

Name: _____

Date Due: 11/30/2025 _____

SESSION #5: RECONCILIATION



Please read the provided material and answer the questions to the best of your ability. Please turn your work into Matt Jennerson or Mark Vallone before the due date.

- 1** Suppose you spread a hurtful rumor about a classmate. explain how God is already reaching out to bring you back to Him through Jesus.

- 2** Briefly explain how “Confession,” “Penance,” and “Reconciliation” each highlight a different step of the same sacrament in a real-life example.

- 3** Christ forgives through the priest: A friend says, “Only God forgives sins—why talk to a priest?” Write a 2–3 sentence reply using the idea of in persona Christi.

- 4** Using the medical comparison from the text, outline a simple “treatment plan” for a recurring sin (two steps before Confession, one step during, one follow-up after).

- 5** Describe one specific way going to Confession could change how you treat someone this week (home, school, team) so that you extend the mercy you received.

Main Point 1:
God desires to shower His mercy on all of us when we sin.

SCRIPTURE

Project and read **2 Corinthians 5:17-21** or ask a leadership teen to read it.

SUGGESTION

When presenting in front of a group, use a Bible to read the passage rather than a digital copy or a paper printout.

- This Scripture passage tells us that God reconciled the world to Himself in Jesus, and St. Paul refers to himself and his fellow ministers as “ambassadors for Christ,” imploring that people be reconciled to God.
- This passage teaches us three important things.
- First, that we are in need of reconciliation. Reconciliation in this context means being brought back into the right relationship with God. As sinners, we need to be reconciled to God.
- Second, God desires to reconcile the world to Himself through Christ. Reconciliation is God’s initiative first, not ours. There are things we need to do to be reconciled with God, which we will talk about later. This reconciliation is only possible because God reaches out to us first through Christ and His self-offering on the cross.
- Finally, Jesus has sent ambassadors into the world to serve as ministers of this reconciliation. Saint Paul and the others with him were imploring others to be reconciled to God. God was using them as His instruments.
- So we see that when we sin, God desires to reconcile us, so much so that He sent His Son into the world to die for us and has sent ambassadors to call us to seek forgiveness.
- Jesus’ gift of Himself on the cross is a testament to how much He loves each one of us and desires that we be in a relationship with Him.
- Throughout His entire public ministry, Jesus encountered people, loved them, and called them to repentance. In the same way, He seeks to heal the brokenness in our lives that is caused by sin.

- For this reason, we may refer to Christ as the Divine Physician, but unlike a typical doctor, He is capable and desires most to heal your soul so we can live united with Him.
- In His infinite wisdom, He has given the Church a particular and practical way in which He wishes to bring about that healing and unity.

CATECHISM

Project and read the following from **CCC 1421**:

“The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health, has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members.

This is the purpose of the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.”

Explain how the Sacrament of Penance is known as Confession and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each naming highlights a different aspect of the same sacrament. Penance refers to the action that brings us back into a right relationship with God, Confession refers to the primary action needed to initiate penance, and Reconciliation refers to the restoration of our place with God and the community.

Main Point 2:

When we adopt a pro-life mindset, we witness to the love of God and His concern for every person He created.

- The sacraments of our faith are rooted in Scripture and Tradition. Christ Himself was baptized. At the Last Supper, Christ institutes the priesthood, instructing His apostles to continue celebrating the sacrifice of the Mass and the Eucharistic feast. Likewise, we see Christ institute the sacrament of Reconciliation when He appears to His apostles after His Resurrection. (**Matthew 3, Luke 22:14-20**)

SCRIPTURE

Project and read **John 20:21-23** or ask a leadership teen to read it.

- Christ knows our sinfulness, and in this moment, He sets into action His plan to keep us reconciled and in union with Him after He ascends into heaven. He gives His apostles the authority to forgive sins in

His name, and that authority passes to the successors of the apostles — the bishops — and from them to priests. **(CCC 1441)**

- Confession is a major point of contention for many non-Catholics, and without more context, it's easy to see how one might be confused. People may wonder, *How could it be that humans can forgive sins? I thought it was only God who could do that.*
- This is a pretty logical line of reasoning and one that the Church acknowledges.

CATECHISM

Project and read the following from **CCC 1441**:

“Only God forgives sins.

Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself,
‘The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins’
and exercises this divine power: ‘Your sins are forgiven.’

Further, by virtue of his divine authority
he gives this power to men to exercise in his name.”

- We must understand that the apostles and the priests, as their successors, are not the ones who forgive our sins.
- In key moments during the sacraments, the priest is acting in Persona Christi, which is Latin for ‘in the person of Christ.’ This includes during Confession when the priest speaks the prayer of absolution or during the Mass when he prays over the bread and wine and they become the Body and Blood of Christ.
- That means that in that moment, the priest is not acting through his own power or authority but rather as a direct conduit of Jesus, who is acting through the priest.
- When we go to Confession and hear the words of absolution, we hear words spoken to us by Jesus through His priest. This is why the priest says, “I absolve you of your sins” rather than, “Jesus absolves you of your sins.”

Main Point 3:

**Frequently confessing our sins to a priest allows us to live lives
radiant with the mercy of God and progress in holiness.**

- We are broken people who need God’s mercy to heal our brokenness. God desires to pour out that mercy on us and into our lives, but we must be willing to ask for it and receive it.

- To seek God's mercy in Confession is humbling because it involves sharing the deepest, darkest parts of our inner lives with another person. **(Going Deeper #1: The Seal)**
- What's more, people who frequent the Sacrament of Reconciliation often find themselves confessing the same sins over and over again, which can be discouraging.
- Though difficult, this is what we must do to be healed of the wounds of sin. Think about a medical analogy. If you were to go to the doctor and receive a diagnosis of cancer or some other serious illness, it wouldn't be a one-time, easy fix. There would have to be follow-up visits that are crucial in trying to cure the disease, and sometimes it would be a lifelong battle.
- Sin is like a serious disease or illness. In fact, it is through sin that disease and illness entered the world. We should have a great zeal to seek healing from the wounds of sin. **(Genesis 3)**
- The more we understand ourselves and our humanity, the more we see why Jesus left us with the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. He knew that we would need it because He understood humanity at the deepest level; being man Himself. He was tempted, and He knew the battles that we would face.

SCRIPTURE

Project and read **Hebrews 4:14-16** or ask a leadership teen to read it.

- That is why Jesus gave us this gift, a gift that He desires us to use. We should not approach the sacrament with shame, but rather, knowing that we have a God who loves us and would do anything to bring us to Him. **(Going Deeper #2: Frequency)**
- When we allow ourselves to be filled with that mercy, we can then share mercy in return. We cannot give what we do not have, and confessing our sins allows us to reset our lives and center on what is truly life-giving.