

HEART SPEAKS TO HEART: THE GIFT OF RECONCILIATION

CATECHIST NOTES



SESSION 2

HONESTY & BRAVERY: God is Calling You (pp.24-37)

Before the session begins:

- Prepare a focal point (which may this week include a children's Bible open at the story of the Garden of Eden; a card with the questions on page 34 written on it: *An Examination of Conscience before going to sleep: Have I made good choices today? Have I loved God with all my heart and grown in friendship with Him? Have I loved other people as I should or have I hurt anyone? etc.*)
- Serve refreshments (when this is possible)
- If the Help and Guidance handouts are to be distributed during the session or in advance for Session 3, have the sheets ready for distribution at the appropriate point in the session
- It may be a good idea to have one or two photocopies of the relevant pages of *Heart Speaks to Heart* (pages 24-37) in case some participants have forgotten their books!

Catechists should be ready to help participants who may be struggling with the discussion. It may help to have pictures or images available or to point participants to this week's focal point.

Catechists should also be aware of families' stories, lives and struggles.

See suggested timings for each section of the session below: it is anticipated that pages 24-27 will take 10 minutes in total; pages 32-33 may take up to 15 minutes in total.

The Lead Catechist notes below are intended to be prompts for the sort of things Lead Catechists may say rather than scripts to be read out.

Welcome and Prayer

3-5 minutes

Lead Catechist:

- Welcomes everyone
- Asks participants to turn to **page 24** in their books
- Reads out the title of the session and says something like: "In this second session we will be thinking about the choices we make and how sometimes we fail to show love as we should and deliberately choose to do something that is wrong."
- Asks everyone to join in the **prayer on page 25** ("Lord Jesus, You are the Lord of Life ..."), leads everyone in making the Sign of the Cross and then leads the prayer

Pages 26-27 ("Celebrating our gifts")

5-7 minutes

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 26**
- Says something like: "I hope you've had chance to read these pages, think about the questions at the bottom of page 27 and record your answers in your Reflection Book.
 - 1. What preparation for First Reconciliation have you been doing at home since last time?**
 - 2. What gifts do you think that *you* have?**
 - 3. How can you use your gifts to help others?**
 Take time now to share together your responses to these questions."
- May encourage participants to read pages 26-27 again before they talk about the questions



Pages 28-29 (Today's virtues: Honesty & Bravery)**5 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 28**
- Says something like:
"This week we will be thinking about the virtues of Honesty and Bravery. The virtues help us grow in friendship with Jesus and become the best person we can be. Let's read what it says about Honesty and Bravery on page 28."
- **EITHER** asks participants to read page 28 together **OR** reads the text aloud to the whole group **OR** invites two participants to read out a paragraph each to the whole group

Pages 30-31 ("Breaking friendship with God")**10 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 30**
- Says something like:
"Let's listen now to a story from the Bible. As you listen, underline words which stand out for you on pages 30-31 and think about what they may mean. After you have listened to the story, share with each other the words and thoughts which meant something to you. Begin to write and draw your thoughts in the spaces beside the Bible passage. You can finish this off at home."
- **EITHER** reads the Bible passage about the forbidden fruit slowly and clearly **OR** invites participants to read the passage to one another **OR** plays the audio of the text (found under **Audios Bible Passages > Reconciliation Session 2 – Breaking Friendship with God**)
- Asks participants to share and write down or draw their thoughts

Page 32 ("Jesus heals our friendship with God")**8-10 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 32**
- Says something like:
"Read the left-hand column and the top of the right-hand column on page 32 together, taking it in turns to read a paragraph each, and then read the questions at the bottom of the right-hand column and talk together, trying to answer one or two of these questions."

Page 33 ("Sins and mistakes")**5-7 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to look at **page 33**
- Introduces the activity by saying something like:
 "When we do something wrong on purpose we call that a sin. Sometimes we do something wrong and don't mean to do it or don't understand that it is wrong: we call that making a 'mistake'. There is no need to confess our mistakes: we only confess our sins – those times we do something wrong on purpose.
 "On page 33, six situations have been described and you need to decide whether what a child does in each of these situations should be called a 'sin' or a 'mistake'. Draw a line from each situation box to EITHER the 'sin' bubble OR the 'mistake' bubble. If you have time, explain why you think the situation is a 'sin' or a 'mistake'."

Pages 34-5 ("Making good choices")**5 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 34**
- Says something like:
 "Read **page 34** together, taking it in turns to read a paragraph each, and talk together about the questions there. If time, read **page 35** and talk together about the question on that page."

Note: there may not be time to do all of this section during this session and catechists may advise participants to do it all or (if begun) to complete it at home.

Page 36 ("At home")**5 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Goes through the home/church activities on **page 36**
- If there has not been chance to complete all the tasks on pages 34-35, encourages participants to finish these off at home (children and adults working together)
- Asks the children to read pages 40-41 and think about the questions there in preparation for the next session

Evaluation**5 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to consider two questions, talk together about them and write down thoughts on post-its.
- The two questions are:
 - 1. What did you enjoy in the session? [2 minutes]**
 - 2. If we were to do the session again, what could make it even better? [2 minutes]**

Page 37 ("Praying in honesty before God")**5 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Invites participants to sit quietly and close their eyes
- Says something like:
"I'm going to say a little phrase three or four times. Say these words silently to yourselves and continue to say them silently after I finish speaking. I will signal the end of this quiet prayer time" [perhaps by ringing a bell]
- Says aloud, "Lord Jesus: my guardian and my guide" three or four times and then allows for 2-3 minutes silence
- Gives the pre-arranged signal after 2-3 minutes silence
- Asks participants to look at the right-hand column on **page 37**
- Reads the words at the top of the column and invites everyone to pray the first lines of the *Hail Mary* together

Thank everyone for their participation in the session and let them know you are available after the session if anyone has any questions.

Finish on time!

Try and meet as a catechist & helpers team after the session to discuss how the session has gone and what could be done better in future sessions.

Please feel free to annotate these *Catechist Notes* and use them to help your reflection for future sessions.

Below you will find some teaching on making choices which you may like to share with parents and carers.

Teaching from the Catechism: Making Choices

Below there are some reflections (based on YOUCAT and the teaching of the Church) on some of the main topics dealt with in Session 2.

References from YOUCAT are given below and you may like to share the quotations with your parents and carers. YOUCAT (The Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church) provides easily accessible answers to many questions about the Catholic Faith which are asked by inquisitive minds. ISBN 978-1-86982-728-0.

We are all tempted as human beings and that is itself not a SIN. Jesus was fully human and faced temptation on many occasions (for example, in the desert or in the garden of Gethsemane).

The important thing here is **choice**. At any moment we can choose GOOD and choose GOD. God is always in the good choice and in making those good choices we grow closer to him.

This Session explores the nature of choice and **sin**. When we sin, we turn away from God, choosing to reject his loving offer of friendship.

(See *YOUCAT*, Page 49. Para 67)

God has created us all to be free. He gives us **freedom**, which is the ability to make our own decisions, to act on them and to take responsibility for them. We lack freedom if our choices or actions are compelled by other people, or by circumstances beyond our control.

(See *YOUCAT*, Page 166. Para 287; Page 167. Para 288)

Christ offers to "set us free" (John 8:32) from sin, death and other forces in our life which oppress us and prevent our friendship with God and with one another. He sends us the Holy Spirit, through whom we share in God's life, enabling us to love God and one another in whatever situation we find ourselves. God freely chooses to give us His gift of transforming friendship, which we call **grace**. But God does not force us to be His friends; He allows us to reject His offer of grace.

(See *YOUCAT*, Page 168. Para.290)

Encourage parents and carers to focus on and praise the good choices their children make, and to help their children to be brave and honest about the bad choices they make: acknowledging them, honestly admitting them, trying to repair the consequences of their actions and learning from what they have done.