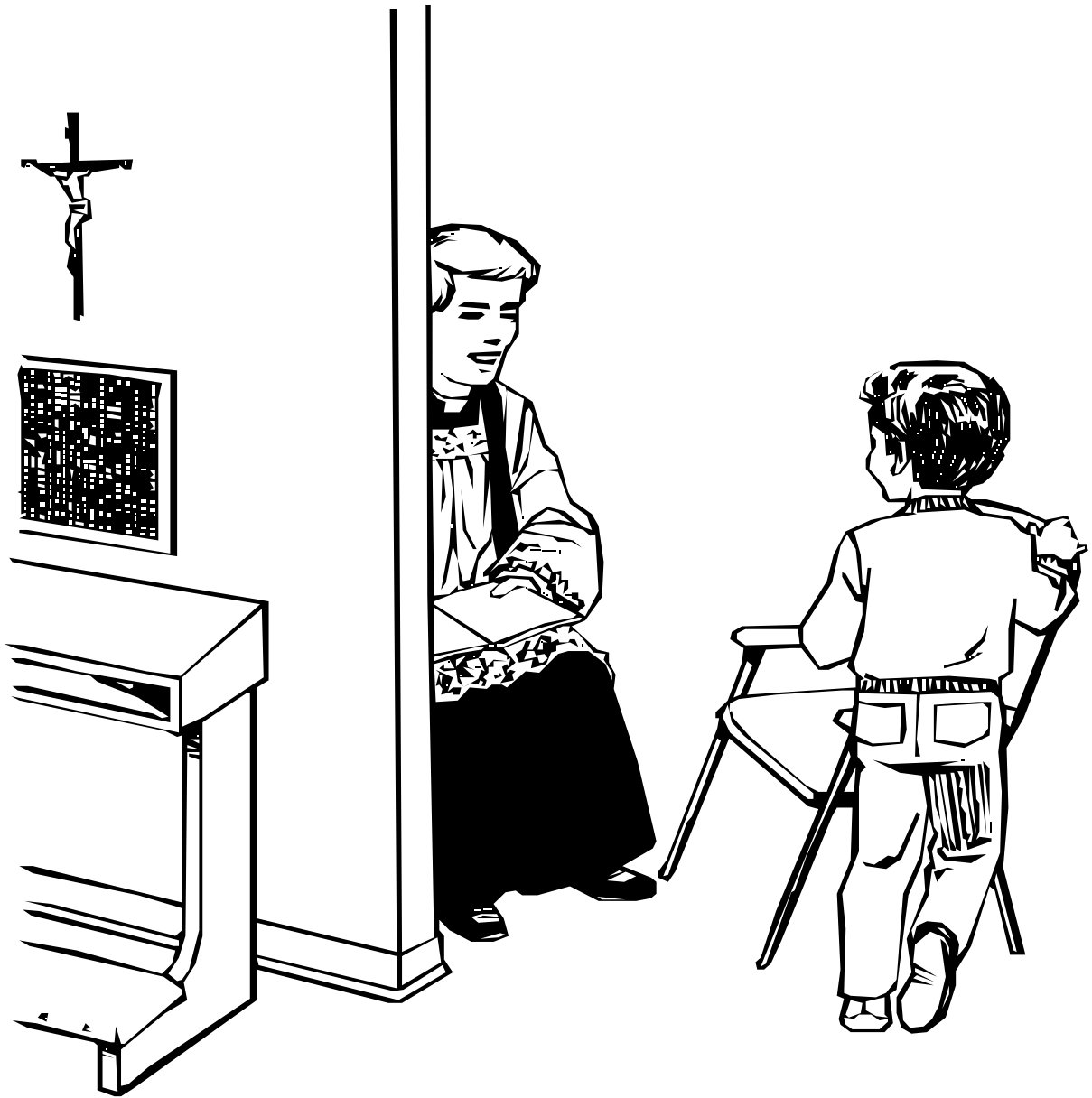


PENANCE



Name: _____

The story of the Prodigal Son.

Jesus told us the story of the Prodigal Son to teach us about God's love and mercy that we receive in the Sacrament of Penance. The story goes something like this...

There once was a man who had two sons. The younger son no longer wanted to live on the farm or do all that his father told him to do. So, one day, he said to his father: "Father, give me the share of your land that is to be mine. I want all that I would receive after your death now." The Father was saddened by this, but he respected his son's wishes. His son could choose to go any time. So the father gave to his younger son the money he would leave for him after his death. The younger son took all he had and left the farm and went into a far off country.



Now the younger son was not very good with money, and spent it all very quickly on things that would not please the father. In fact, the way he spent his money was very offensive to the father and hurt him very much. After he spent all his money, a famine hit this country and the son had to work very hard just to have food to eat.

One day, the younger son realized that his father's servants had a better life than the one he was living. They had lots of food, but he was always hungry. So, this son decided to return to his father, and confess or tell him his sins, and tell his father that he is sorry. The younger son started on his way home.

Now back on the farm, the father longed for his younger son to return to him, for he loved him very much! He would watch and wait for his son to return. One day, the father saw his son coming and he was filled with joy and love. He ran to his son, hugged and kissed him. The son told his sins to his father and told him that he was sorry.

The father was so excited and overjoyed at the return of his son, that he sent his servants to bring his best robe and a ring to put on his finger and shoes on his feet. They cooked a great feast and had a big party. His father knew that his son was lost and dead because of sin, but now that he has confessed his sins and returned to his father, he is home and alive with grace.

The same will happen to you when you go to confession. Sometimes we are weak and sin, and this saddens God our Father greatly. He waits for us to return to Him because He loves us. When we confess our sins and are sorry, God forgives us and is happy that we have turned away from sin and back to God. This is what we do in the Sacrament of Penance.

The story of the Prodigal Son.

QUESTIONS

1. Who tells us this story and why?
2. Write about the family in this story. How many people? Who are they? Where do they live?
3. What did the younger son want?
4. Did the father allow him this?
5. Where did the son go and what happened to him?
6. Why did the son decided to return home?
7. What did he tell his father?
8. What happened when he returned home?

The Sacrament of Penance

The Sacrament of Penance is also called the Sacrament of Confession or the Sacrament of Reconciliation (CCC 1423-4). All of these titles are good. This sacrament is a sacrament of healing (CCC 1421), for in Confession, we heal our relationship with God, His Church and we heal our souls!



We go to Confession because we are sinners. In Baptism all our sins are washed away, but we are still tempted to sin (CCC 1428). We often sin and this offends and hurts God. When we sin, we turn away from God and from His Church. We do this by breaking God's laws (the Ten Commandments). We need to turn back to God and the Church by seeking forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance.

To make a good Confession, we must prepare by learning about God's laws. We look at our own lives to see which laws we have broken. The Holy Spirit will help us become ready. We can then go to a priest and make a good confession. In the Name of God and His Church, Christ will forgive you through the priest and this will take away your sins (CCC 1459). The priest will also give you a Penance that will help you to make up for your sins (CCC 1459). A Penance is often a prayer, a work of charity, or a sacrifice (giving up something you like) (CCC 1460).

After you have gone to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, you are reconciled (forgiven and accepted fully) again with God and with His Church (CCC 1468-9).

The Sacrament of Penance will help you to live a holy life following God's laws. You will receive grace to overcome your sins too. Confession will help you to prepare for your judgment when you meet God (CCC 1470). Every confession is like a little judgment where you tell God you are sorry for your sins and He forgives you. When you are before God, you will be responsible for your actions, words and works you should have done. By going to confession often, you will not need to be judged for the things you have already confessed at the end of your life.

The Sacrament of Penance will heal your soul from sin and your relationship with God and neighbor. What a gift!

Questions about Penance

1. List three names for this Sacrament.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2. This sacrament is a sacrament of _____. (growing, healing)

3. Why do we go to confession?

4. Who do we offend or hurt when we sin?

5. How do we sin?

6. What must we do to prepare for a good Confession?

7. What two things will a priest do for you in this Sacrament?

- 1.
- 2.

8. What will this Sacrament help you to do?

9. At the end of this life, what will this Sacrament help prepare you for?

10. What will this Sacrament heal?

Word Search

P P O H T L A W P S O U L Y
R E C O N C I L I A T I O N
E N O L J H S O N C U T E N
P A M Y U A C F O R G I V E
A N M S D R M H E A L I N G
R C A P G I W Y A M T S I C
E E N I M T O F F E N D S H
M N D R E Y O R T N D W A U
S T M I N T E M P T E D Y R
T W E T T M S M G R A C E C
C O N F E S S I O N O L M H
O R T H U R T S D P R A Y D
A K S I N S A C R I F I C E
L P R I E S T M J E S U S T

Can you find these words in this puzzle? Circle them.

Find them in the text called “The Sacrament of Penance” and put a box around them. Use the color purple.

CHARITY
CONFESSION
GRACE
HURTS
LAW
PRAY
RECONCILIATION
SIN
TEN

CHURCH
FORGIVE
HEALING
JESUS
OFFENDS
PREPARE
SACRAMENT
SOUL

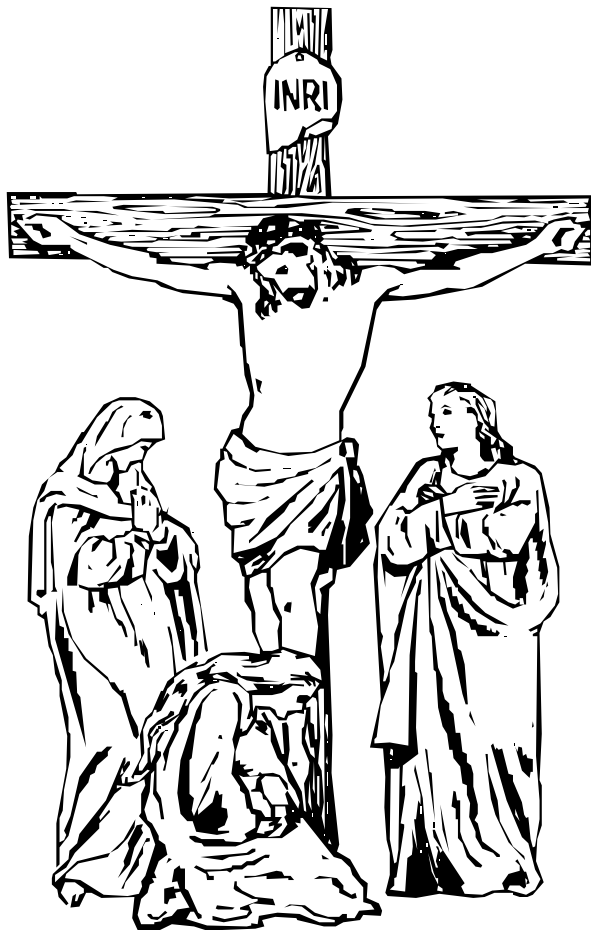
COMMANDMENTS
GOD
HOLY SPIRIT
JUDGEMENT
PENANCE
PRIEST
SACRIFICES
TEMPTED
WORK

Draw a picture of you sad because of your sins.

Draw a picture of you happy with God after Confession.

Why Should I go to Confession?

1. To turn back to God (CCC 1428) and heal my relationship with Him.
2. To have my sins forgiven by God (CCC 1441). Jesus died for my sins and because I am united with Him through my baptism, my sins can be forgiven.
3. To receive a Penance to make up for my sins against God and His Church (CCC 1443).
4. To receive grace (CCC 1446) to overcome my sins, to heal my soul and help me to get to Heaven.
5. To overcome my sins and desire goodness in my life (CCC 1431).



My God,
I am sorry for my sins
with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong,
and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you
whom I should love
above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance,
to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever
leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ
suffered and died for us.
In His name, my God,
have mercy. Amen.

How can I prepare to receive the Sacrament of Penance?

To answer this question, we must first know that there are five Steps to a good confession. Let's learn them now.

- 1) Make an examination of Conscience. This means to learn God's laws and then look at your own life to see if you have obeyed or broken God's laws.
- 2) Have contrition for your sins. This means to be sorry for your sins because they offend God who is all-good and all-loving.
- 3) Decide to do your best to not sin again.
- 4) Confess your sins to a priest or bishop in the Sacrament of Penance.
- 5) Do the Penance that the priest gives you. You should do this right away. Penance helps you to make up for our sins and helps you to overcome your sin.

It is important to learn your faith and follow God's laws. Jesus will help you.

Confession Quiz

1. Why do we go to Confession? There are four reasons.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

2. What two things will a priest do for you in this Sacrament?

- 1.
- 2.

3. What will this Sacrament heal?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

4. What are the five steps to a good confession?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

5. Why do I want to receive the Sacrament of Penance?



STEP 1. Examine Your Conscience.

To examine your conscience, you must know God's laws... Let's learn them.

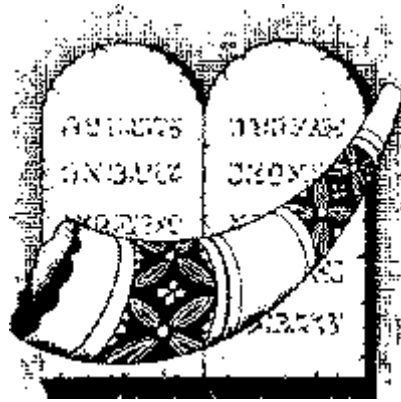
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.
3. You shall honor the Sabbath.
4. You shall honor your mother and father.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.

These Ten Commandments can be summarized with the Great Law: "Love the Lord you God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and all you mind, and you neighbor as yourself."

Also, the Church has some laws you must follow. They are called the precepts of the Church.

1. You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.
2. You shall confess your sins at least once a year
3. You shall receive Holy Communion at least once a year, and during the Easter Season.
4. You shall fast according to Church laws (On Fridays of Lent, and Ash Wednesday)?
5. You shall confess your mortal sins before receiving Holy Communion and observe the one-hour Eucharistic fast.
6. You shall not make a bad confession.
7. You shall support your Church with your talents and money.



NAME THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (IN ORDER).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

WHAT IS THE GREAT COMMANDMENT?

LIST THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

SIN

Now that you know the laws, you must learn what sin is. There are two kinds of sin: mortal and venial.

MORTAL SIN is when you **know something is seriously wrong**, you **intend** to do this sin, and you **freely consent** to doing this sin. For example: you know breaking one of the Ten Commandments is seriously wrong. Let's use stealing as an example. So, you know that stealing is seriously wrong, you want something and decide you will steal it, and you choose (say yes) to steal something. This would be a mortal sin.

VENIAL SIN is when the **sin is less serious**, or when you **do not intend** to sin, or **do not freely consent** to sin. Let's use a similar example. You like your friend's toy, and you borrow it, but forget to return it. This is an accident. It is a sin if you do not return it when you realize that you still have it. Or, if you take your friend's toy but don't ask permission, but did not intend to steal it. These are examples of venial sin.

In CONFESSION you MUST confess all your MORTAL SINS and the number of them, and you may also confess your venial sins.

Every sin hurts your relationship with God and His people, the Church. Even sins you don't think anybody knows about. Every sin puts a distance between you and God. Venial sins are like taking small steps away from God. Mortal sins are like running away from God as far as you can! You must confess your mortal sins so that you can be with God again. Every decision we make has not only effects here on earth, but also after this life. If you die in Mortal Sin, you can go to Hell. Hell is eternal punishment for our sins. It is important to go to confession as soon as you can after making a Mortal Sin. It is also good to confess your venial sins, because if you take lots of little steps away from God, pretty soon, you're too far away! When you confess your sins, you are brought back to God. The best part is, nobody will ever know what you confessed, because your sins are between you and God. The Priest can NEVER HELP tell anyone what you told him in confession.

Here are some questions to help you examine your conscience.

1. I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods besides me.

- * Did I do my prayers with all my heart?
- * Did I bother others while they were praying?
- * Was I ashamed to be a Catholic?
- * Was I afraid to tell others about Jesus?

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.

- * Did I use God's name or Jesus' name in anger or fun?
- * Did I curse (ask God to hurt someone or wish harm on someone)?
- * Did I make fun of holy things?

3. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath.

- * Did I miss Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation through my own fault?
- * Did I come to Mass late through my own fault?
- * Did I leave Mass before it was over without a good reason?
- * Did I whisper, laugh, talk or tease others during Mass?
- * Do I take time to spend with my family on Sundays?
- * Do I do extra prayers on Sundays?

4. Honor your father and mother.

- * Do I disobey my parents?
- * Do I disobey my teachers or priests?
- * Did I make fun of old people?
- * Was I mean to my parents?
- * Did I forget to pray for my parents?

5. Thou shalt not kill.

- * Did I think of myself as better than others (pride)?
- * Did I fight with boys or girls?
- * Did I hurt my brothers or sisters? Was I mean to them?
- * Did I call others bad names?
- * Was I angry? Was I stubborn? Was I lazy?
- * Did I eat or drink too much or hurt my body in any way?
- * Did I hate others?
- * Did I try to get even with others?
- * Did I lead others to sin by my example?
- Was I mean or cruel to animals?

6 & 9. You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.

- * Did I have bad thoughts and like them?
- * Did I tell bad stories?
- * Did I listen to bad talk? or read bad books? or go to bad movies or watch bad T.V. shows?
- * Did I touch others on purpose in a way that was not pure?
- * Did I really want to look at or do things that were not pure?
- * Did I go to places that led me to sin?
- * Did I look at or draw bad pictures?

7 & 10. You shall not steal

You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.

- * Did I steal anything? How much? Where from?
- * Did I tell others to steal?
- * Did I take or keep stolen things given to me by others?
- * Did I hurt or spoil another's property?
- * Did I cheat in class or at home?
- * Did I keep valuable things that I found?
- * Was I jealous of others when they did better than me in class, had cool things?

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- * Did I tell lies?
- * Did these lies hurt others?
- * Did I talk about my or others sins without a good reason?
- * Did I say mean things about others when they were not around?
- * Did I gossip?

Church Precepts:

- * Did I make a bad confession by keeping back a mortal sin or not being sorry for my sins?
- * Did I receive Holy Communion without fasting first?
- * Did I receive Communion in Mortal Sin?
- * Did I fail to go to Confession once a year?
- * Did I fail to receive Communion at Easter time?
- * Did I eat meat on Fridays and Ash Wednesday?
- * Did I keep Days of Obligation Holy?

STEP 2. Have Contrition.

Contrition means to be sorry for your sins. There are two kinds of Contrition: Perfect Contrition and Imperfect Contrition (also called Attrition).

PERFECT CONTRITION is when you are sorry for your sins with all your heart, because they offend God and hurt others.

IMPERFECT CONTRITION is when you are sorry for your sins because you fear the punishment for your sins - and if it is a mortal sin, you fear going to hell.

We should strive for Perfect Contrition. It may help us to pray before a crucifix and remember how Jesus suffered and died for our sins. Either form of contrition is acceptable and is permissible when receiving the Sacrament of Penance.

STEP 3. Decide to not sin anymore.

This third step is very important. Before we go to confession, we must really choose to do our best to not sin anymore. We must decide to not do things that lead us to sin. We may have to avoid people and places that might lead us to sin. By confessing our sins, we know we are responsible for our actions, and that because sin is offensive to God, we must avoid what leads us to sin. We choose to do all we can. We might sin again in the future, but we must do our very best to not sin.



STEP 4. Confess your Sins.

To be able to go to confessions, you must first be baptized, and you must be old enough to understand the difference between right and wrong (CCC 1457). You must also go to confession before your first communion (CCC 1457). To receive absolution (to be told your sins are forgiven), you must confess your sins to a priest or a bishop (CCC 1461). You must confess all your mortal sins and the number of times you did each of them. It is also good to confess venial sins (CCC 1458). You should never fear telling the priest you sins, because you are really telling them to Jesus (and He already knows your sins and died for them!) The priest also can NEVER tell anybody your sins.

In the Confessional...

1. You will enter a confessional or a confession room and will have the choice to kneel behind a screen or sit in a chair facing the priest. He may greet you and read from the bible or say a prayer.
2. You will begin right away and will make the sign of the cross and say **“Bless me Father, for I have sinned, this is my first confession.”** (In the future you will say how long it has been since your last confession, for example - bless me Father for I have sinned, it has been two weeks since my last confession.)
3. **Tell you sins** following the order of the Ten Commandments or say the hardest ones first. If you have mortal sins, be sure to say the number of times you did them. If you do not know the number tell the priest how often you do this sin.
4. **Listen to the priest**, he may give you some advise. He will also give you a penance to do (usually a prayer).
5. Say an Act of Contrition: **O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins, because of your just punishments, but most of all because they offend you , my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Your grace to sin no more, and to avoid all that leads me to sin. Amen.**
6. The priest will give you absolution. It is a long prayer that ends with “I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son an of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” He will then dismiss you.

STEP 5. Do your penance.

If you broke your mother's favorite vase, you would tell her that you are sorry. She may forgive you, but the vase is still broken, and you are responsible for this. You may either be punished, or you may try to fix the vase. That is what penance is like, we do our best to make up for our sins.

Usually the priest will give you a penance of saying a few prayers. He may ask you to do an act of charity or to give something up (CCC 1460). The penance he gives you depends on your personal situation and the seriousness of your sin (CCC 1461).

You should do your penance as soon as possible after your confession, so you don't forget your penance.



