



iBelieve Session 8. Forgiveness and resurrection

Creed Reference – I believe in... The forgiveness of sins, The resurrection of the body, and Life everlasting

Song – Father I have sinned by Fr Eugene O'Reily

Father I have sinned
Help me find my way
Remember not my sins
Just let me hear you say

*I forgive you, I love you
You are mine, take my hand
Go in peace, sin no more
Beloved one*

Father I have turned
My back and walked away
Depending on my strength
And lived life my own way.

Father I have closed
My eyes to those in need
Thought only of myself
A victim of my greed.

Father I have loved
If love's the word to use
I've played so many games
They've left me so confused

Father I've returned
I'm home with you to stay
Standing by your door
Knowing what you will say

Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Scripture – The Prodigal Son Luke15:11-32

Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'

Activity

Use the song, scripture and tool to create the building blocks for your own service of reconciliation. Hopefully you can plan with your parish priest so that he can be available during your session to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with each person individually. Depending on how large your group is, you may need more than one priest, or to allow extra time in your session. If a priest is not available, deliver your service anyway, and encourage everyone to receive the Sacrament at another time, when it is available within your parish. You may be able to draw on members of your parish liturgy committee to support the planning, especially if you do not feel very confident doing it yourself.

If it is not possible to receive the Sacrament within your service, you will need to include some kind of symbolic cleansing or letting go, like:

- washing your hands;
- tearing up, burning, or simply surrendering bits of paper with notes on from their Examination of Conscience;
- letting go of biodegradable helium balloons on which people have written what they are sorry for;
- meditating with a small stone and then making a pile of them with others from the group.

It is also good to include some kind of sign of peace among the group members.

You will need to create an atmosphere of prayer and reflection so that everyone is occupied while individuals receive the Sacrament. Use music, candles, and visual centrepieces like statues, icons or other symbols. Give everyone pens and paper and encourage them to use their time as preparation by reflecting on the Examination of Conscience (they might write words or draw images to help remind them of what they want to say to the priest).

Once they have received the Sacrament, they should pray, especially if that is the Penance they have been given.

Once everyone has received the Sacrament, draw the group back together and finish with a song or shared prayer.

Tool | Examination of Conscience

There are many Examinations of Conscience available, and many traditionally follow the Ten Commandments as a guide. You may have a standard one that you use in your parish or group. For those who have not received the Sacrament of Reconciliation many times, or are unfamiliar with the process, here is a simple Examination of Conscience which can be used as a starting point. You could even develop one that your group uses, by inviting everyone to participate in writing reflective questions that are particularly relevant for their lives and contexts.

My relationship with God:

- What steps am I taking to help me grow closer to God and to others?
- Do I turn to God often during the day, especially when I am tempted?
- Do I participate at Mass with attention and devotion on Sundays and Holy days?
- Do I pray often and read the Bible?
- Do I use God's name and the names of Jesus, Mary and the saints with love and reverence?

My relationships with family, friends and neighbours:

- Have I set a bad example through my words or actions?
- Do I treat others fairly? Do I spread stories that hurt other people?
- Am I loving of those in my family?
- Am I respectful of my neighbours, my friend and those in authority?
- Do I show respect for my body and the bodies of others? Do I keep away from forms of entertainment that do not respect God's gift of sexuality?
- Have I taken or damaged anything that did not belong to me? Have I cheated, copied homework, or lied?
- Do I quarrel with others just so I can get my own way? Do I insult others to try to make them think they are less than I am?
- Do I hold grudges and try to hurt people who I think have hurt me?