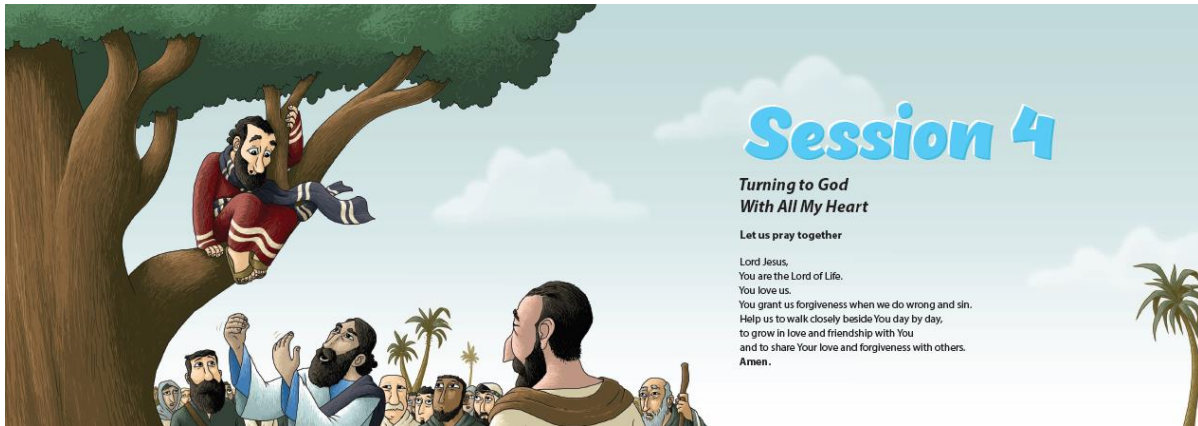


# HEART SPEAKS TO HEART: THE GIFT OF RECONCILIATION

## CATECHIST NOTES



### SESSION 4

#### FRIENDSHIP & RESPECT: Turning to God (pp. 52-67)

##### Before the session begins:

- Prepare a focal point (which may this week include a children's Bible open at the story of Zacchaeus; 5 cards with the words/phrases Examination of Conscience, Confession, Penance, Contrition, Absolution written on them; etc.
- Serve refreshments (when this is possible)
- Have the *How to Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation* cards ready to be distributed towards the end of the session
- If the Help and Guidance handouts are to be distributed during the session or in advance for Session 5, 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 52-67) in case some participants have forgotten their books!

This may be a longer session if catechists decide that the children should begin to practise celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the session. If so, practicalities and arrangements for First Reconciliation will need to be checked with the Parish Priest.

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 52-55 will take 10 minutes in total; you may well need longer than 5 minutes for pages 64-65).

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 52** in their books
- Reads out the title of the session and says:  
"In this fourth session we will be thinking about what we need to do as we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There's quite a lot to remember but we will keep going over this to make sure that you don't feel too nervous before your 1<sup>st</sup> Confession."
- Asks everyone to join in the **prayer on page 53** ("Lord Jesus, You are the Lord of Life ..."), leads everyone in making the Sign of the Cross and then leads the prayer

### **Pages 54-55 ("Getting near 'The Big Day'")**

**5-7 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 54**
- Says something like:  
"I hope you've had chance to read these pages, think about the questions which are on page 55 and record your answers in your Reflection Book.  
**1. What preparation for First Reconciliation have you been doing at home since last time?**  
**2. How are *you* feeling as the big day of your First Reconciliation approaches?**  
**3. What will help you to prepare well for your First Reconciliation?**  
Take time now to share your responses to these questions."
- May encourage participants to read pages 54-55 again before they talk about the questions

**Pages 56-57 (Today's virtues: FRIENDSHIP & RESPECT)****5 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 56**
- Says something like:  
"This week we will be thinking about the virtues of Friendship and Respect. The virtues help us grow in friendship with Jesus and become the best person we can be. Let's read what it says about Friendship and Respect on page 56."
- **EITHER** asks participants to read page 56 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 58-59 ("Jesus makes friends with Zacchaeus")****10 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 58**
- 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 58-59 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 Jesus and Zacchaeus 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 4 – Jesus Makes Friends with Zacchaeus**)
- Asks participants to share and write down or draw their thoughts

**Page 60 ("Steps to becoming friends again")****5 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 60**
- Says something like:  
"Read the left-hand column and the top of the right-hand column on page 60 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. If time, read **page 61** and talk together about the question on that page."

**Pages 62-63 ("Reconciliation ...")****10 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to look next at **page 62**
- Says something like:  
"Read **page 62** together, taking it in turns to read a paragraph each, and then try the activities on **page 63**, where there are 5 words with 5 meanings: you will need to match the right word to the right meaning. If you have time, try writing your own meanings for the words at the bottom of the page."

**Pages 64-65 ("Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation")****5 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 64**
- Says something like:  
"This week we will look closely at how we celebrate Reconciliation and how you will make your First Confession."
- Explains where the children will celebrate their First Reconciliation (e.g. will it be in a Confessional or somewhere in Church, face-to-face with the priest?)
- Reads aloud the pages **64-65** explaining the text while reading through it
- Gives out the *How to Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation* cards and asks the children to learn the words and practise at home what they have to do (**OR** takes time now during or at the end of the session to practise with the children).

**Note:** you will probably need more time to do this during the session and may need to build extra time into this week's session. Alternatively, you may like to spend time on working through the card at a rehearsal nearer the day of First Reconciliation. In times of social distancing, the guidance for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation given on the card may need adapting.

**Page 66 ("At home")****5 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Goes through the home/church activities on **page 66**
- Asks the children to read pages 70-71 and think about the questions there in preparation for the next session
- Announces details of the First Reconciliation celebrations

**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 67 ("Praying in friendship with 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, "O my God: God of love and mercy" 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 67**
- Reads the words at the top of the column and invites everyone to pray three times the Act of Contrition prayer ("O my God ...") 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 Church teaching on showing respect for others and the environment in which we live. You may like to share this with parents and carers.**

## **Teaching from the Catechism: Showing Respect for Others and the Environment**

*Below there are some reflections (based on YOUCAT and the teaching of the Church) on the **respect** we should show to others and our world (a key virtue which we have reflected on in Session 4).*

*References from YOUCAT are given below and you may like to share the quotations with your parents and carers.*

Humans are the most valuable of God's creatures, because we are made in His "image" (Genesis 1:27), which enables us to know and to love Him. (See *YOUCAT*, Page 44. Para.56)

We should honour God by treating animals and plants with appropriate care. We should value our fellow creatures because God created all living things through love, and all living things reflect His own life. (See *YOUCAT*, Page 44. Para.57)

God created the world and everything in it to show His glory, and to provide a suitable environment in which we can live. But God made humans for a unique purpose: to share in God's own life by knowing and loving Him. (See *YOUCAT*, Page 45. Para.59)

We obey God's commandment "to till and to keep" the earth (Genesis 2:15) by preserving our world's ecological diversity, natural beauty, and finite resources. God created Earth as an environment in which humans can flourish, and we must maintain this environment as a suitable home for future generations.

(See *YOUCAT*, Page 236. Para.436)

God created animals out of love and celebrates their value (Genesis 1:25). We should also value creatures, thanking God for their beauty and variety. (See *YOUCAT*, Page 237. Para.437)

**DVD resources** (which you may like to make use of):

*Global Healing: How our Faith Helps us Care for our Common Home* (a CaFE resource: [www.faithcafe.org](http://www.faithcafe.org) [www.ourcommonhome.co.uk](http://www.ourcommonhome.co.uk)) - available as a course online.

*Global Caring: Living in Harmony with God's Creation* (a CaFE resource: [www.faithcafe.org](http://www.faithcafe.org) [www.ourcommonhome.co.uk](http://www.ourcommonhome.co.uk)).