

Background Notes for Parents

About the Theme – The Sacrament of Reconciliation

To help us understand this Sacrament we need to know a little bit about a Sacrament.

A sacrament is something that uses signs – usually a combination of words and actions, that have a message for those who are celebrating it; they give them a gift. This gift (which Catholics call grace) is given by Jesus whom they meet in the Sacrament, to deepen and develop their relationship with him. Through the Sacraments God helps Catholics grow in friendship with him.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is known by various names:

- **The Sacrament of Confession:** This emphasises the confession of sins to a priest.
- **The Sacrament of Forgiveness:** This emphasises the belief that through the priest's prayer of absolution God grants the forgiveness of sin.
- **The Sacrament of Conversion:** This emphasises the call to return to the Father from whom one has strayed through sin.
- **The Sacrament of Reconciliation:** This emphasis that through the Sacrament the penitent is reconciled to God, and to each other.
- **The Sacrament of Penance:** This is the official title given to the sacrament and emphasises the need for the penitent to do penance to repair any damage their sins may have done.

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation the key signs are:

- The **words of absolution** which removes a person's sins.
- The **laying on of hands** which occurs many times during the sacraments to symbolise the giving of strength and power. When the sign is used in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it reminds us of the times when Jesus laid his hands on the sick and healed them.

Through these signs Jesus heals the person of sin and reunites them with God and God's family – the Church.

The Sacrament was given by Jesus after the resurrection when he said to his apostles 'Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain they are retained'. It was through these words that Jesus gave his Church the power to forgive sin and to reconcile sinners.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation brings those who receive it back to God, who forgives them and absolves them from their sins. During the Sacrament of Reconciliation the Church celebrates the gentle love and mercy of God which is illustrated in parables such as The Lost Sheep and The Prodigal Son. The Sacrament calls people to confess sins, seek forgiveness and be reconciled to God and to one another. It is a celebration because while Catholics are sorry for their sins, they know that, no matter how badly their friendship with God has been damaged, God still loves and heals the sinner.

For Catholics the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a source of joy and comfort. In the Sacrament they experience time and time again the extraordinary love of God.

Overview

Key Vocabulary	<u>EARLY YEARS</u> <u>Friends</u> <u>RECONCILIATION</u>
Friend Happy Sad Love make up kind gentle loving sorry Jesus, rule understanding new start friendship forgive change	<p>Christians believe that, in Jesus Christ, the world has been reconciled to God. Through Christ we are offered the power to forgive and make peace and to receive and offer reconciliation. Relationships bring both joy and challenge.</p> <p>Children will know and understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We can make friends• Jesus had good friends; what Jesus tells us about friendship <p>See Background Notes for Parents</p> <p>This topic is all about friends. As children will be missing their friends who they haven't been able to see and play with during lockdown it's important to emphasise the positives of looking forward to seeing friends again and being with them in the future.</p> <p>Week 1: Read together stories about what it means to be a friend. Talk about what being a friend means: friends look after and do things for one another; friends do things together; friends make one another happy; things that spoil friendship; making friends again. Ask children to draw pictures of friends, make friendship bracelets or have a friends' tea party with their toys.</p> <p>Week 2: Read the story of Jesus and his friends and talk about the key questions. Ask children to draw themselves in the picture and think about how they can be good friends of Jesus. Sing friendship songs.</p> <p>Week 3: Share the story about A New Rule and talk about it. Talk about how friendships can be broken. How do we make friends again when we fall out? Introduce saying sorry and what it means to forgive each other so we can mend broken friendships. Ask children to draw a circle of friends and write the new rule in the centre.</p> <p>Week 4: Look at the key vocabulary for this topic and use it to remember all we have learnt about being friends, Jesus' friends, his special rule and how to make up if we break our friendships. Celebrate with a simple Act of Worship.</p>

Early Years

In **EYFS** the foundations for understanding the Sacrament of Reconciliation are laid. The children are not yet introduced to the Sacrament but are helped to understand more fully the difference between right and wrong, the importance of saying sorry and how we can make up and make a fresh start with our friends.

Week 1: Read together some stories about what it means to be a friend (for example *The Selfish Crocodile* by Faustin Charles, *The Pain and the Great One* by Judy Blume, *Let's be Friends Again* by Hans Wilhelm – all are available on Youtube.)

Point out the following elements of friendship: friends look after and do things for one another; friends do things together; friends make one another happy, comfortable and glad; things that spoil friendship; making friends again.

Draw pictures of friends or make friendship bracelets or have a friends' tea party with your toys. (You might be missing your friends at the moment but it's good to think about the fun you'll have when you meet up again.)

Week 2: Read the story of Jesus and his friends (see below). Look at the picture and ask some key questions:

- Q How do we know they are friends?
- Q What does the picture tell us about friends?
- Q What did Jesus and his friends do? (They worked, told people the Good News of God's love for everyone, answered questions.)
- Q Where did they go when they were tired?
- Q What did they do together? (eat, shared experiences, rested)
- Q Where do you go when you are tired?
- Q Who do you talk to about your experiences of the day? e.g. what has gone well/what has not.
- Q Where do you go to be quiet and still?

There is a space in the picture for you to add a picture of yourself. Think about how you can be a friend of Jesus – by looking after others, doing as you are told, helping with tidying up and chores.

Make up a 'friendship action song' to include smiling at others, shaking hands, giving a hug, sharing your sweets etc. to the tune of 'Here we go round the mulberry bush...'

This is the way we share our sweets, share our sweets, share our sweets x 2,

This is the way we share our sweets if we want to be good friends.

Week 3: Share the story about A New Rule (see below) and talk about it. *Imagine you are in a circle of friends, what might break the friendship circle? Talk about the things that can make you and others unhappy. How do we make friends again when we fall out? Talk about saying sorry and what it means to forgive each other so we can mend broken friendships. Draw your own circle of friends and write the new rule in the middle of the circle.*

Week 4: Look at the key vocabulary for this topic and use it to remember all we have learnt about being friends, Jesus' friends, his special rule and how to make up if we break our friendships. Celebrate with a simple Act of Worship (see below).

Week 2 Jesus and his friends



Jesus and his friends worked very hard.

They travelled on rough, dusty roads to towns and villages all over the country. Sometimes they had to walk a very long way to get from one village to another. All day long they told the people in the villages and the towns the Good News of God's love for everyone. They answered lots of questions that people asked them about God, sometimes very hard ones.

In the evening, they felt very tired.

Sometimes they all went to a quiet, lonely place to eat, to share with each other what had happened during the day, to rest, to be quiet and still.

(based on Mark's Gospel Chapter 6:7,30-32)

Week 3 A New Rule



A New Rule

Jesus said, "I'm going to give you a new rule.

It's this: Love one another.

I love each one of you, and I want you to love each other.

When you're all happy together,

everyone will know that you love one another, and that you are my friends."

(based on John's Gospel Chapter 13:34-35)

Week 4

Act of Worship EYFS 1 and 2 FRIENDS



“Jesus had good friends; what Jesus tells us about friendship.”

Gathering Together

You might like to set up a Focus table:

- Table with candle and purple cloth
- Paper chain ‘teddies of friendship’
- Friendship bracelets
- Any work done on the topic
- A Bible if possible

We begin our liturgy on ‘Friends’ by lighting our candle and remembering that Jesus is with us and that he calls us his friends.

As we make the Sign of the Cross together, let us remember that this shows we are friends of Jesus.
In the name of the Father.....

We have been thinking about what it means to be a friend.

Friends look after and do things for one another.

Friends do things together.

Friends make one another happy, comfortable and glad.

We have also been thinking about the things that spoil friendship and how we can make friends again.

The Word of God

Jesus had lots of friends. His closest friends were called his disciples but Jesus was a special friend to children. Jesus gave us all an important rule – that we should love each other. Loving each other is a sign that we are friends of Jesus. Before we hear what Jesus said about this rule, let’s sing ‘Alleluia’ to greet the gospel.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

Glory to You, O Lord

(We make the sign of the cross on our forehead, lips and heart, in preparation to hear the Good News of the Gospel. We make the sign of the cross on our foreheads to show we believe in God’s Word, on our lips to show we try to speak God’s Word to others, and on our hearts to show we love God’s Word and will try to live a good life).

Jesus said, ‘I am going to give you a new rule .It’s this: Love each other.

I love each one of you and I want you to love each other.

When you’re all happy together, everyone will know that you love one another, and that you are my friends.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ

**Response to
the Word**

To show that we are friends with one another let's shake hands and say **'Peace be with you'**.

Children may share some of their work done in the topic



**Going
Forth**

Sometimes we can fall out with our friends. We make ourselves and our friends unhappy. When that happens, we need to say sorry and make up as friends as soon as we can. All of this week we'll try to remember this.

At present we can't see our friends and play with them as we would like to. But we can still remember Jesus' rule to 'Love each other' by thinking of them, praying for them, sending them messages or phoning them. When we meet again we will know how to be the best of friends!

