



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME



UNIT 8

Better Friends with Jesus

AIMS

1. To gain a better understanding of the Ten Commandments
2. To realise that Jesus leaves us free to answer for his call to follow Him.
3. To introduce the Sacrament of Reconciliation as the way how we make friends again with God after sin.

KEY WORDS

- SELFISH - SIN - SORRY
- RECONCILIATION
- CONFESSION

INTRODUCTION

Narrate the story of Thomas (see separate A4 Resource sheet with this Unit).

Ask: when do we behave like Thomas? It is when we do not follow any of God's Ten Commandments. It is when we do not follow Jesus New Commandment: LOVE GOD and LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

RESOURCES

- Flash cards with these words: RECONCILIATION, SELFISH, SIN and SORRY.
- Pictures/objects to accompany the story of Thomas.

MAIN

- Remind children about the Ten Commandments. For a few minutes talk about the story of how GOD gave them to us through Moses. (see Side b of Worksheet 8) Invite children to give example of any of the Ten Commandments. Ask children about Jesus' New Commandment. Remind how its first part LOVE GOD relates to the first 3 commandments while the second LOVE ONE ANOTHER relates mainly to the 4th to 10th Commandments.
- Talk about saying NO to God with reference to Thomas' story. We behave like Thomas when we say NO. This is when we Sin or break any of the Commandments. It means we are being SELFISH and wanting to do what we want with no regard to what God wants.
- At the same time we are FREE to act in the way we want. God does not make us do anything but he wants us to FOLLOW him out of our free will.
- Every time we are selfish we often hurt other people's feelings too. (refer to Thomas' story) This brings unhappiness and sadness in us and in others.
- Was it easy for Thomas to come when he was called? Why not? It is not always easy for us to do what God wants. Sometimes we find it very hard to be good, make the good choices, avoid sin and avoid being selfish. God our Father understands that it is not always easy to follow his Commandments. But he is always ready to help us and even forgive us if we ask Him.
- Move on to the idea of being SORRY. Explain that being sorry helps us to grow and become better persons. (Link to Thomas' story) Being sorry also means we truly promise not to do the same thing again. God can only forgive us if we are sorry.
- We usually say sorry to God and ask him to forgive us at Mass when we pray "Lord have mercy" and when we say the "Lord's prayer" (forgive us our trespasses) and other prayers.
- But we are also invited to a special meeting with Jesus in which we say sorry to him directly. This is called the Sacrament of **Confession** or the Sacrament of **Reconciliation**. Explain that this is a celebration the children are soon going to celebrate.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Ask the children to sit quietly and keep a few moments of silence. Invite them to reflect on God's loving forgiveness: "Let us close our eyes and think of how much God our Father loves us. Let us think of the times we have been selfish - the times we have sinned and for which we are sorry"

End the prayer session with the Act of Contrition.

NOTES

Prayers in the PRAYER BOOK which are related to this theme and can be used both during the session as well as at home, are the ACT OF LOVE, the SORRY PRAYER (ACT OF CONTRITION) and the I CONFESS.

ACTIVITY

Talk about the **Act of Contrition** (or Sorry prayer) and how we use this short prayer to show we are sorry for our sins and how we want to try not to sin again. Encourage the children to pray it every day and learn it by heart.

Hand out worksheet 8 for the children to complete at home.