepts of these chapters in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Lesson at a Glance

- 🏠 Go** (10 minutes)
 - Opening Prayer
 - Engage Activity
- ✚ Seek** (30 minutes)
 - Featured Story
 - Core Learning Activity
- ✂ Find** (20 minutes)
 - God’s Treasure of Forgiveness
 - Lesson Wrap-Up
 - Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and chapter 8 activity booklet
- index cards, one for each child
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- “Holy Spirit Come,” by Spring Harvest (Elevation Kids)
- “Nigeria: Come, O Holy Spirit / Wa wa wa Emimimo,” by John Bell and Alison Adam (GIA Publications, Inc.)

The Holy Spirit Teaches Us



Background Focus

You may have seen the cartoon featuring Lassie, the dog who so often comes to the aid of her human family members. In one frame, a man is pictured in the midst of high waves, clearly about to drown and calling, “Lassie, get help!” In the next frame, Lassie is seen stretched out on her back on a psychiatrist’s couch, recounting her thoughts and feelings, while the psychiatrist diligently takes notes.

We all need help. Jesus knew this, and promised to send the Holy Spirit as our Advocate, our Helper. The Holy Spirit is especially important—and helpful—while preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Holy Spirit helps us to discern our sin, ask forgiveness, and move forward with confidence in the love of God in order to share that love with others. This is the whole purpose of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In this chapter, the children are introduced to the examination of conscience to help them call on the Holy Spirit for guidance as they prepare to receive this sacrament for the first time.

🏠 Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in their chapter 8 activity booklets and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have the children put their activity booklets away for now.

Engage Activity

- Ask the children to name some of the helpers in their lives (*community helpers like police officers and firefighters, helpers at school, helpers at home*). Write these on the board.
- Consider aloud some of these helpers. Choose some in turn and ask:
 - How does this helper help you?
 - How does this helper make your life safer or better?
- Tell the children that today we will learn about another helper that Jesus sent to us, the Holy Spirit. We will learn more about all the ways the Holy Spirit helps us in our lives, and how the Holy Spirit helps us prepare to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find John 14:15–31 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1689 and 1692).
- Direct them to turn to the Featured Story on page 1690 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves on the page are a shortened version of the Scripture verses on pages 1689 and 1692.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1690–1691, and invite them to describe what they see in the artwork.
- Introduce the Bible story to the children by explaining that after Jesus died and rose from the dead, he went back to Heaven to be with his Father. Tell them that before he left, Jesus promised to send a helper for us, the Holy Spirit.
- Read the Bible story to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Who is the Helper that Jesus promised? (*the Holy Spirit*)
 - How will the Holy Spirit help you? (*The Holy Spirit will teach us and help us remember all that Jesus said.*)
 - What does the Holy Spirit bring us as a gift from Jesus? (*peace*)

- Conclude by reminding the children that because the Holy Spirit brings us peace, we can share that peace with others. Ask the children: How can we share peace? (*by being kind, by forgiving others, by helping others*)
- Invite the children to turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers: Helper, forever, Spirit, truth, remains, in, Holy Spirit, teach, remember, told, peace, worried, afraid*

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1691 to the children, or invite a volunteer or volunteers to read.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points with them:
 - The great gift of Jesus to us is the Holy Spirit.
 - The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all one God. They are the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.
 - We receive the Holy Spirit's power at Baptism.
 - The Holy Spirit is our Helper. We cannot see him, but he works within us.
 - The Holy Spirit helps us to understand what Jesus taught and to act on it through the good ideas we have.
 - The Holy Spirit is at work in us each day. We can ask him for help and guidance.

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read Live It! on page 1691 or read it aloud to the group.
- Distribute an index card to each child if time permits. Instruct the children to copy the Holy Spirit prayer onto the index card and place it in their Bibles as a bookmark.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1691.
- Direct their attention to the second frame. Explain that the Holy Spirit is often shown as a dove, because a dove is a sign of peace.
- Encourage several volunteers to stand and summarize the Bible reading for the group, using the images in Tell It!

- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Tell them that they can keep any remaining stickers to be used at a later time as they explore the Bible by themselves.

Core Learning Activity

An Examination of Conscience

- Explain that one of the special things the Holy Spirit helps us with is our preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - The Holy Spirit helps us remember things we have done for which we are sorry and want to ask forgiveness. The Holy Spirit helps us to be honest and truthful with ourselves.
 - Today, we will ask the Holy Spirit for help to think of sins we want to confess in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This thinking-over of what we have done and any sins we have committed, how we could have better kept the Ten Commandments and been better followers of Jesus, is called an **examination of conscience**.
- Remind the children that each of us has a conscience, that is, an inner knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. Tell them that when we examine our conscience, we look at things we have done and remember things we have done that were right and good. Explain that we also remember things we have done that were not right, that caused a problem for ourselves or for someone else.
- Explain that we will now examine our consciences together. Begin in these or similar words:
 - Let us quiet ourselves. Hands, be still. Feet, be still. Fold your arms or hands on top of the desk. You may put your head down if it helps you to listen. I will ask a question for you to think about. Answer it in your heart, just for yourself. When it is time for you to prepare for your confession, ask the Holy Spirit to help you remember this examination of conscience.
- Continue with the following questions. Pause between each one.
 - Have I used God's name and the name of Jesus with respect? *(pause)*
 - Have I honored God by saying my prayers? *(pause)*
 - Have I done my best to pay attention at Mass and to pray and sing with my parish? *(pause)*
 - Have I shown love to my parents and others who care for me by listening to them and always doing as they ask? *(pause)*
 - Have I lied to my parents or my teachers? *(pause)*
 - Have I been helpful to my brothers and sisters? Have I been mean to them? *(pause)*
 - Have I treated others in a kind and friendly way? Or have I been mean to others? *(pause)*
 - Have I played fairly? *(pause)*
 - Did I call names or tell lies about someone? *(pause)*
 - Did I share my things with others? *(pause)*
 - Have I treated the belongings of others carefully? Have I taken what does not belong to me? *(pause)*
- End by praying: "Jesus said, 'Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid.' (John 14:27) Thank you, Holy Spirit! Be with us always. Amen."

Process the Activity

- Invite the children to share what they felt during this activity. Explain that sometimes we can feel sad when we remember some things we have done wrong, but this sadness is true sorrow, and it will turn to joy after we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Explain that the Holy Spirit is our Helper and will help us to live the way Jesus taught. Tell the children that the Holy Spirit will remind us of all the things we have done and will help us to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation with honesty and courage.

- Explain that as followers of Jesus, we try to live by the Golden Rule that Jesus taught us:
“Do for others what you want them to do for you” (Matthew 7:12).

Ask the children to turn to page 1988 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* to find this Golden Rule printed above the Ten Commandments.
- Remind the children that the examination of conscience is printed on page 3 in *The Rite of Reconciliation and Key Words* booklet. Suggest that they bring this examination of conscience to church and review it before receiving the sacrament.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on pages 65–66 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God’s Treasure of Forgiveness

- Recall the previous lessons with the children by arranging the children in two lines. These will be the two teams.
- Ask the first question (using the questions below). Only the two children at the front of the line may answer, but if any other team member knows the answer, it can be whispered to the child at the front of the line. The first correct answer gets one point. After answering the first question, the first two children sit down and the next two are “up” for the next question.

Review Questions for This Activity

1. What do we call God’s life in us? (*grace*)
2. When we disobey God’s Law, we call it what? (*sin*)
3. What is the Great Commandment that Jesus taught us? (*to love God and to love others as ourselves*)

4. When we fail to love fully, where can we ask for forgiveness? (*in the Sacrament of Reconciliation*)
 5. Why did God give us rules? (*to keep us safe and happy*)
 6. How is an accident different from a sin? (*An accident is something unexpected that you did not choose to happen; a sin is a deliberate choice.*)
 7. What is the difference between a mortal sin and a venial sin? (*A mortal sin separates us from God; a venial sin harms our relationship with God and others. We must confess a mortal sin and ask forgiveness as soon as possible.*)
 8. What prayer do we say in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to express our sorrow for our sins? (*an Act of Contrition*)
 9. When can we call on Jesus for help? (*any-time, but especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation*)
 10. What happens when we receive absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (*Our sins are forgiven and we are given the gift of peace.*)
- Expand the questions, if necessary, by formulating extra questions based on the activity worksheets.
 - End the game by assuring the children that they are ready to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation!
 - Invite the children to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers:*
1. *sin*, 2. *contrition*, 3. *venial sin*, 4. *mercy*, 5. *absolution*

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God’s Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 8 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under “Things to Remember” to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - The Holy Spirit is our helper and guide.
 - The Holy Spirit helps us examine our conscience.
 - The Holy Spirit helps us remember important facts about the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 8 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Play a song from the list of "Music Suggestions" at the beginning of this lesson, if there is time.
- End by praying the "Come, Holy Spirit" prayer (found in Live It! on page 1691 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*). Then close with a final Sign of the Cross.



Additional Activities

Practice for First Reconciliation (15 minutes)

- Take the children to the church for a First Reconciliation practice. Remind them to bless themselves with holy water before entering. (This reminds us of our Baptism and that we are children of God.) Show them how to genuflect on one knee before entering the pew. Explain where they are to wait for their turn. Remind them to think about a few sins they will confess when it is their turn.
- Ask each child his or her preference for confession—either kneeling in the confessional, kneeling at the screen, or sitting face-to-face with the priest in the Reconciliation Room. Show each child where he or she is likely to confess. (You may want to group the children by their preferences.)
- Conclude this visit by asking the children to kneel. Pray aloud, thanking Jesus for giving us the Sacrament of Reconciliation and for sending us the Holy Spirit to help us. Remind the children to genuflect as they leave the pew.

A Letter to Jesus (15 minutes)

- Explain to the children that this is the last session of preparation for First Reconciliation. Tell them that they have learned a lot about Jesus in these past few weeks.
- Ask the children to make a card for Jesus, thanking him for our sessions together. The children might also mention other things they are grateful for, or situations of concern to them.
- Distribute a piece of construction paper to each child. Ask the children to fold the construction paper in half, making a card, and to write inside the card.
- Remind the children that letters usually begin, “Dear . . .” and include a closing before the signature, such as “Gratefully, Sherry” or “Love, Julio.”
- Make crayons or markers available. Ask the children to decorate the front of their cards.
- Collect the cards and include them in the Sacrament of Reconciliation environment in some way, perhaps in a basket placed near the altar. Alert the children to look for them on that day.

Materials Needed

- none

Materials Needed

- white construction paper
- pencils, crayons, or markers

Materials Needed

- index cards, one for each child
- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector

The Holy Spirit Comes (Video) (15 minutes)

- Prepare for this activity by writing each gift of the Holy Spirit on a separate index card. Place them upside down on a tray. Distribute them to the children and allow each to pick one gift. If you wish, you may write the gift on white paper, punch a hole at one end, and pull a red ribbon through the hole to make a bookmark.
- Show the video “The Holy Spirit Comes (Day of Pentecost),” available on YouTube (2:58). It is based on the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, as given in the Book of Acts.
- Remind the children that the Holy Spirit gave the Apostles many powers. Explain that one power was the power of healing, as in the video, and another power was the power of forgiveness. Tell the children that this power was handed down from the Apostles to bishops and priests.
- Explain that when we receive forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are being graced with the power of God’s forgiveness, through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - We call the powers of the Holy Spirit the “Gifts” of the Holy Spirit. They are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, strength or courage (fortitude), reverence (piety), and wonder and awe (fear of the Lord).
- Distribute the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Ask each child to draw a card from the tray. Ask volunteers to announce their gifts, and take the opportunity to explain each one.
- Explain that we received these Gifts of the Holy Spirit at Baptism. They will be strengthened in Confirmation. We have opportunities every day to use these gifts that the Holy Spirit brings us.
- You may want to play one of the selections listed in the “Music Suggestions” at the beginning of this lesson.



The Rite of Reconciliation

The Communal Celebration

1. We gather with our parish community. We join in singing a hymn. The priest greets us and leads us in praying together.
2. We listen to the Bible. We may hear more than one reading, with a psalm response in between. We stand for the Gospel reading. Then we listen to the priest or deacon talk about the readings. He helps us understand what we heard in Scripture.
3. We make an examination of conscience. We think of things we have done that we are sorry for. We pray together to tell God we are sorry. Then we pray the Lord's Prayer together.
4. We wait to take our turn confessing our sins. While we wait, we can sing or pray. When it is my turn, I confess my sins. The priest gives me my penance and absolves me from my sins. My sins are forgiven! I make the Sign of the Cross with the priest.
5. When everyone has confessed individually, we pray and sing in thanksgiving to God. The priest or deacon blesses us. We go in peace.
6. I do my penance as soon as possible.

The Individual Celebration

1. I take time to examine my conscience. I ask the Holy Spirit to help me remember what I have done or not done to follow God's Law. I think about the words of Jesus ("Love one another"), the Ten Commandments, and the Golden Rule.
2. The priest welcomes me. We make the Sign of the Cross together.
3. We read the Bible, the Word of God. The priest may ask me to read.
4. I confess my sins to the priest. He may give me some words of advice or encouragement. Then he gives me my penance.
5. The priest invites me to pray an Act of Contrition. In my prayer, I tell God that I am sorry for what I have done wrong and that I will try not to do these things again.
6. The priest extends his hand or hands over me and gives me absolution in the name of Jesus. My sins are forgiven! I make the Sign of the Cross with the priest.
7. We give thanks to God, and then the priest sends me forth in peace. I do my penance as soon as possible. I quietly thank Jesus for giving me his new life of grace and a new start.

Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation often. It will help you to follow Jesus. The Church wants us to receive this sacrament at least once a year. Those who have committed a mortal sin must confess their sins and receive absolution before receiving Holy Communion.



An Examination of Conscience

Think about the words of Jesus: "Love one another as I have loved you." Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind what you have done, or what you have not done, to follow God's Law. Ask for his help to be truly sorry for these sins.

A Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Ask Yourself

- Have I used God's name and the name of Jesus with respect?
- Have I honored God by saying my prayers?
- Have I done my best to pay attention at Mass and to pray and sing with my parish?
- Have I shown love to my parents and others who care for me by listening to them and always doing as they ask?
- Have I lied to my parents or my teachers?
- Have I been helpful to my brothers and sisters? Have I been mean to them?
- Have I treated others in a kind and friendly way, or have I been mean to others?
- Have I played fairly?
- Did I call names or tell lies about someone?
- Did I share my things with others?
- Have I treated the belongings of others carefully? Have I taken what does not belong to me?



Reconciliation Key Words

A

absolution God's forgiveness of our sins through the words and actions of the priest

accident something done by mistake, or an action with unintended results; an unplanned event

Act of Contrition the prayer we say in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to express our sorrow for our sins and our promise not to sin in the future

C

confession another name for the Sacrament of Reconciliation; telling our sins to the priest during the Sacrament of Reconciliation

conscience the knowledge of right and wrong that we have within us

contrition true sorrow for our sins and a desire to avoid sin in the future

conversion changing for the better; turning our lives back to God

D

disciple someone who follows the instructions of a teacher; a close follower of Jesus

E

examination of conscience thinking about our actions, any sins we may have committed, and how we could have better kept the Ten Commandments and been better followers of Jesus' way of love

F

forgive to give up resentment or anger toward someone who has caused harm, restoring friendship and love

G

grace the free gift of God's own life in us, which makes us his children

Greatest Commandment the most important commandment, the commandment to love God and others, given to us by Jesus (see Mark 12:28–31)

M

mercy the loving kindness of God to all his children; the love and forgiveness we receive in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

mortal sin a serious sin, committed on purpose, that completely breaks our loving relationship with God and with the People of God, the Church

P

peace an inner feeling of calm or quiet; peace is a gift of the Holy Spirit that we receive in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

penance a prayer or good action or act of self-denial to repair the damage caused by our sin and to show that we will do better

S

Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation the sacrament in which God forgives our sins and brings us back together with him and with the Church

sacraments seven holy signs that Jesus gave the Church, which give us a share in God's life. The Seven Sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders.

Sacred Scripture the Word of God; another name for the Bible

sin something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law. When we sin we offend God and hurt our relationship with him.

T

Ten Commandments the ten important rules God gave to Moses and to us, to keep us safe and happy

V

venial sin a less serious sin that weakens, but does not completely break, our loving relationship with God

Acknowledgments

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