

# Finding the Help We Need

## TEACHER RESOURCE

### 1. Prayer and Scripture

We have learned about different kinds of prayer: adoration, thanksgiving, contrition, and intercession. These types of prayer can help us grow in our relationship with God. Praying to God isn't like putting coins in a vending machine. Most often we don't immediately receive what we want. Prayer is also not like gambling with a slot machine. We don't toss a prayer up to God and hope we hit the jackpot and He hears it. God doesn't work like either of these examples. God is Three Persons in a Communion of Love who wants to be in a friendship with us. The more we talk and listen to our friends, the more we understand them. The same thing is true of God. The more we talk and listen to God, the more we understand His Heart. The more we read the Bible, the more we know how Jesus would act. Jesus confronted a lot of challenging situations in His life, some very similar to what we might face. People talked about Jesus behind His back. Jesus was falsely accused, made fun of, betrayed, and abandoned by people He thought were His friends. He was physically hurt. Jesus got tired, got hungry, and got sad. Even so, He responded to every situation with love. We can read the Bible to understand how God, in the Person of Jesus, responded to problems. We can prayerfully ask for God's grace and help to make good decisions.

### 2. Spiritual Mentor

We meet a lot of different people in our life. We tend to make friends with people close to our own age, but those friends can't help us with everything. Sometimes we need the wisdom of older people. Think about the older people in your life, such as your parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents, teachers, coaches, and family friends. Of these people, who consistently loves like Jesus loves? These are good people to get to know more. Ask them questions about their life and why they make the decisions they do. Ask them why their faith is important to them and how they like to help people. As your friendship with such a person grows, you might feel comfortable asking him or her questions about your own life. That person was in middle school once too! Now he or she has the benefit of extra years of life experience and a different perspective and might be able to help you in a way you didn't see yourself.

### **3. Good Friends**

The older we get, the more time we spend with our friends. School, sports, theater, and other activities allow us to socialize and build relationships. Friends our own age are helpful, because they are often going through the same things we are. We need to be a good friend. This means learning to recognize when our friends are in need. When we see them struggling, we shouldn't ignore them or make fun of them. We should help them out in whatever way we can. When we're having a hard time, it's okay to recognize that we need our friends too. We should have the courage to ask for help, rather than keep things bottled up inside. Our friends can't always help us – some problems are too big for just one person, but it doesn't mean we shouldn't share our struggles. Unfortunately, not everyone we know is helpful. Some people will try to get us to do bad things, or they will talk about people in a rude, cruel way that ignores people's dignity. These people are not real friends to us. It's important for us to find good friends who will care about us and want to help us make good decisions.

### **4. Sacraments: The Eucharist**

Just as we need physical food to nourish our bodies, we need spiritual food to nourish our souls. Imagine what it would feel like to go all day without eating. Now imagine what it would feel like if this happened for an entire week. People can physically survive up to three weeks without food, but it's very harmful to the body. Starving people have difficulty performing normal functions and thinking clearly. It would be a miserable experience to go that long without eating. The Church asks us to go to Mass once a week on Sundays. At Mass we receive Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist. Skipping Mass is like spiritually starving ourselves. When we don't have the regular spiritual food of the Eucharist, our souls will suffer, just like our bodies without food. This might not seem as if it will help us with a specific problem, but going to Mass keeps us spiritually healthy. If we separate ourselves from God, it will be more difficult to hear Him and make Christ-like decisions in our everyday lives. We should take advantage of the opportunity to go to Mass on Sundays, and during the week if possible, to receive the help of God's grace in the Eucharist. When we regularly attend Mass, we get to know the parish community. They can also be a source of help and advice when life is challenging.

### **5. Sacraments: Confession**

Sometimes we need help because we made a bad decision. God is there to forgive us and help us make up for what we have done. If we've hurt someone, we should apologize to that person. This can require courage, because it isn't easy to admit to our mistakes. Still, the person we hurt has dignity. He or she deserves an apology! As Catholics, we have another special gift when we make mistakes: the Sacrament of Confession. In Confession, we confess our sins to Jesus Himself through the priest. We can also ask the priest any questions we might have about living a good life and avoiding sin. After the priest gives us some advice and tells us our penance, he absolves us of our sins. This is really God Himself forgiving us. It's like what King David wrote in the Psalms: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has [God] removed our sins from us" (Psalm 103:12). Confession removes the stain of our sin and gives us a fresh start.