



RCIC PROGRAMME

Unit 13 - FORGIVENESS



The Sacrament of Reconciliation

AIMS

1. To understand that the Sacrament of reconciliation is a meeting of reconciliation between two friends.
2. To go through and understand the five basic steps for celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession.



KEY WORDS

- Think
- Be Sorry
- Talk to the Priest
- Say Penance
- Say Thank You

INTRODUCTION

- Begin the session by talking about the idea of GETTING READY. With the help of the children talk about getting ready before going to a party or similar occasion you have been invited to.
- Remind that soon children are going to celebrate something very special - they have an invitation from Jesus to celebrate RECONCILIATION. This is when we talk to the priest and ask God to forgive our sins and making us his friends again. We have to make sure we are ready for this special occasion.

RESOURCES

- Story/Posters of the Prodigal son.
- Flashcards for Key Words shown above.
- PowerPoint Presentation (or other images) about Reconciliation.
- Worksheet 13

MAIN

- Remind/Narrate the parable of the Prodigal Son. Show how when we go to Confession we are like the Son going back to his loving father. What did the Prodigal son do when he found himself lonely? Elicit the fact that he started to THINK (show Flashcard) about how disrespectful he had been to his father. Before celebrating Reconciliation we must do the same. We think about the different situations we have not been loving to God, family members, friends and others.
- The Prodigal Son was SORRY (show Flashcard) for his sins. He went back to his father and acknowledged he had sinned against him. In reconciliation we too go back to God our Father and we say we intend not to sin again. Talk about how we show we are truly sorry. Refer to the words in the *Sorry Prayer*. The Prodigal Son went to his father and talked about his sin. In Confession we go to the Priest who is the person chosen by Jesus to help us celebrate this Sacrament of Reconciliation. (show Flashcard (TALK TO THE PRIEST). Talk about the place we use for confession. Some people use the Confessional Box, others use other places in church, at school etc. Talk about and explain in detail what we do when we go to the priest. (also see PowerPoint presentation on the Sacrament of Reconciliation)
 - ⇒ **Bless** - 'Bless me father.' (We also usually say: 'It's been since my last Confession')
 - ⇒ **Confess** your sins. Talk to priest about your relationship with God.
 - ⇒ The priest will talk to you - **Listen** to what he says.
 - ⇒ Say the **Act of Contrition** - *O my God I am very sorry that I have sinned*
 - ⇒ **Absolution** by priest - God forgiving your sins
 - ⇒ **Farewell** - Thank priest - Leave and find a quiet spot to say Penance and thank God.
- Part of the Reconciliation process is to try to make up for our sins. This is the reason behind PENANCE that the priest gives (show Flashcard) This is usually a prayer or another good deed we are asked to do after we finish our Confession. It is like when Zacchaeus said he was going to give back a lot of money to the poor. Finally also say THANK YOU (show Flashcard) to God for forgiving our sins.
- Talk about how often should we receive this Sacrament. Explain that unlike Baptism or Confirmation this is not a Sacrament that we receive only once. God invites us to celebrate this Sacrament **REGULARLY** - any time we feel we have gone against God's wishes, we sinned and we need to ask for forgiveness.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

- Invite the children to keep a few moments of silence to think about how special the gift of FORGIVENESS is. They are soon to celebrate this special occasion for the first time.
- Pray together the ACT OF CONTRITION and the OUR FATHER inviting the children to reflect on the words 'forgive us our trespasses'.

NOTES

Other ideas to facilitate a better understanding of this sacrament is to do some roleplay with children based on the contents of this session and to visit the parish church and talk about the Confession room/ box.

ACTIVITY

- Hand out Worksheet 13 and briefly go through the words children have to fill in and other tasks they are to complete at home. Point out to the 5 STEPS also shown on side A of the worksheet and encourage children to go through them and think about them at home too.
- Time permitting read and talk about the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15: 3-7) or recommend that children read it with parents at home. Stress God's joy when the 'lost' sinner is found.