Learning Goals

› When we sin, we disobey God and fail to love Him and each other, and we reject His love.

› God will always welcome us back and forgive our sins if we are truly sorry for them.

› Jesus established the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation so that we could receive God's forgiveness.

› There are four parts to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation: contrition, confession, penance, and absolution.

Connection to the Catechism of the Catholic Church

› CCC 1423-1424
› CCC 1440-1460
› CCC 1468-1470

Vocabulary

› Repent
› Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation
› Contrition
› Confession
› Penance
› Absolution
› Conscience
› Stole

I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.

LUKE 15:7

In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

LUKE 15:10
Lesson Plan

Materials

- Lost
- The Good Shepherd
- The Lost Coin
- The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation
- Symbols of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation
- Sophia Sketchpad video on Confession found at SophiaInstituteForTeachers.org/sketchpad
- Drawing or construction paper
- Crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils
- Scissors

Prayer

O my God, I am sorry for my sins. In choosing to sin, and failing to do good, I have sinned against you and your Church. I firmly intend, with the help of your Son, to make up for my sins, and to love as I should. Amen.

DAY ONE

Warm-Up

A. Lead your students in praying the prayer for this lesson. Feel free to use the version your school uses if it is different.

B. Have students turn to Lost (page 165) and write about or draw a picture of a time they lost something that was important to them. Students who have never lost something important to them may instead write a creative story about what they imagine it might be like to lose something important. Ask for volunteers to share their stories.

C. After a few students have shared, ask:

- If God were writing this story, what would He write about? What is God’s favorite thing? YOU are God’s favorite thing!
What do you think God does when we turn away from Him when we sin?” He “searches” for us by calling us back to Him. We can cooperate with His grace by turning away from sin and returning to Him. When we do, He rejoices, just like the people in the parables.

D. Have your students turn to **A Father’s Love** (page 30) from Unit 1. Project an image of the painting of The Return of the Prodigal Son by James Tissot. Ask your students to recall what parable this painting depicts. The Parable of the Prodigal Son.

E. Review briefly the main ideas of story of the Prodigal Son. The younger of two sons asks for his inheritance from his father. The father gives the son his share of the inheritance, and the son leaves home. The son spends all his money foolishly and then finds himself in poverty. While working feeding pigs, the son realizes that the pigs eat better than he does and the servants on his father’s property live better than he does. So, filled with sorrow, he returns home to beg his father to take him back as a servant. While a ways off, the father sees his son coming home and runs to meet him. He embraces him and gives him a ring and a fine robe and has a feast in his honor. The son tells his father how sorry he is. The father forgives him and takes him back into his home.

F. Discuss with your students the following questions:

› Imagine for a moment that you are the younger son. How could you have been a better son to your father?

› The son felt sorry for his sins and decided to change his life. What do you think would have happened if he had gone back home without being sorry? Would that be right?

› Why do you think it’s important that the son felt sorry, expressed his sorrow, and asked for forgiveness?

› If a friend offended you, would you be satisfied merely to know that he or she was sorry, or would you want that friend to tell you he or she was sorry?

› Imagine for a moment that you are the father. How would you have felt seeing your son again, who has broken your heart, taken all of your money, and wasted everything? What would you want to say to him? Would you want to punish him? Would you forgive him and welcome him home?

G. Explain to your students that this parable is an important one for us to better understand God’s forgiveness. God made each of us to love Him, and He gave everything to us. And yet, when we sin, when we disobey God and fail to love Him and each other, we reject His love. In those instances, we are like the son who takes what his father gave Him and foolishly wastes it. But God is like the father in this parable. He will always welcome us back and forgive our sins if we are truly sorry for them. To be truly sorry for our sins and to return to God is to repent. God always wants us to repent of our sins and will forgive us when we do. Over the next few days we are going to learn about the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Jesus established this Sacrament so that we could receive God’s forgiveness and be welcomed home.

But first, let’s take a look at a few more parables Jesus used to teach us about the father’s forgiveness.
Activity and Assessment

A. Arrange your students in groups of three or four. Assign each group either the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:4-7) or the Parable of the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10). Then have your students turn to either The Good Shepherd (page 167) or The Lost Coin (page 169), depending on which they were assigned and, in their groups, read the parables together and discuss the paintings using the given discussion questions.

Note: Both parables are taken directly from the Scripture and may contain words or concepts that are difficult for some students to understand. Review the parables in advance and discuss with your students any words or concepts that you think they may not understand.

B. After your students have finished discussing the parables, call on groups to share about their discussions.

C. Then ask your students what these three parables (the Lost [Prodigal] Son, the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Coin) teach us about being sorry for our sins (repentance) and about God’s forgiveness. When we sin, we turn away from God, or become lost. God is always “searching” for us and calling us to repent and come back to Him. When we do, He will always forgive us our sins if we are truly sorry and will welcome us back with love. Accept other reasoned answers.

DAY TWO

Warm-Up

A. Lead your students in praying the prayer for this lesson.

B. Show your students the Sophia Sketchpad video on Confession, found at SophiaInstituteForTeachers.org/sketchpad. Show the segment of the video from the beginning to the 3:08 mark. Then ask your students the following questions:

- What stood out to you from the video? Accept reasoned answers.
- Some people ask why you must confess your sins to a priest. In reality, when we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, to whom are we directly confessing our sins? God.
What did Jesus command His Apostles to do regarding sins? To forgive them or retain (which, in this case, means to not forgive) them.

Even though Jesus knows all our sins and knows our hearts even better than we do, what must we still do? Tell Him we’re sorry.

What questions do you have after watching the video? Accept reasoned answers.

Activity
A. Have your students turn to The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation (page 171). First, have your students skim the reading and note the words in bold. Then introduce these words to your students, pronounce each one, and define them. Then read the essay aloud as your students follow along. (Note: This is a slightly longer reading than your students may be used to, with some complex concepts. Pause as needed to clarify questions, define unfamiliar words, and help your students understand these important topics.

B. After reading the selection, have your students answer the focus questions. Assign as many questions as would be appropriately challenging. Then, when they have finished, review and discuss the correct answers.

Formative Assessment
A. Distribute to each student a piece of drawing or construction paper. Make crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils, and scissors available. Have your students fold the paper in half lengthwise. Then, help your students make three cuts in the paper, just to the fold, to create a “flip book” as in the diagram below.
B. Have your students label each of the front flaps with one of the four parts of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation: contrition, confession, penance, and absolution. On the underside of each flap, have your students write a definition of that part of the Sacrament in their own words. Then, on the opposite inside flap, have your students draw a picture to help them remember the meaning of that part of the Sacrament.

C. When your students have finished their flip books, have them leave them on their desks and then move around the room to view their classmates’ flip books.

DAY THREE

Warm-Up

A. Lead your students in praying the prayer for this lesson.

B. Arrange your students in pairs or trios. Using the flip books they created in the previous lesson, have your students take turns quizzing each other about the four parts of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

C. Then ask your students the following questions and have them answer them without looking at their flip books:

› In which part of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation do we tell the priest our sins? **Confession**.

› In which part of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation does the priest forgive our sins with the authority of Christ Himself? **Absolution**.

› In which part of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation are we moved by sorrow for our sins? **Contrition**.

› In which part of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation does the priest give us an action to do or a prayer to say in order to make up for our sins? **Penance**.
D. Explain to your students that, like the other Sacraments, Penance and Reconciliation has certain symbols to help us understand what is happening in the Sacrament. Ask your students if they can name some of the symbols of the Sacrament of Baptism (or other Sacraments, such as the Eucharist). Baptism: water, the baptismal candle, white garment, and holy oil. Eucharist: Bread and wine, wheat and grapes, a chalice, an altar, and so forth.

E. Explain that in today’s lesson, your students are going to learn about the symbols of Penance and Reconciliation.

Activity and Assessment
A. Have your students turn to Symbols of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation (page 176). Read the information on the graphic organizer with your students and clarify any questions. Then make crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils available and have your students complete the chart by drawing their own pictures of the various symbols.

B. In the empty boxes, have your students create their own symbol for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and write a sentence or two that describes it. Then call on students to share the symbols they have created.
Lost

Directions: Write about or draw a picture of a time you lost something that was very important to you. Tell what was lost, how you felt, and what happened when you found it (if you did!).

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

165
The Good Shepherd

Directions: Read the Parable of the Good Shepherd and reflect on the painting. Then discuss the questions.

What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, “Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.” I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance. (Luke 15:4-7)
Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you about this painting?

2. What moment from the Parable of the Lost Sheep has the artist chosen to paint? Why do you think he chose this moment?

3. In this parable, what does Jesus say that a person who had 100 sheep would do if he lost one?

4. What would the person do once he had found the lost sheep? How is this like the response in Heaven to one sinner who repents?

5. In John 10:11, Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” The Good Shepherd is also the title of this painting. Do you think the man in the painting is Jesus or the person from this parable?

6. How is Jesus like the shepherd in the parable? Why is the Good Shepherd a good title for Jesus?
The Lost Coin

Directions: Read the Parable of the Lost Coin and reflect on the painting. Then discuss the questions.

What woman having ten coins and losing one would not light a lamp and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it? And when she does find it, she calls together her friends and neighbors and says to them, “Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost.” In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents. (Luke 15:8-10)
Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you about this painting?

2. What moment from the Parable of the Lost Coin has the artist chosen to paint? Why do you think he chose this moment?

3. What does Jesus suggest a woman with 10 coins would do if she lost one of them?

4. What would the woman do once she found her lost coin? How is this similar to the how the angels of God would react to one sinner who repents?

5. In John 8:12, Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Describe how the light looks in this painting. Where do you think the lost coin is in this painting? How does the light from the lamp or candle help the woman search for her coin? Why do you think the artist chose to paint the light in this painting the way he did?

6. When we sin, we are like the lost coin. We turn away from God and “walk in darkness.” How is Jesus the light of the world? Why is the Light of the World a good title for Jesus?
Directions: Listen as your teacher reads about the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Then answer the questions.

God loves each one of us. He wants to be a Father to us. Sadly, we often sin and turn away from God. To help us become sons and daughters of the Father again, Jesus gave us a way to be forgiven of our sins in His Church — the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

Reconciliation means to repair a hurt relationship and make it like new again. In the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, we tell God that we are sorry for our sins and want to make up for them. We are given God’s forgiveness and our friendship with Him is made new!
The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation has four parts:

1. **Contrition**: Contrition means being sorry for our sins and making the choice not to sin again.

2. **Confession**: Confession means telling all of our sins to a priest. In this Sacrament, the priest is acting in the place of Jesus Himself. When we confess to a priest, we are really telling God how we know that we have disobeyed Him and hurt our relationship with Him and His Church.

3. **Penance**: After we confess our sins, the priest will give us something to do to make up for our sins. Often our penance is a prayer to say. We must do our penance as soon as we can.

4. **Absolution**: The priest prays a special prayer and, with the authority of Jesus Himself, absolves, or forgives, our sins.
After we have been forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, we are completely free of sin. There is no sin on our souls! In order to show God our thanks for His great gift of forgiveness and love, we must do all we can to avoid sinning again.

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation does other good things for us as well. Our consciences are made stronger. Conscience is the voice of God within our hearts that helps us know right and wrong. The Sacrament also makes it easier for us to forgive others who have hurt us. When we are shown mercy, it helps us to show mercy to others.

Remember you never have to be scared to go to confession. God already knows our sins. God rejoices when sinners repent, and He will never give up on us.
Answer Key

Note: Remember you can discuss these questions as a class, or you can have your students write their answers. Assign only as many questions as would be appropriately challenging.

1. Because we often sin and turn away from God. God still wants us to be His sons and daughters, so Jesus gave us the Sacrament.

2. To repair a hurt friendship or relationship and make it like new again.

3. Contrition, confession, penance, and absolution.

4. Being sorry for our sins and making the choice not to sin again.

5. Because we are really telling God how we know we have disobeyed Him and hurt our relationship with Him and His Church.
Answer Key

6. Jesus Himself.

7. To make up for our sins.

8. To be forgiven of our sins.

9. Our conscience is made stronger, and it becomes easier to forgive others who have hurt us.

6. Whom is the priest acting in the place of?

7. Why is penance important?

8. What does it mean to be absolved of our sins?

9. What are two other good things this Sacrament does for us?
Symbols of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

Directions: Read about each symbol of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Then make a drawing of each symbol and write a short explanation of your drawing.

Keys
A single key or a pair of crossed keys. Jesus told St. Peter: “I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19)

Explain your drawing:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
Purple Stole

A long, thin strip of cloth that a priest wears over his shoulders. Purple is the liturgical color of sorrow and repentance.

Explain your drawing:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

A Raised Hand

The priest holds his right hand over your head as he absolves you of your sins in the person of Christ.

Explain your drawing:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
The Cross

The priest makes the Sign of the Cross over you as he closes the Prayer of Absolution, “And I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Explain your drawing:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________