



The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Preparation Booklet 6



Qs and As: The Sacrament of Reconciliation



Q Why do we have the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

A The Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us to grow in our love for Jesus.

- It helps us to understand what is right and what is wrong.
- It allows us to say sorry to Jesus when we sin.
- It helps us to understand that forgiving others is important.
- Jesus gave his apostles and priests the power to forgive sins on his behalf and he invites us all to participate in this special sacrament where we meet him.

Jesus said some very special words to his apostles. He said:
Those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; those whose sins you retain, they are retained."

Q Why do we talk to a priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

A Although we talk to a priest, the priest is there to act in the person of Jesus. Even though we cannot see Jesus, he is always with us and he is there when we confess our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

When a man becomes a priest, he is given special power from God to listen to us when we say sorry for all our sins but it is Jesus who forgives our sins.

So, when you talk to the priest you are really talking to Jesus.

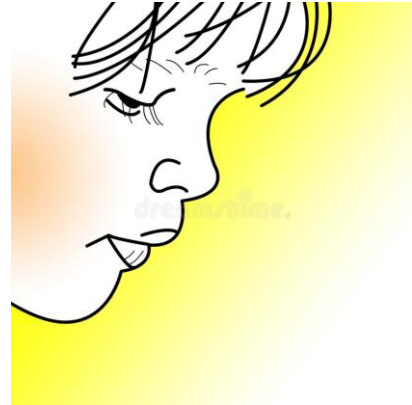
Q When are my sins forgiven?

A When you have finished talking about your sins with the priest, you say the Act of Sorrow. Then, as the priest says the Prayer of Absolution, your sins are forgiven.

Before the Sacrament of Reconciliation ...

Before the Sacrament of Reconciliation, you should prepare by thinking about what you are going to say.

Here are some questions to help you. These questions are called an EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.



Did I go to Mass?

Did I say my prayers every day?

Did I say unkind things to my mum or dad?

Am I hard to get along with (at school, at home)?

Did I do what my parents told me to do? My teacher?

Was I lazy around the house?

Did I hurt other people by calling them bad names?

Have I started fights with my brothers and sisters at home?

Have I blamed other people for things I did?

Did I get other people into trouble?

Do I hit people when I get angry?

Have I forgiven people? Or am I holding a grudge?

Have I cheated or been unfair in games?

Did I refuse to play with someone for no good reason?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation Step by Step

1 When it is time for you to make your First Reconciliation, you and the priest will make the sign of the cross together:
"In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. "

2 The priest will ask you to tell him what you are sorry about.
*Think about what you're sorry about, and tell the priest.
Do not worry if you forget things or get stuck.
The priest will help you.*

3 The priest will talk to you about the things you tell him. He does this so that he can give you good advice and help you to avoid the same sins again.

4 The priest will give you a **penance**. A penance is a way of showing that you are sorry. For example, this can be:

- a prayer, maybe the Hail Mary or Our Father.
- doing something special to help someone else.
- doing without something for a while to show that you are sorry.

5

The priest will then ask you to say your Act of Sorrow. You should try to learn this prayer by heart before you make your First Reconciliation. Ask someone at home to help you to learn it.

6

After you have said the Act of Sorrow, the priest then says the prayer of **ABSOLUTION**: " ... *I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.* You should make the sign of the cross and say Amen.

7

You then go back to your seat and kneel down to pray for a while in silence, knowing that God has forgiven you and always loves you.



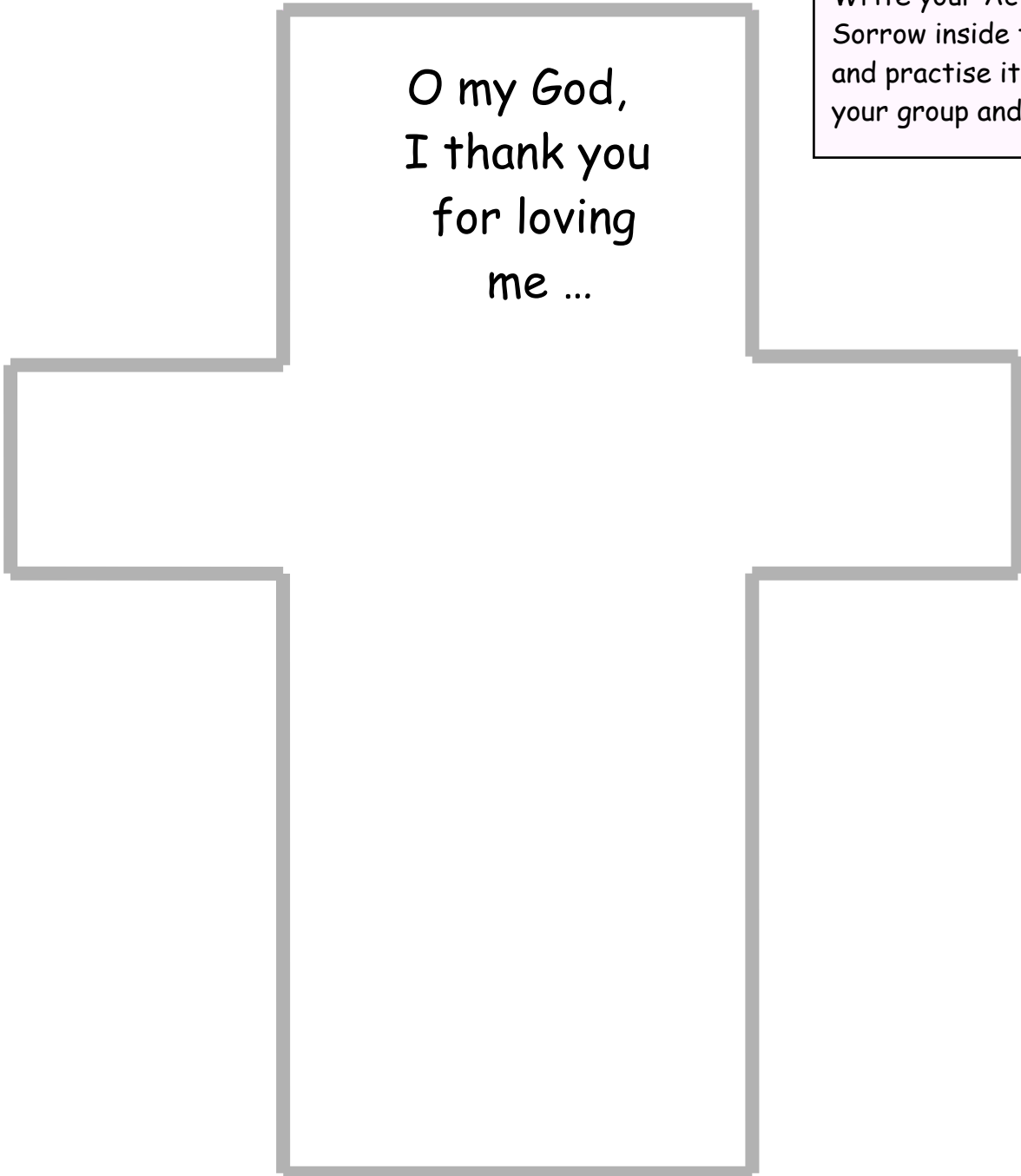
*"I absolve you
from your sins
in the name
of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy
Spirit."*

Amen.

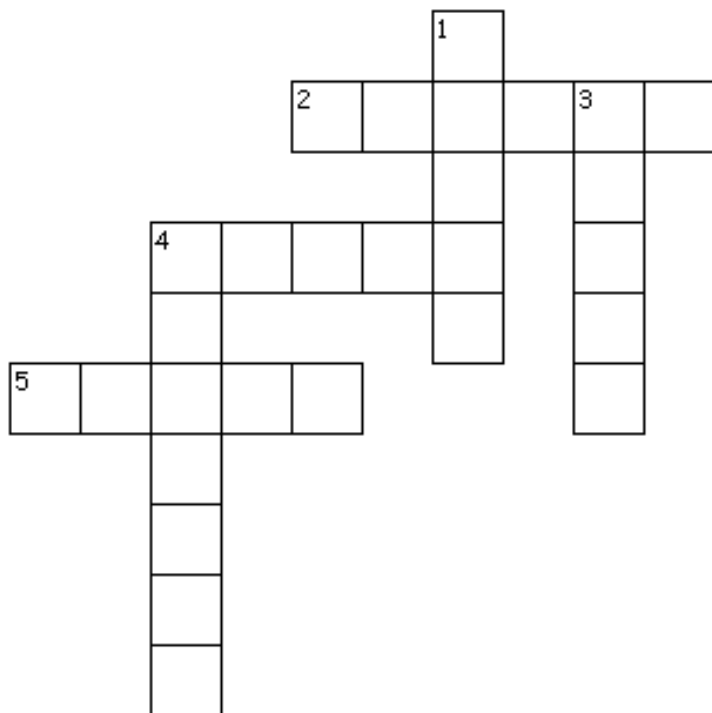
Act of Sorrow

O my God,
I thank you
for loving
me ...

Write your Act of
Sorrow inside the cross
and practise it with
your group and at home.



Reconciliation Crossword



Across

2. When we go to Reconciliation we talk to this person.
4. We are preparing for our F_____ Reconciliation.
5. We should say this if we have been unkind to someone.

Down

1. God gives us special g_____ to make us good people.
3. How many Sacraments does the Church have?
4. If we are sorry God will always f_____ us.

Sacrament of Reconciliation Preparation Booklet 6

Lesson Aims

- to help the children to understand why we need Reconciliation.
- to explain the role of the priest as Christ's representative.
- to explain the practical things about the Sacrament of Reconciliation (entering the confessional box/ learning the Act of Sorrow, etc).
- to explain difficult terms like "Penance," Absolution," etc
- to help the children to understand that the Sacrament of Reconciliation comes from Jesus.

1 "Qs and As about the Sacrament of Reconciliation " worksheet 20 minutes approx.

There are only a few questions here but the children will have many more! Allow them to ask as many as they want. Someone may ask how often we should go to Reconciliation. A fair answer is probably every couple of months. Remind them that they should always go at Easter time. Go through each question one by one. Highlight the role of the priest as Christ's representative. Mention the Sacrament of Ordination and say a few things about this to help them to understand the priest's role.

2 Before the Sacrament of Reconciliation 15 minutes approx.

The aim of this sheet is to help the children to reflect on their sins - this can be quite hard for kids and adults too! Ask them to close their eyes and listen to the Examination of Conscience. Be ready to answer any questions they have. Remind them of the importance of going to Mass and the need for Reconciliation if they miss Mass (unless unavoidable).

Tell them that they do not have to tell the priest every sin but should think about the main ones and the more serious or frequent ones.

They will need lots of reassurance as some will be afraid/shy to talk about their sins or to speak to a priest. Remind them that Jesus loves them and that he will be listening to them .

3 The Sacrament of Reconciliation Step by Step 25 minutes approx.

Depending on the parish, the children may or may not make their First Reconciliation in a confessional box. If there is one, take them to see it beforehand and let them enter it to make them feel more at ease there. Go through items 1-7 slowly.

At item number 1 ask the children to all make the sign of the cross together - a chance to make sure they can all do this properly. At item number 4 explain what a penance is. At item 6, explain what "Absolution" is. Explain the link to their Baptism in the priest's words, "I absolve you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." - Just as Baptism cleanses them from sin, so too are they cleansed at Reconciliation. Take the chance here to check that the children know the Hail Mary and Our Father (maybe also the Glory Be). At item 7, underline the need for quiet prayer time when they leave the confessional box - to say their penance and/or other prayers. Help them to understand that they can start afresh - Christ has cleansed them from their sins. The main thing is lots of reassurance and to answer any questions they have.

4 "Act of Sorrow" Worksheet 15 minutes approx.

Ask the children to say the prayer together a couple of times. Ask them to write the prayer down and hang it on their wall by their bed to help them learn it. Ask them to get their parents to help them learn it.

5 First Reconciliation Crossword 15 minutes approx.

A simple crossword activity.