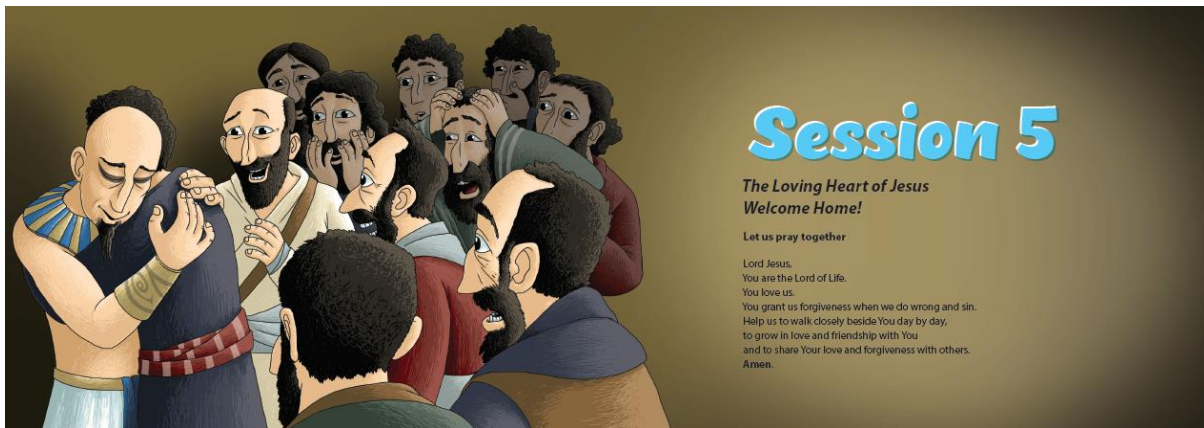


HEART SPEAKS TO HEART: THE GIFT OF RECONCILIATION

CATECHIST NOTES



SESSION 5

LOVE & FORGIVENESS: the loving Heart of Jesus (pp. 68-81)

Before the session begins:

- Prepare a focal point (which may this week include a children's Bible open at the story of Joseph or the parable of the Prodigal Son; the cards with the 5 words/phrases on (Confession, Contrition, etc.) also used in the focal point in the last session (you could use these in this session, holding them up when you remind the children of the different stages of Reconciliation); etc.
- Serve refreshments (when this is possible)
- If the Help and Guidance handouts are to be distributed during the session, 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 68-81) 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 68-71 will take 10 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 68** in their books
- Reads out the title of the session and says something like:
"In this fifth session we will be thinking about how much God loves us and is always ready to forgive us. We will be talking again about what we need to do as we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and how we continue to grow in love and friendship with Jesus."
- Asks everyone to join in the **prayer on page 69** ("Lord Jesus, You are the Lord of Life ..."), leads everyone in making the Sign of the Cross and then leads the prayer.

Pages 70-71 ("Preparing for the final session") **5-7 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 70**
- Says something like:
"I hope you've had chance to read these pages, think about the questions at the bottom of page 71 and record your answers in your Reflection Book."
 - 1. What preparation for First Reconciliation have you been doing at home since last time?**
 - 2. Do you remember what you have to do and say for your First Reconciliation?**
 - 3. How are you feeling now as First Reconciliation approaches?**
 - 4. Do you have any other questions?**
 Take time now to share together your responses to these questions."
- May encourage participants to read pages 70-71 again before they talk about the questions

Pages 72-73 (Today's virtues: Love & Forgiveness)**5 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 72**
- Says something like:
"This week we will be thinking about the virtues of Love and Forgiveness. The virtues help us grow in friendship with Jesus and become the best person we can be. Let's read what it says about Love and Forgiveness on page 72."
- **EITHER** asks participants to read page 72 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 74-75 ("Joseph forgives his brothers") **10 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 74**
- 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 74-75 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 Joseph and his brothers slowly and clearly **OR** invites participants to read the passage to one another **OR** plays the audio of the text (found under **Bible Passages > Reconciliation Session 5A – Joseph Forgives His Brothers**)
- Asks participants to share and write down or draw their thoughts

Pages 76-77 ("I Wonder")**10 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 76**
- Reads the instructions on page 76 and reads slowly the headings in the three boxes
- **EITHER** asks participants to read slowly the story on **page 77** to one another **OR** (and this may be the preferred option) slowly reads the story on page 77 (this latter option gives participants chance to reflect and imagine that they are in the scene) **OR** plays the audio of the text (found under **Audios Bible Passages > Reconciliation Session 5B – A Father Forgives His Son**)
- Asks participants (once they have finished listening to and reflecting on the story) to fill in the boxes (**EITHER** in words **OR** in drawings)
- Participants may need to finish this off at home

Pages 78-79 ("The Forgiveness of God")**10 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Asks participants to turn to **page 78**
- Says something like:
"Read page 78 together, taking it in turns to read a paragraph each, and talk together about the questions as you come across them. If you have time also read page 79 together, taking it in turns to read a paragraph each, and talk together about the questions at the bottom of page 79."

Note: There may not be time to do all of this section during this session and catechists may advise participants to finish it off at home.

Page 80 ("At home")**5 minutes**

Lead Catechist:

- Goes through the home/church activities on **page 80**
- Informs participants of any plans for a rehearsal before First Reconciliation
- Repeats details of the First Reconciliation celebration and of any ways in which the children will celebrate together once they have celebrated First Reconciliation

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 83

Lead Catechist:

- Draws participants' attention to **page 83**
- Encourages the children to fill in this page as soon as possible after they have celebrated their First Reconciliation
- Advises participants on the date of First Reconciliation and the name of the Parish!
- Asks participants to turn back to **page 81**

Page 81 (“Praying and Forgiveness”)**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, “Forgive me, Jesus: my friend and my Lord” 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 81**
- Reads the words at the top of the column and invites everyone to pray the concluding prayer together

Thank everyone for their participation in the session and let them know you are available after the session if anyone has any questions. **Let the children know that you will be praying for them as the day of their First Reconciliation approaches.**

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 next time you use the resource. Discuss plans for the celebration of First Reconciliation (and any rehearsal beforehand) and the jobs that need to be done.

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

Below you will find some suggestions for continuing the journey of faith after the celebration of First Reconciliation. You may like to share these suggestions with parents and carers.

There is also a *Continuing the Journey - After First Reconciliation* tab on the website. There you will find a booklet and leaflet which you may like to download and give to parents & carers and children.

You may like to quote *YOUCAT*, Page 206. Para.373.

OUR CONTINUING JOURNEY IN FAITH

The preparation of our children to celebrate their First Reconciliation has been a journey of learning and exploration for everyone involved. Being open in Faith means allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire and lead us into a deeper relationship with God, with the Lord Jesus and with others.

Our children have taken the next precious step in their faith and in deepening their relationship with God; families have been made welcome, their participation in the preparation and the example they give has been much appreciated, and their own understanding of our faith has been enriched; catechists have been blessed by new encounters with a living God within the people they work with and serve; the Church community is renewed and refreshed by the faith and gifts brought by our children and their families; the wider community benefits from the growth of the Kingdom through faith and the charitable works which result from faith.

Take time too to reflect on ways in which you may continue your faith journey as a family together. As you journey with your child towards the celebration of the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation there are many ways in which you may give example to and help your child experience God in the world today.



There are many ways to put your faith into action (both as children and as parents or carers). Just a few examples are given below.

- Continue to engage in private and family prayer
- Encourage your child to keep their special Prayer Place and to continue to add things into their Reflection Book.
- Read about Jesus and others who have lived their faith; a good way of doing this is by using resources which help you to read and reflect on the Bible e.g. *The Wednesday Word* (www.wednesdayword.org)
- Become involved at Church during Holy Mass. Perhaps there may be an opportunity for either children or adults to:
 - present the gifts of bread and wine
 - help take the collection
 - read at Holy Mass
 - become an altar server

See what may be possible in your own Parish

- Support and pray for members of the Church and wider community
- Join or start a Prayer Group
- Join groups to learn more about Catholicism, e.g. through courses developed by Sycamore and CaFE (your catechists may be able to tell you more about these and other local parish opportunities to find out more about the Catholic faith)
- Join Catholic societies and organisations (many of our schools have a Mini Vinnies group and many of our parishes have the adult version: a Society of St Vincent de Paul group); both the Mini Vinnies and the SVP are dedicated to helping the poor and needy
- Joining a Social Action Group linked to the Church (e.g. a CAFOD group, a Justice and Peace Group, etc.)
- Care for God's creation in charitable works which care for the world (for the climate and its creatures)
- Look at your parish website or the Leeds Diocesan website (www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk) to find out about events which you may join in with.

There are many other ways to grow in faith which are UNIQUE - as you and your family are!

You may like to take the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with your children.