



RECONCILIATION

9-12
YEARS

Preparing for the **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

• Nine to twelve year olds are encouraged to participate in the parish Reconciliation program.
• However if they are not able to, the following session could be used.

Aim

• Children look back at their actions and discern what their choices reveal about them as a disciple of Jesus. Children also prepare for the Rite for Reconciliation and learn how this sacrament can bring them back to right relationship with God.

Background

Information for Catechist

• Conscience – a deep inner awareness of right and wrong, an understanding of principles which are meant to govern behaviour, and a sense of the degree to which our thoughts and our actions are in harmony with those principles.

• Conscience is our true inner voice.

• Why is it important? Through our conscience we respond to God's call to be the person God made us to be. The only way we can understand who we are called to become is through our conscience, where our life experiences, our standards, and our serious reflection shape our understanding, our knowledge and our choices.

Background

Information for Catechist

How do we form our conscience? – It is a life time process, beginning with the lessons taught by our parents and teachers; with teaching and stories from our Christian tradition and scripture; with insights gleaned from our culture, our own best experience and, positively or negatively, from interactions with our peers.

Free will is something God gives us, so we have to be careful that we know what is right and what is wrong. Sin is a deliberate choice to do wrong. Sin is before all else an offence against God, a rupture of communion with God.

Sometimes we make mistakes which can have a negative effect on ourselves or on someone else. Mistakes are not sins.

We make choices all the time. Some are everyday choices like what to wear, or what to have for breakfast. These choices do not hurt others. Some choices we make throughout a day do affect other people, the way we act towards them and the way we act towards God. Disciples of Jesus choose to do right by themselves and others.

We use our conscience to help us make these choices. We all need support in choosing good actions and maintaining respectful relationships.

We all need to ask for forgiveness and to give throughout our lives. Wrong choices, which impact on ourselves and other people, separate us from God, others and our communities. Jesus revealed to us a God who is merciful and compassionate.

Through preparation for the Sacrament of Penance the young people are led to a better understanding of God's mercy, so that they may confess their sins and receive forgiveness in the First Rite of Reconciliation.



Exploring

Choices

Brainstorm what 'having a choice' means

How do we come to know about right and wrong?

Whether we are making the right choice or the wrong choice, our decisions do affect others. Choices are like ripples created in a body of water when we drop a stone.

Demonstrate this happening:

You will need: Clear bowl filled with water and a small rock

Drop the rock into the water so the group can observe the ripples.

Repeat the demonstration, dropping the rock from higher up.
The group should see bigger ripples.

Alternatively show a clip from the internet: Ripple effect

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xv0ik3ugRg>

Video Link 1.1



Discuss how our choices (right or wrong) have a ripple effect on those around us.

Our conscience, our true inner voice, helps us to choose right from wrong. We should listen to our conscience. It helps us to hear the Holy Spirit. Explain what conscience is to the group.

Do you remember a time when you ignored your conscience?

Talk about this time and describe how you felt.

Activity

See, Judge, Act

In *Mater et Magistra* Pope John XXIII affirms the process of *See, Judge, Act* as a way of reading and responding to a situation:

See

- See, hear, and experience the lived reality of individuals and communities.
- Name what is happening that causes you concern.
- Carefully and intentionally examine the situation. What are the people in this situation doing, feeling, and saying? What is happening to them and how do you/they respond?

Judge

- The word 'judge' is used here in a positive sense – to analyse the situation and make an informed judgement about it.

Act

- Plan and carry out actions aimed at transforming the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Your Turn...

See

Ask the young person to share a situation that happened in their life recently (from school, sport, club, family).

What happened?

Who was involved?

Who was affected?

What did you do and why?

Judge

(This is where your conscience, your inner voice, is talking to you).

Ask the young person to ask themselves...

Was the situation positive or negative?

Was your choice, your action right or wrong?

How do you feel about the situation?

What might Jesus have done?

How did the situation make you feel?

How do you think others felt?

Act

What would you like to change?

What actions are you going to take now, or if this happens again?

How might that change the situation?

Who can you ask to help you?

How could this make you closer to Jesus?

Examination of Conscience

Close your eyes and listen to the words from the examination of conscience.

From Liturgy Brisbane *Our Family Prays* page 112.

Think of Your Sins

First, think about your relationship with God.

- Do you remember God each day?
- Do you thank God for good things?
- Do you ask God's help in troubles?

Next, think about your relationship with others.

- Are you thoughtful and kind to those in need?
- Do you help others at home and at school?
- Are you patient with others?
- Are you honest and fair?
- Do you tell the truth?
- Do you always speak well of others?
- Do you respect what belongs to someone else?

Finally, think about yourself.

- Do you look after your body well?
- Do you practise self-control?
- Are you a peace-maker?
- Are you generous and loving?

If you answer 'no, not always' in your heart to any of these questions, these are your sins.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

What happens at First Rite of Reconciliation?

Go through the steps of the rite with the young person in the church, if possible. Explore the Reconciliation room.

The Sacrament of Penance - First Rite of Reconciliation

PREPARATION

Before celebrating the Sacrament of Penance you need to prepare yourself, to examine your conscience. Pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance to help you know and understand the ways you sin and where in particular you need God's forgiveness.

CELEBRATION

The Priest Welcomes You

When it is your turn, go to the priest. You may sit or kneel to talk to the priest. He will welcome you and pray the Sign of the Cross with you.

The Word of God

To help you to understand and know God's mercy, the priest will share with you a reading from Scripture.

Confession

Tell the priest about the sins you reflected on in your Examination of Conscience. The priest will talk to you about how you can change your ways. He will then give you an act of penance – this is a prayer or action to help you change.

Prayer of Sorrow / Act of Contrition

The priest will ask you to pray a prayer of sorrow to tell God you are sorry for your sins. You can use the following prayer.



O my God, I am sorry that I have sinned against you, because you are so good, and with your help I will not sin again.

Absolution

You will receive God's forgiveness and peace as the priest prays and makes the Sign of the Cross over you.

Through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.



Amen.

Prayer of Praise

The priest finishes with a short prayer of thanks and praise to God.

Prayer

Together

Pray the prayer Jesus gave us: **Our Father...**