

TOPIC FOUR:

SIN AND THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

GOAL:

To help the candidate grow in the understanding of sin and its effects and develop a greater appreciation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

RATIONALE:

Sin damages or destroys our relationship with God. It also disrupts or weakens unity within the Christian community. The forgiveness of sins is most fully expressed and celebrated in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

BACKGROUND:

It is not uncommon for candidates--and adults--to have difficulty in celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. For many, twice a year is the maximum number of times to go to confession.

To some degree, the cause may be the great emphasis that has been placed on the loving mercy of God, almost to the exclusion of God being all-just. This leads many to assume that since our "little sins" are quite insignificant compared to the crimes committed in our society, God understands our human weaknesses. Therefore we do not need to go to confession.

In your discussion with your candidate, attempt to pinpoint the causes for difficulties he or she may have with going to confession. Attempt to deepen his/her understanding of the healing nature of this sacrament and how it can be effective in overcoming weaknesses and sins.

PRAY Together

Lord, hear the prayers of those who call on you, forgive the sins of those who confess to you, and in your merciful love give us your pardon and your peace.

Lord, may the Helper, the Spirit who comes from you, fill our hearts with light and lead us to all truth as your Son promised, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

ACTIVITY I: SCRIPTURE SEARCH – SIN

1. Read together each of the Scripture passages below.
2. Discuss each passage together in the light of these questions:
 - a. Sin has been defined/described as - - -
 1. "missing the mark" of living God's covenant of love
 2. an attitude
 3. an action and a failure to act
 4. a power
 - b. How do these Scriptures help you to understand these descriptions?

Genesis 3:1-24

Ephesians 4:25-31

Romans 5:12-14

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Galatians 5:16-21

ACTIVITY II: SINS AGAINST EACH COMMANDMENT

While all the commandments ask us to act in a certain manner, there are sins involved with each commandment. In the lists given with each commandment,

DISCUSS how each sin is a violation of that commandment.

1st Commandment:

- denial of God (apostasy/giving up the Faith)
- heresy (deny one or more teachings of the Church)
- schism (denial of Pope as Head of Church and Supreme Authority on earth)
- presumption (assume that salvation can be obtained: 1. by one's own efforts or 2. by God's help without our own cooperation)

- despair (refuse to trust that God will forgive our sins and give us the means of salvation)
- indifferentism (one religion is as good as other)
- satanism (worship of the devil)
- have other gods
- superstition (astrology, fortune tellers)

2nd Commandment:

- blasphemy (mocking, ridiculing, despising God, His Church, saints or holy objects)
- irreverence in using the name of God, Jesus, or saints
- cursing (calling down evil upon another)
- swearing (calling upon God to witness that something is the truth when it is not true)

3rd Commandment:

- failure to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
- doing unnecessary, servile work on Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation

4th Commandment:

- disobedience to parents
- disobedience to Church authorities
- disobedience to other lawful authorities
- failure to care for parents

5th Commandment:

- murder
- abortion
- euthanasia
- suicide
- artificial contraception
- sterilization
- artificial insemination
- in vitro fertilization
- violence
- anger
- drugs/drunkenness
- war (unjust)

6th Commandment:

- any sexual acts outside of marriage
- failure to avoid occasions of sin, such as pornographic books/entertainment.

7th Commandment:

- stealing
- shoplifting
- unjust business practices/ethics
- damaging what belongs to another
- excessive gambling
- cheating
- acceptance of bribes

8th Commandment:

- lying
- ruining reputation/dignity of another
- rash judgment (make a decision before knowing all the facts)
- detraction (revealing another's faults which harm the person's good name or is not going to help them)

9th Commandment:

- encouraging impure thoughts/desires
- encouraging or creating pornographic materials

10th Commandment:

- desiring to obtain another's possessions unlawfully
- being envious of another's possessions
- plotting to steal/cheat

Discuss how the beatitudes are to be lived out in our lives.

The Eight Beatitudes (Social "rules") Mt 5:3-10

1. We must depend on God
2. We must be sorrowful for our sins and injustices
3. We must be humble because we are creatures
4. Holiness is to be like God. Morality is to act like God acts; i.e., holy/out of love/peace
5. We receive forgiveness in like manner to how we forgive (See "Our Father")
6. We must have our heart set on God. Materialism/consumerism goes contrary.
7. We must promote harmony/peace with God and all beings.
8. We must be ready to be persecuted/insulted because of our Faith.

ACTIVITY III: WATCH: AN ENCOUNTER WITH MERCY

Watch: Sign on to Formed. On the Home page pull down the menu from the "Programs" button. Click "The Sacraments" on the menu. Scroll until you find the "Forgiven: The Transforming Power of Confession" tile. Click on it. Next, click on "Session 2: An Encounter with Mercy" tile. Click on it and watch the 27 minute video.

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PROGRESS REPORT

Date: _____

Name: Sponsor _____

Candidate _____

Sponsor: What I discovered in this lesson(s) was:

Candidate: What I discovered in this lesson(s) was:

Sponsor: What specific tasks/assignments should your candidate work on in relation to this topic:

- a. between now and your next meeting?

- b. in a long-range manner?