

Sacraments: A Call to Holy Living

SAYING I'M SORRY: PENANCE

UNIT

3

LESSON
FOUR

From Our Hearts to God

Sometimes it is hard to take responsibility for the wrong things I do, Lord. Give me courage to say I'm sorry. Amen.

MY WORLD

I disobeyed my mom and dad. They told me I couldn't play my video game after 7 PM but they caught me playing at 9 and took it away for a week.

Dad told me that the Bible says children should obey their parents, especially when the parents are trying to help their children grow into good adults who love God and do right.

When mom and dad caught me, I went from enjoying playing my game to feeling like a great big stone was pressing on me. I couldn't even keep my mind on the game. I felt bad and even a little silly for not following their instructions for such a stupid reason.

Dad said doing something wrong is like a heavy yoke on a person. I asked dad what a yoke was. He said farmers have a wooden thing they put on the cattle to attach the plow to dig up the dirt. And people put a yoke on their shoulders to carry two buckets of water or other stuff at each end.

When God forgives us for our sins it is like having the weight of the yoke's burden taken off our shoulders.

I told mom about feeling like a big stone was on me when she and dad caught me playing the video game. I guess that was like the yoke's burden. I will not play my video games for a week, but I feel like the stone on me is gone since I talked with mom and dad and told them I am sorry I disobeyed them.

What was the heaviest thing you ever carried?

How long were you carrying it?

How did you feel when you put it down?



GOD'S GUIDING WORDS

"If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens, come to me and I will give you rest. Take the yoke I give you. Put it on your shoulders and learn from me. I am gentle and humble, and you will find rest. This yoke is easy to bear, and this burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30



Getting Closer to God

We feel close to God when we talk to him. Every Sunday we get a chance to talk with God about what we have done wrong during the week so God can strengthen us to do better in the future. We do this when we confess our wrongs, our sins, to God and then receive Holy Communion. Here is what we say:

- I have sinned against the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- I confess before my fellow Christians and before God all my sins.
- I have sinned by thinking wrong things, by saying wrong things, by doing wrong things.
- I sinned on purpose and accidentally.
- I have sinned by letting my **pride** hurt others, by being meanly **jealous** of others, by being **angry** with others, by being **lazy** and not doing what I should, **by wishing I had what others have** and being upset with them because they have what I **want**, by **eating too much** while others in this world go hungry, by **wanting more** and more instead of being content with what I have and sharing with others.
- I have sinned because I didn't do what I know God would want me to do and I did things God would NOT want me to do. I knew what was right and what was wrong, but I didn't care. I know what Christians should do, but I didn't do the Christian things I should. I was tempted to do the wrong things and didn't stop myself. I could have done good things but I didn't. I feel miserable, God, because I am not behaving like the good Christian I really want to be.
- I have sinned against God.
- I will ask the priest, who is your representative, to release me from feeling tied up by my sins.



Our Armenian Way

You just learned the group confession as recited in the Armenian Church. It used to be done before Badarak starts, but now we do it just before Communion. It is our time to make things right with God after a week of small and big sins. God knows we are not perfect and every day we have opportunities to do or not do what God wants. Confession gives us all a chance to say to God: I know I have sinned and I am sorry. Please forgive me and strengthen me to make right choices in the future.

We have individual confession also. Sometimes people want to confess their sins in private with the priest. It gives them a chance to talk more about what they have done wrong and to get the priest's help in finding the right way to do things. Anyone who wants private confession can call the priest and set up an appointment.



Taking a **Closer** Look



Մեղայ Աստուծոյ ME-GHA AS-DOO-DZO. This is the phrase we say after each part of the confession. It means "I have sinned against God" and it is our way of acknowledging that we have made a mistake, a wrong choice. It is a form of **CONTRITION** which means recognizing that we have done wrong and saying it.

Time to Celebrate

Take your “forgiveness” stone. Write

“Megha Asdoodzo”

Forgiveness Stone



RESPONDING IN FAITH

Lord, your forgiveness feels like new clothes for the first day of school. It makes me feel lighter, as if I have set down a heavy stone and am ready for a new start. Amen.

FAMILY CORNER

Sharing Our Faith

Today, we learned about the burden of doing wrong and how every Sunday God gives us the chance to “come clean.” The sacrament of penance is the opportunity for all Christians to pledge a new start before God. The children reviewed a simple and meaningful version of group confession and even made their own “forgiveness stone” as a symbol of how heavy we can feel when we’re not following God. Have your child use the stone as a paperweight.

Living Our Faith

1. Encourage confession and forgiveness in your family life by modeling it yourself. Be quick to apologize if you’ve done something wrong.
2. Let forgiveness free you. Purchase a helium balloon from your local supermarket or other store. Be sure the string is long enough so that when it is let go in the house, it can be retrieved. Gather as a family each day and have everyone hold the string close to the balloon. All say together “I am sorry for anything I did to hurt you today. I forgive anyone who has hurt me.” Then let the balloon go. Do this as often during the week as you feel comfortable.

you and the world?” Refer to some of their answers on the board as you discuss this last question. 10 min.

3. Segue with: “Let’s remember that at Jesus’ baptism, after the water came the Holy Spirit.” Turn to **God’s Guiding Words** and then continue to **Getting Closer to God**. Have students fill in the blank. Discuss answers. 5 min.

4. Turn ahead to **Our Armenian Way** and read. Explain to children that the herbs, flowers and oils listed are only a few of the 47 that are used to make *muron*. Then place the bowl, oil and miscellaneous ingredients on your desk and have students come around. Pour some oil in and crush a bit of the flowers in the oil. Say: “Let’s pretend that this is the *muron* left from the ceremonies of 7 years ago. Now we’ll make more together.” Have every student participate by spooning up a tiny amount of each item and adding it to the bowl. Then mix with a silver spoon (they can take turns doing that as well). Say: “Remember that every Bishop will take a supply back to their Diocese for use in the sacraments. At your baptism and chrismation, the priest blessed you in nine places by signing the cross with this oil like this.” Dip your thumb in the mixture and sign a cross on the inside of their palms. 10 min.

5. When students have returned to their seats, read **Taking a Closer Look**. Talk about how these different parts of the body stand for something and are symbols of holy living. List the 9 parts of the body across the board and ask students to discuss how they can reflect holiness. Give children time – they will come up with some great answers (although some may be silly)! Examples are given below.

Eyes	see good in people, look at good things, see the world as God might
Ears	listen to beautiful things, hear the good people say
Nose	smell the sweetness of life in all God’s blessings
Mouth	say only good things, don’t curse, praise God and others
Hands	do good works, lift them up in prayer
Feet	walk with God, walk with people who need your help, don’t go to bad places
Back	bear other’s burdens, work hard,
Heart	love God and one another
Forehead	think good thoughts, think of how you can do God’s work, think of others

Distribute cross stickers and direct them to do the activity. 10 min.

7. Read **Time to Celebrate**. Distribute blank paper to each student and have them create their religious symbols. They may use colored pencils, markers, color pens. Discuss the results and post them on the wall or bulletin board, under the sign “Symbols of Our Faith.”

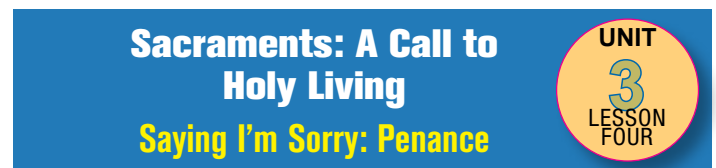
8. Do a lightning round review: “Okay, let’s take a moment to remember: what is that special oil used to mark us as babies during chrismation with a sign of the cross? (Holy *muron*) How many parts of the body are signed? (9) Name them. (Eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, feet, heart, back and forehead). Then conclude class with the prayer in **Responding in Faith**. 15 min.

Evaluating Your Lesson

1. What needs more pre-class preparation?
2. How can you make the lesson flow more smoothly?

Extending the Lesson

1. Have students complete the **Baptism, Chrismation, Communion** puzzle (from the back of this manual). Answer: *The Sacraments of Initiation*



Key Concepts

1. God loves us and knows that we will not always stay on track as we try to live a good and Spirit-filled life.
2. Recognizing that we sin, that all humans sin, and saying “I’m sorry” is the first step in re-establishing our relationship with God.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Read a story about the effect of sin.
2. Analyze a simplified statement of confession.
3. Create a “penance” stone as a desk paperweight.
4. Review previous sacrament lessons.

Materials Needed

The Sacraments, The Symbols of Our Faith by Fr. Garabed Kochakian

A fist sized rock for each student (these can be purchased at a garden center). Have these in a pile on your desk.

Dark blue and purple permanent markers

Small paper or plastic bags for stone paperweights

Note to the Teacher

Next week, you will take your class to church for confession and Holy Communion. Email the parents during the coming week so that children come prepared by fasting or eating something light. Ask for volunteers to bring juice and cookies or snacks.

Procedure

1. Pray **From Our Hearts to God** together. Ask students and discuss: “What are some things you’ve been sorry that you did or said?” (Perhaps a harsh word to a friend or sibling, disrespecting parents) “Why is it so hard sometimes to say ‘I’m sorry?’” (It’s hard to admit you’re wrong, you don’t want to seem weak or silly, you’re too angry or proud, you don’t think you’re wrong) Conclude by announcing that today’s class is about the sacrament of penance, the very sacrament of saying “I’m sorry”to God. 10 min.
2. Read **My World** and discuss the questions. Students might share a time they carried a heavy suitcase or even their baby sibling. Ask them to elaborate. Have students come up to your desk and choose a stone. When they’ve returned to their seats, ask them to hold it. Is it heavy? If they say “not really,” ask whether it would be hard to carry it around in one hand or in their backpacks all day long. Have them set it aside and read **God’s Guiding Words**. Say: “So...Jesus promises us a way to free ourselves of this burden, by following him.” 10 min.
3. Teach the first paragraph of **Getting Closer to God**. Then have students volunteer to read each bulleted section. Conclude by posing the following questions; ask students to find and read aloud the section that gives the answer.
 1. When we sin, whom do we sin against? (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)
 2. To whom do we confess our sins? (fellow Christians and God)
 3. Sometimes we sin accidentally. How else do we sin? (on purpose)

4. Seven sins were listed. Can you name three of them?
5. Is it a sin if you know as a Christian you should do something but you don’t do it? (yes)
6. Who is God’s representative when we confess our sins? (the priest) 10 min.
4. Review **Our Armenian Way**. Ask: “Do you ever wish you could start over on something or begin again when things aren’t going right? The sacrament of penance is the fresh start to your relationship with God and others.” You might want the students to share some experiences when they got to do something over that they did poorly the first time or start again when their first attempt wasn’t good. Conclude by telling the students that taking part in confession each Sunday is our way of “starting over” and “trying again.” 5 min.

5. Teach **Taking a Closer Look** and then distribute markers. Write *Megha Asdoodzo* on the board. Explain that it means “I have sinned against God” in Armenian. Have the students repeat the phrase several times. Then pass out markers and have students write *Megha Asdoodzo* and *Forgiveness Stone* on their rock (**Time to Celebrate**). They may also decorate it.

Discuss: If the rocks represent our sins, what could some of these be? (Lying, cheating, being mean to someone, not obeying parents, wanting something someone else has, etc.) If the students don’t have ideas, suggest some to them. Tell students to take the rock home and use it as a paperweight, a reminder that doing things God would not want us to do is a heavy weight. Remind them that Jesus makes the yoke easier to carry by forgiving your sins. 15 min.

6. Spend five minutes in review. Ask students to look over the last three lessons in the sacraments unit and come up with one question to ask the rest of the class. If no one can answer, they should provide the page where the answer appears. Do this for as long as you have time. Then conclude with **Responding in Faith**. 5 min.

Evaluating Your Lesson

What went well? What didn’t?

How can you change the lesson so it is more meaningful for the students?