

# 12

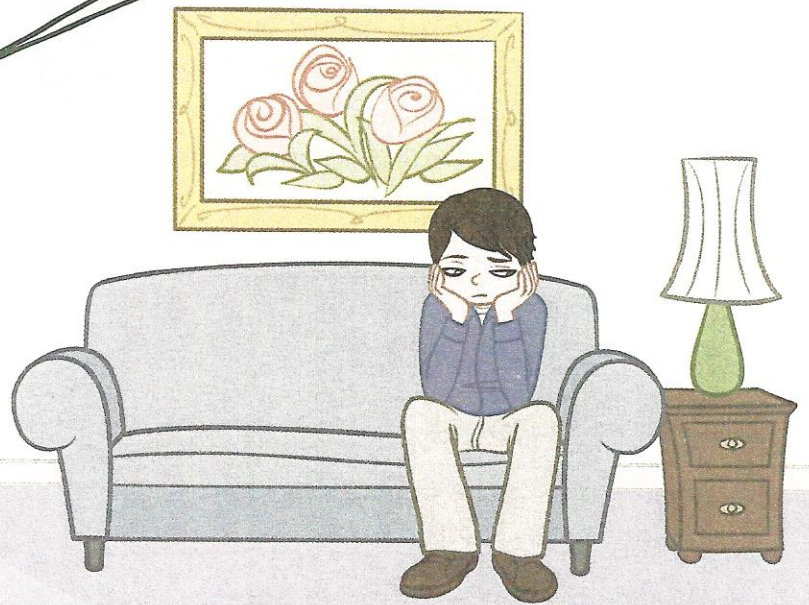
## God Gives Us Forgiveness and Peace

### BEST FRIENDS

When Carlos came home from school, his older sister Gabrielle could tell that something was wrong. Instead of going to the kitchen for a snack, Carlos just sat in the living room.




“What’s wrong, Carlos? Are you sick?”



Carlos answered that he was not sick, but upset at what happened in school.

“Our class was helping Mrs. Fisher move some books in the library. Adam picked up too many books at one time. They slipped out of his hands and fell onto the floor. We all laughed at Adam. Nobody helped him.”

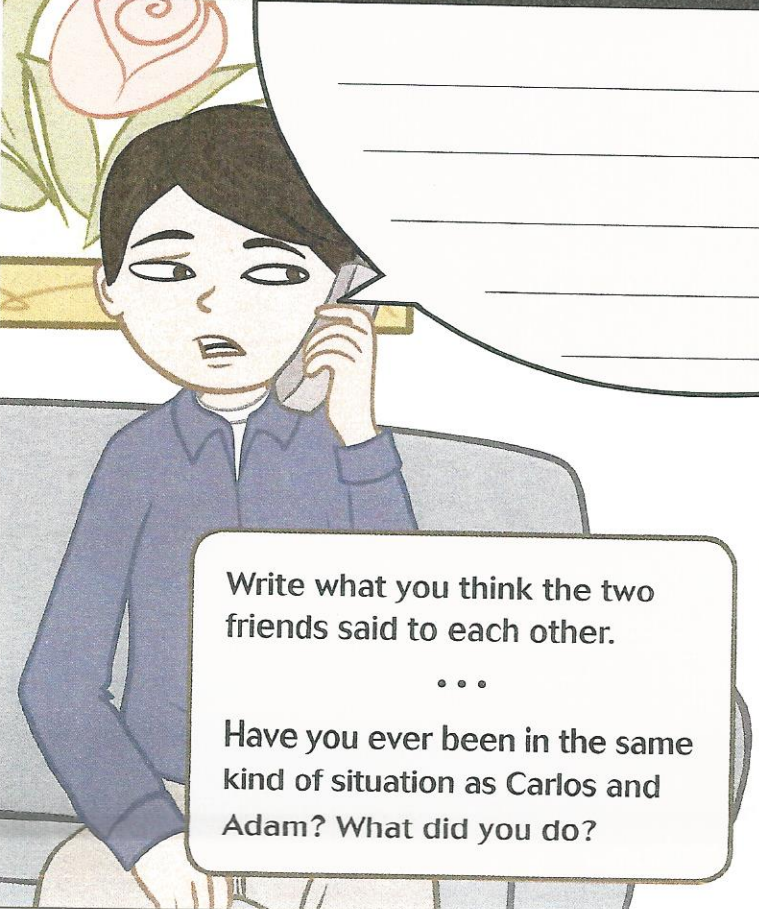




"Adam is your best friend. Do you think you hurt his feelings?"

"I guess. Teddy and I called Adam over to our lunch table, but he didn't sit with us. I really think I let Adam down. What should I do?"

Gabrielle told Carlos to call Adam. And that is what he did.



Write what you think the two friends said to each other.

...

Have you ever been in the same kind of situation as Carlos and Adam? What did you do?



## We Will Learn...

- 1 Jesus taught us about God's love and forgiveness.
- 2 We celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
- 3 In the Sacrament of Penance we receive Christ's peace.



Yet, after Baptism, we sometimes make choices that do not show love for God, ourselves, and others. Just as he did two thousand years ago with those who followed him, Jesus today forgives those who are truly sorry. He does this through the Church in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. We can call this sacrament the Sacrament of Penance. It has also been called the sacrament of conversion, of confession, of forgiveness, and of Reconciliation.

**What does it mean to be reconciled with God?**

## **1** Jesus taught us about God's love and forgiveness.

By the way he lived and the things he did, Jesus helped people to turn to God his Father and to follow God's law. Jesus wanted people to turn away from sin and grow closer to God.

During his ministry, Jesus helped his followers turn to God his Father with love and trust. He called them to conversion.

**Conversion** is turning back to God with all one's heart. Jesus made their conversion possible by actually forgiving people's sins. They were then reconciled, or brought together again, with God.

As Jesus' followers today, we first receive God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Baptism. We are freed from Original Sin, and forgiven any personal sins we may have committed. We begin our new life in Jesus Christ.

## **Do You Know?**



**W**e prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance by making an examination of conscience. We think about our choices and determine whether or not we have followed

God's law and the teachings and example of Jesus. Doing this helps us to judge our decisions and actions and to know what we need to confess. Serious sins need to be confessed because they completely break our friendship with God. These sins must be forgiven so that we can again share in God's grace. We also confess our less serious sins. The forgiveness of these sins strengthens our weakened friendship with God, and helps us continue loving God and others. If we have committed serious sin, we must receive God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion.

## 2 We celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

Our **conscience** is our ability to know the difference between good and evil, right and wrong. When we think and do things that lead us away from God or fail to do the good that we can do, we sin. **Sin** is a thought, word, deed, or omission against God's law.

Every sin weakens our friendship with God and can lead to sinful habits. Less serious sin, *venial sin*, does not turn us completely away from God. Very serious sin, *mortal sin*, does completely turn us away from God because it is a choice that we freely make to do something that we know is seriously wrong. If we do not confess mortal sins before we die, we risk eternal separation from God which is called *Hell*.

God never stops loving us, even when we sin. He will always forgive us if we are sorry. We can receive God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance. The sacrament has four main parts:

- **Contrition**—We express our heartfelt sorrow for our sins. We pray an Act of Contrition as a sign of sorrow and intention to sin no more.
- **Confession**—We confess, or tell, our sins to the priest.
- **Penance**—The priest gives us a penance, an action that shows we are sorry for our sins. It is sometimes a prayer or an act of service. Accepting this penance is a sign that we are turning back to God and are willing to change our lives.

- **Absolution**—Our sins are absolved, or forgiven. In the name of Christ and the Church and through the power of the Holy Spirit, a priest grants the forgiveness of sins. As a sign that our sins are being forgiven, the priest extends his hand and prays the words of absolution. We respond, "Amen."

Whether we celebrate the Sacrament of Penance individually or in a communal penance service, we always confess our sins individually to the priest and receive absolution from him. And each time we celebrate the Sacrament of Penance, whether individually or in a group, we are joined to the whole Church.



In the Sacrament of Penance, the priest, who has received the Sacrament of Holy Orders, acts in the name of Jesus Christ and the Church and through the power of the Holy Spirit. So it is important to know that only a priest can hear our confession and forgive our sins. The priest can never, for any reason whatsoever, tell anyone what we have confessed. He has promised to keep the seal of confession.

**When the priest is giving us absolution, what does he do as a sign that we are being forgiven?**

### 3 In the Sacrament of Penance we receive Christ's peace.

At the end of the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, the priest tells us, "Go in peace." We are able to go in peace because our sins have been forgiven. We, in turn, are called to share Christ's peace with others.

One of the ways we share Christ's peace is by forgiving others. Sometimes this is difficult to do. Yet Jesus taught us that we must forgive others. One day when the Apostle Peter asked, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus told him, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times" (Matthew 18:21, 22). Jesus was telling Peter that he should always be forgiving. And each of us must remember this teaching of Jesus, too!

When we forgive others, we are living out the Beatitude:

"Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God"  
(Matthew 5:9).

By asking for forgiveness and forgiving others, we are following Jesus' teaching. We are showing our love for God and others. And we are spreading Christ's message of peace in our community and throughout the world.

**How can you share Christ's peace with others this week?**



## Review

Circle the correct answer.

1. A (penance/contrition/confession) is an action that shows we are sorry for our sins.
2. Our (confession/contrition/conscience) is our ability to know the difference between good and evil, right and wrong.
3. (Some/No/Every) sin weakens our friendship with God.
4. Telling our sins to the priest is (confession/conversion/conscience).

Discuss the following.

5. What do we mean by *conversion*?
6. Why is it important for us to forgive others?
7. What is the role of the priest in the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance?

## Faith Words

**conversion** (page 82)

**conscience** (page 83)

**sin** (page 83)

**contrition** (page 83)

**confession** (page 83)

**penance** (page 83)

**absolution** (page 83)

# With My Family

## Sharing Our Faith

- 1 Jesus taught us about God's love and forgiveness.
- 2 We celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
- 3 In the Sacrament of Penance we receive Christ's peace.

## PRAYING TOGETHER



Here is an Act of Contrition that you can pray while celebrating the Sacrament of Penance or pray at any time.

My God,  
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.  
In choosing to do wrong  
and failing to do good,  
I have sinned against you  
whom I should love above all things.  
I firmly intend, with your help,  
to do penance,  
to sin no more,  
and to avoid whatever leads me  
to sin.  
Our Savior Jesus Christ  
suffered and died for us.  
In his name, my God, have mercy.

## Living Our Faith

The Church teaches that we must form, or educate, our conscience by studying Scripture and the teachings of the Church. As a family, identify one way that you will form your conscience this week.