

BACKGROUND NOTES FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

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 strengthen 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.

This 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>YEAR 5</u> Freedom and Responsibility RECONCILIATION
freedom, responsibility Beatitudes Commandments	<p>Christians believe that God has given to each person the free will and power to choose. The gift of God's Spirit, guarantee of God's abiding presence is the foundation of Christian faith in the holiness of conscience. The creative interplay of freedom and responsibility informs the life of the community of believers, the Church.</p> <p>Children know and understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Freedom involves responsibility• God's rules for living freely and responsibly – the Commandments <p>See Background Notes for Parents and Carers</p> <p>Week 1: What do freedom and responsibility mean to us? Read After School. What are our usual rules that illustrate freedom and responsibility? How have our freedoms and responsibilities changed during lockdown and why? Ask children to design a Rainbow poster showing what our responsibilities are during this time and how our actions will give the NHS the freedom to work effectively.</p> <p>Week 2: Rules give people freedom to live as they wish, but at the same time, be responsible for the happiness of the whole group. Read the story of Moses and the Israelites. Read the Ten Commandments. Ask children to write 'God's Guide to Freedom and Responsibility', suggesting ways in which people can keep each commandment; what they do, say and feel; how it helps people live together freely.</p> <p>Week 3: Read a prayer called the Shema from the Book of Deuteronomy. It is a reminder God gives his people of their responsibility to love God. When Jesus is asked which is the greatest commandment he quotes from the book of Deuteronomy in his reply.</p> <p>In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus calls people to a new way of living. Read Jesus the Teacher. These eight 'blessings' are called the Beatitudes. Ask children to write their own modern version of the Beatitudes reflecting the lives of Christians today, using whatever medium they wish.</p> <p>Week 4: Look at the key vocabulary for this topic and use it to remember all we have learnt about rules that give us freedom and responsibilities, the Ten Commandments, the Greatest Commandment and the Beatitudes. Celebrate with a simple Act of Worship</p>

Year 5

Year 5 children do not focus on the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Instead they look at the rules we live by, rules that give us freedom and responsibility. They explore the Ten Commandments, the Greatest Commandment and the Beatitudes.

Week 1: Talk about what you think freedom means and what responsibility means and would it mean the same for everyone and why? Read After School (see below). What are our usual rules – at home, in school - that illustrate freedom and responsibility. Children may want to discuss how our freedoms and responsibilities have changed during lockdown and why. *Design a Rainbow poster showing what our responsibilities are during this time and how our actions will give the NHS the freedom to work effectively.*

Week 2: People who want to live or work together make rules for themselves, just as we have rules at school or at home. The rules give them freedom to live as they wish, but at the same time, be responsible for the happiness of the whole group. Read the story of Moses and the Israelites (see below). Read the Ten Commandments (see below). Christians share these Commandments with the Jewish people. *Write 'God's Guide to Freedom and Responsibility'. For each commandment suggest ways in which people can keep this commandment; what they do, say and feel; how it helps people live together freely.*

Week 3: God gave Moses some commandments and rules for his people. These helped the people to love God and live in peace with each other. In the Book of Deuteronomy 6: 4-9, which is part of the Torah, God gives his people a special reminder of their responsibility to love God. It is a prayer called the Shema (see below). When Jesus is asked which commandment is the greatest of all he quotes from the book of Deuteronomy in his reply (see below).

Matthew's Gospel collects Jesus' teaching together in what is called the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew's Jewish readers would remember how Moses brought God's law (rules) to the people. Matthew wants his readers to see that Jesus is calling people to a new way of living. Read Jesus the Teacher (see below). These eight 'blessings' are called the Beatitudes. *Try to write your own modern version of the Beatitudes reflecting the lives of Christians today. You could use Powerpoint, a storyboard or design eight Whatsapp/Instagram messages with text and pictures.*

Week 4: Look at the key vocabulary for this topic and use it to remember all we have learnt about rules that give us freedom and responsibilities, the Ten Commandments, the Greatest Commandment and the Beatitudes. Celebrate with a simple Act of Worship (see below).

Week 1

After School

Daniel and Samantha had been secretly saving their pocket money for six weeks to buy their Mum a birthday present. They had seen her admiring some earrings in the jeweller's shop in town, so they decided they would get off their bus in town and buy them. When they got to town they went to the shop, only to find it was closed, so they decided to find another shop. After a long search, they found another jeweller's where they had the same earrings. They bought them and went back to catch their bus.

Meanwhile, at home, their Mum was very worried. It was nearly 5.30 and Daniel and Samantha weren't home. She rang up the school and was told they had gone home. She rang a few friends, but the children weren't there. "I shall have to ring the police if they don't turn up soon," she said to herself.

- Q What do you think happened when Daniel and Samantha got home? Why?
- Q What would the main issues be for Daniel and Samantha?
- Q What would the main issues be for their Mum?
- Q Has anything like that happened to you? What did you learn from the experience?
- Q What freedom does their Mum have a right to?
- Q What freedom do the children have a right to?
- Q What do you think is responsible and irresponsible behaviour and what are your reasons?

Week 2

Moses and the Israelites (taken from the Book of Exodus)

After Moses led the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, they wandered in the desert for many years. They were glad they were free, but it was hard going at times. Sometimes they were hungry and thirsty, then they began to grumble. But God provided for them, in spite of their grumbles and they knew that God was with them leading and guiding them.

As they made their way through the desert they lived together as a community learning to care for each other's needs, but above all learning to know and worship the God who had saved them. When they reached a very high mountain called Mount Sinai, Moses ordered the people to camp at the foot of it and not to climb its slopes, because it is God's mountain. Moses himself began to climb and asked the people to pray that God would teach them the laws which would bring them together as a people. Moses stayed on the mountain for a very long time, praying and talking with God. Then he returned to God's people and gave them God's Laws: The Ten Commandments. These were to help the people to live in freedom and to be responsible for their actions.

- Q Why are rules necessary to enable people to co-exist successfully?
- Q Why was this particularly true for the Israelites wandering in the desert?
- Q In what way do rules and laws bring freedom to people who follow them?
- Q Why did Moses feel it was his duty to seek advice from God on rules to live by?
- Q Would all the rules necessarily be about religious belief and practice? Why?
- Q Why would the Israelites accept these rules from Moses?

Week 2 The Ten Commandments

God spoke, and these were his words:

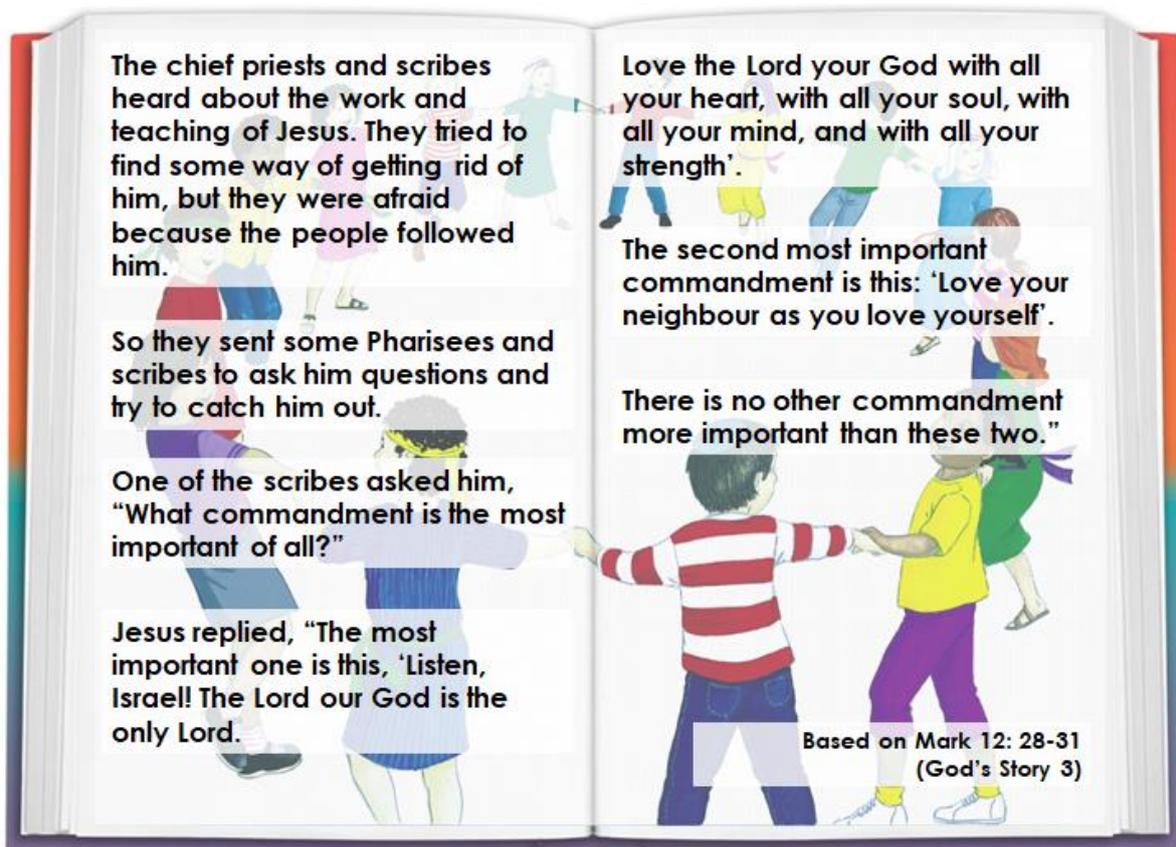
“I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves.”

1. *Worship no god but me. Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth. Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the Lord your God.*
2. *Do not use my name for evil purposes.*
3. *Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. You have six days in which to do your work, but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work – neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country. In six days I, the Lord, made the earth, the sky, the seas, and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested. That is why I, the Lord, blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.*
4. *Respect your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you.*
5. *Do not kill.*
6. *Do not be unfaithful.*
7. *Do not steal.*
8. *Do not lie against your neighbour.*
9. *Do not be greedy and want what other people own.*
10. *Do not take another’s husband or wife.*

Based on Exodus 20 1-17

- Q Which Law do you think is most important and why?
- Q How do you think these Laws helped the Israelites to live in harmony with one another?
- Q Which day do Jewish people observe as the Sabbath?
- Q How do they keep it holy and make it a day of rest?
- Q Which day of the week is the holy day for Christians?
- Q How should Christians observe this?
- Q Who are the first three Laws concerned with and why?
- Q Who are Laws 4 - 10 concerned with?
- Q Which of these beliefs and values are most important to us today and why?

Week 3 Compare the first passage from the Old Testament with Jesus' words in the New Testament



Jesus the Teacher

Matthew's gospel collects Jesus' teaching in what is called the Sermon on the Mount. (Chs 5-7) Matthew's Jewish readers would remember Mount Sinai and how Moses brought God's law to the People. In Matthew's gospel Jesus says very clearly, "I have not come to do away with the Law or the teachings of the prophets." Matthew wants his readers to recognise Jesus as the 'new Moses' calling all people to a new way of living.

A NEW WAY OF LIVING (based on Matthew 5: 1-17)

When he saw the crowds Jesus went up the mountain and sat down. His disciples gathered round him and this is what he taught them.

You will be blessed when you have an open and generous heart.

When you share what you have with other people

God will be very close to you.

You will be blessed when you reach out to those who grieve.

When you make friends with those who are sad and lonely,

God will be there to comfort you.

You will be blessed when you are gentle.

When you treat others with kindness and patience

God will give you all you need.

You will be blessed when you work for justice.

When you respect and stand up for the rights of others,

God will give you life to the full.

You will be blessed when you forgive others and don't hold grudges.

You will find God ready to forgive you.

You will be blessed when you desire what is good.

When you always search for what is good, you will find God in all around you.

You will be blessed when you are a peacemaker.

When you try not to let a quarrel even begin or are first to say sorry

you will be known as children of God.

You will be blessed when you are made fun of for doing what God wants.

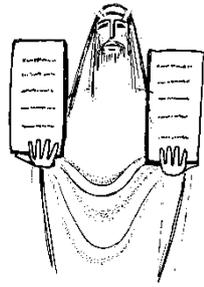
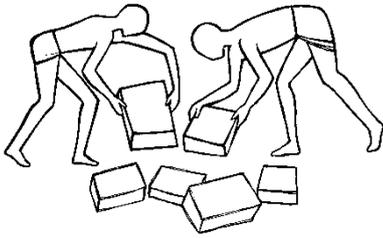
When people laugh at you for living in God's way,

know that you are very close to God.

Remember what happened to so many of God's messengers.

Rejoice and be glad.

- Q Which Beatitude do you like best and why?
- Q In what way are the Beatitudes different from the Ten Commandments?
- Q How does Jesus want us to live?
- Q How will we be rewarded for living in this way?



Act of Worship Year 5

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

“God’s rules for living freely and responsibly – the Commandments”

You may like to set up a focal table:

Gathering

Together

Table with a cloth and a candle

Bible if possible

Any work done on the topic

We begin our liturgy on ‘Freedom and Responsibility’ by making the Sign of the Cross **In the name of the Father...**

And by lighting our candle and remembering that God is present in our gathering.....

People who want to live or work together make rules for themselves. The rules give them freedom to live as they wish, but at the same time, be responsible for the happiness of the whole group.

We have surely all wished, at one time or another that we could go through life without having to obey rules. “It would be great if I could just do as I want”, we might say. But when we stop to think about it, if we had no rules to obey, then what some people want to do, might harm, or put at risk, others around them – and probably themselves as well.

Rules are there to protect us all, and to make our lives more pleasant. Some of these rules that govern our lives can be seen at home and in school, and they ensure that we think of others, as well as of ourselves. They help us to behave more responsibly. Some of the rules we are following at the moment (staying at home. social distancing, washing hands) are there to keep us and others safe and to protect the NHS.

**The Word
of God**

We are now going to hear about some of the earliest rules which were written down; rules which were given to us by God himself, through his contact with the great Jewish leader, Moses. God chose Moses to lead the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, but he soon discovered that, although they were all supposed to follow the Jewish religion, the Jews were a very quarrelsome group. They refused to do what Moses asked them to – so he sought God’s help to give them rules, which would make them all to be free, but responsible for their actions, and would encourage them to be more considerate of others.

Reader: A reading from the Book of Exodus

Moses climbed to the top of Mount Sinai. He remained on the mountain for a very long time, praying and talking with God. Then he returned to God’s people and told them God’s Laws – the Ten Commandments.

I am the Lord, your God. Love, serve and promise me to keep my name holy.

Keep my day holy.

Love and obey your parents and those who have charge of you.

Do not kill, and do not be angry or bad-tempered.
Respect and care for other people.
Do not steal, cheat or want things that don't belong to you.
Tell the truth and speak kindly of others.
Do all you can to care for others and make them happy.
Do all you can to care for other people's belongings.



The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

**Response to
the Word**

Those rules were so appropriate for living a more responsible life, that today they are still the basis for many of our own laws – and those of other countries too.

We all know that we are supposed to obey rules which are there to ensure that each of us lives our lives to the best of our ability. But we also know that at times we do not succeed. Examine your conscience for a moment and think of a time when you deliberately chose to break rules and weren't responsible in your actions.....

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation we celebrate God's love and mercy. We learn about the joys and challenges of living as a follower of Jesus in love and peace. During the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation the Church celebrates the love and mercy of God and calls people to confess their sins, ask for forgiveness and be reconciled to God and to one another. During the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Act of Contrition, also called the Prayer of Sorrow, is said. Let's say that prayer together now for all the times we didn't use our freedom responsibly and broke important rules for living...

**O my God, because you are so good,
I am very sorry that I have sinned against you
and with the help of your grace I will not sin again. Amen**

**Going
Forth**

For the next week let's try to pray the Act of Contrition every evening before bed to say sorry for the times during the day we haven't lived responsibly.

To end our liturgy let's say together:

**God our Father, you have given us freedom in our lives.
With this freedom we can bring sorrow or joy to ourselves and to others.
Help us always to use our freedom in a responsible way.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

