

WALKING by FAITH

Grade 4 / Home Lesson

CHAPTER 22 WELCOME HOME

Objectives

- Describe God's loving kindness as having no limits.
- Explain the need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Explore the basic parts of Reconciliation: contrition, confession, penance, and absolution.

Step 1: *We Are Invited* (Life Experience), pages 164–165

Recall a specific situation where you were given a second chance; for example, a chance to retake a test or a second serve in tennis. Then together pray the opening **Prayer of Welcome Home** on page 164.

Read the opening paragraphs on the page. Lead your child to understand that no sin is too great for God to forgive. God loves us and always wants to “welcome us back home.” Jesus guaranteed this by dying on the cross for our sins.

Before your child reads the **Scripture Story: Saul Changes His Life**, ask him or her to recall the story of Stephen from the previous chapter.

Ask your child to describe what is happening in the photograph. (Possible response: A mother is forgiving her daughter for doing something wrong.) What do you think would happen to families if the members did not forgive one another? (Possible responses: People would not talk to one another; everyone would be angry.)

Invite your child to respond to the caption question.

Discuss Saul's experience of the blinding light and hearing Jesus' voice. Ask: Imagine that you saw a flash of light and heard Jesus speaking to you. How would it change your life? (Possible response: I would be amazed by what happened and know that Jesus had singled me out for a special purpose.) How did this experience effect Saul's life? (He stopped persecuting the Christians, was baptized, and began preaching about Jesus.)

Remind your child that Paul or Saul wrote many of the letters of the New Testament. These are often read at Mass.

Step 2: We Explore (Doctrine), pages 166–169

Discuss a time when you broke a dish and glued it back together. Explain that sin is like breaking the dish. Reconciliation is like the glue; it holds the pieces together again.

Read **The Sacrament of Reconciliation** on page 166. Ask: If Baptism frees us from sin, why do we need the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (Possible response: We still have free will and can choose to sin after Baptism. Reconciliation gives us a second chance whenever we sin. God is always willing to forgive us.)

Read **Catholics Believe**. Explain that by celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we publicly declare to the Christian community that we have sinned and we understand how our sins have weakened our relationships with one another.

Draw attention to the photographs on this page and read the caption.

Draw your child's attention to the stained glass window on page 167, which shows the story of the prodigal son. Ask: How do you think the prodigal son felt when he was welcomed back by his father? (Possible responses: happy, relieved, safe, forgiven, peaceful.)

Read **Activity** and help your child to retell the story as it could happen today.

Read aloud the first two paragraphs on page 167, making sure your child understands the terms *absolution* and *conversion*; refer to the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook. Emphasize that only God can forgive sins. God has shared this power with the Church. Priests, acting in the name of Christ, forgive sins. Ask: To whom or what are we reconciled through the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (ourselves, other people, God, and all creation) Point out that the seal of confession is what obligates a priest never to reveal our sins.

After your child has read **Continuing Conversion**, use the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to clarify the highlighted term. You may want to review the distinction between a mortal sin and a venial sin. (Refer to pages 128–129.) Ask: How does frequently celebrating Reconciliation help us? (Possible responses: It helps us avoid temptations and make better moral choices; it reminds us that we are called to continual conversion throughout life.)

Read **Making up for Sin** on page 168. Discuss the term *penance* and refer to the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook for further clarification. Ask: What is another word for penance? (satisfaction) What might a good penance be for stealing an item from a store? (Possible response: returning the item or paying for it.) What might a good penance be for being mean to a brother or sister? (Possible responses: Be nice; share something together.)

Read **Our Moral Guide** and answer the question posed there. (Remind your child that penitential acts, such as prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, are forms of spiritual discipline that help us turn away from selfishness and sin.)

Look at the text and pictures on page 169. Explain that reconciliation is a process that helps us return home, as the prodigal son did. The reconciliation process has four steps: (1) contrition, or sorrow for our sin, (2) confession, (3) satisfaction, or penance, (4) absolution.

Read the text under each heading of **The Way Home**, and discuss the corresponding street sign using the following questions:

Lost What does the Dead End sign mean? (The street goes nowhere.) How is sin like a dead end? (Possible response: It gets us nowhere; we have to turn around and start over.)

Contrition How is contrition like a U-turn? (Possible response: Contrition turns our lives around; we turn away from sin and back to God.)

Confession How are confession and the One Way sign related? (Possible response: We start going in the right direction when we confess our sins; we want to go one way—toward God.)

Satisfaction How is satisfaction like repairing a road? (Possible response: Penance repairs the wrong we have done.)

Home What does the merge sign mean? (Two lanes of traffic are coming together in one lane.) How is this last step like reconciliation? (Possible response: Through absolution we are reunited with God and the Christian community; we go together in the same direction.)

Step 3: We Reflect (Integration of Faith into Everyday Life), page 170

Review the material taught in this lesson by completing the sections: **Recall, Think and Share**, and **Continue the Journey**.

Read and discuss **We Live Our Faith: At Home** and **In the Parish**. Try to follow through on these suggestions.

Refer to the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook for clarification and review of all highlighted words.

Complete pages 43–44 in your **Faith Journal**.

Step 4: We Celebrate (Prayer and Conclusion), page 171

Ask your child to recall the four steps in the process of reconciliation. (contrition, confession, penance or satisfaction, and absolution)

Look at the background picture on page 171. Ask: How is Reconciliation like a road? (Possible response: It is a journey that leads to God; even if we take a wrong turn, we have a way to get back on the right road.)

Explain that the picture at the bottom of the page shows Jesus at the house of Simon. Share the following information with your child. *The Supper at the House of Simon* is the work of Veronese, an Italian artist. The picture, painted in 1572, illustrates the story found in *Luke 7:36–50*. Jesus is eating at the house of a Pharisee named Simon, but Simon has not offered him the usual courtesy of water and a towel to wash his feet. A woman who has sinned approaches Jesus and performs this courtesy for him, washing his feet with her tears of contrition and drying them with her hair. For her sincerity Jesus welcomes her and forgives her sins. The painting may be seen today in the Louvre in Paris.

Read **Open Our Ears** and explain that God’s grace is always there for us but we have to choose to respond to it. Turn to page 220 and pray together the **Act of Contrition**. Then invite your child to think about something in his or her life that needs to change: negative attitude, prejudice, bad habit, and so on. Give your child time to reflect quietly for a few minutes. Then pray the closing **Prayer**.