



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME



UNIT 11

Friends Again with God

AIMS

1. To help children understand that a sacrament is a sign of Jesus' continuing love and care for us.
2. To realize that Jesus forgives us through the priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
3. To appreciate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a very important means of spiritual growth.

KEY WORDS

- SACRAMENTS
- RECONCILIATION
CONFESSION
- FRIENDSHIP
FRIENDS AGAIN

INTRODUCTION

Give the children a piece of paper each. Let them write on it the best gift that God gave us. Put all entries into a gift box and then pick up a few and discuss them with the children.

God gave us a lot of gifts and sometimes it is very hard to decide which one is the best. But surely one of God's best gifts is his own FRIENDSHIP to us (show flashcard)

RESOURCES

- Flashcards with Key words shown above.
- Paper and writing tools.
- A gift box or similar container.
- Images/Posters of Gospel stories about forgiveness.
- Worksheet 11

MAIN

- To help us keep this friendship, Jesus gave us seven special gifts. These are called SACRAMENTS (show Flashcard). Ask the children to name the sacraments (discussed in Unit 4) How many sacraments have you received so far?
- The second Sacrament we are going to receive is RECONCILIATION or CONFESSION (show Flashcard). (Here you may wish to say that in cases when people are baptised at an older age they usually receive the sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation together on the same day. This is because these are the three sacraments of Initiation)
- Invite the children to talk about an experience they may have of an argument they had with their friends. Ask if and how they did make peace again. This should help introduce the experience of Reconciling with someone else, which is what we do in this Sacrament.
- Ask what the word "Reconciliation" means? It means making FRIENDS AGAIN (show Flashcard). Explain that this is what happens in the Sacrament of Reconciliation - we become Friends again. We become friends again with **God** and with **each other**. When we do something wrong we do not only sin against God but also against other people or friends. When we sin we disregard God's laws and we hurt others in different ways.
- Jesus himself gave us this Sacrament. He instructed the apostles and gave them the power to forgive all sins in his name. He said to them: *'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven'*. Move on to discuss examples from the Gospels when Jesus forgave sinners. It always helps if images such as posters or slides are used when talking about these episodes. Examples may include: Zacchaeus (Worksheet 9 Side b), The woman caught in sin (see Worksheet 11 Side b); etc
- Also introduce the idea of PENANCE - making up for our sins. Briefly talk about how People like Zacchaeus and Peter wanted to make up for their sin and show they were truly sorry.
- Say that we will be looking at how to receive and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the next session.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Put on some background music. Show the images used in the session again and invite the children to think silently about Forgiveness and Reconciliation.

Introduce and say together a prayer of sorrow such as the ACT OF CONTRITION or the I CONFESS (see Prayer Book).

NOTES

Remember to make links with the liturgy. Often Reconciliation is celebrated in LENT in many Parishes. Find time to talk to the children about this special season of the Church's year - a time for more PRAYER, PENANCE and GOOD DEEDS

ACTIVITY

Remind the children about the "Act of Contrition" or "Sorry prayer". Encourage them to learn it by heart and to include it in their daily prayers.

Hand out Worksheet 11 . It may be helpful for the children to go through the sentences and statements in side a of the worksheet as they may not be very straightforward with all children. Some of the statements may have to be briefly discussed or illustrated using real life examples.