Lesson Plan #1  Penance and Reconciliation

Objectives:
- Children will be able to summarize the importance of Penance and Reconciliation and the reasoning behind the sacraments. They will be able to discuss its role as a Sacrament of Healing.
- Children will recall the different names for the sacrament and be able to explain the need for this sacrament after Baptism.
- Children will know when Penance was instituted and who has the power to forgive our sins.

Discussion Points:
- Tell children that Penance is a Sacrament of Healing because it frees us of sin, which weakens us. It, therefore, gives us strength. We become weak through sin. Jesus gave us this sacrament so that the Church can continue His work of healing and salvation (Y. 224  C. 295)
- Discuss with children the meaning of sin. Talk about how it is more than behaving wrongly. It is actually a turning away from God. We grow apart from God when we sin.
- In this growing apart, we grow weak.(Y. 67  C. 73)
- There are different names for the Sacrament of Penance but it is all the same sacrament and has the power to bring us back to God. This sacrament may be called the sacrament of Penance, the sacrament of Reconciliation, the sacrament of Forgiveness, the sacrament of Confession, and the sacrament of Conversion. (Y. 225  C. 296)
- Relate the sacrament of Baptism to the sacrament of Penance. Talk about how Baptism frees us from original sin in Baptism but because we are human, we are weak and continue to sin. Jesus gave us this sacrament to be able to be free of our sins and bring us back to Him. (Y. 226  C. 298)
- Jesus gave us the sacrament of Penance on Easter when He showed himself to the apostles and told them to “receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” (John 20:22–23). Jesus forgives sins through the power of the Holy Spirit and passed on that power through the apostles, our first priests. (Y. 227  C. 298, 307)
- God is the only one who can forgive our sins. Jesus could say “Your sins are forgiven” only because He is the Son of God. Jesus gave priests the power to forgive and so they can forgive our sins in His name. (Y. 228  C. 302)

Additional Resources/Activities:
- www.sacredhearthouston.org : has many extension activities for sacrament of Penance under home resources for sacramental preparation of Children.
- www.sadlierreligion.com : sadlier religion /we believe/ printable activities
- www.catholicjules.net : guide explaining the sacrament of penance
Lesson Plan #2 Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

Objectives:
- The children will be able to relate the two necessary elements needed for the Sacrament of Reconciliation: the acts of the penitent (one coming to confession) and the absolution of the priest, who works in the name of Christ.
- The children will be able to relate the steps needed to prepare a person for repentance.
- The children will be able to explain what an examination of conscience means.
- The children will practice reciting the Act of Contrition.
- The children will review the process of receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Discussion Points:
- Discuss how we feel when we know we have done something against God and have a feeling of guilt after. When we know we want to be better and be closer to God and feel His love, we are examining our conscience and are contrite, or feel sorry, about our choices. We say we will do better and try not to sin again. This is the first step necessary for the sacrament of Reconciliation. (Y. 229, 231 C. 300,302, 303)
- We need to confess our sins at confession and tell them to a priest. God wants us to tell our sins and to admit to them in a personal way in confession. We also say the Act Of Contrition. God is merciful and wants us to unburden ourselves, which renews us. To children, we may say it is like starting over on a brand new clean page with no mistakes on it. God wants this for us. In His name, the priest offers us absolution for our sins. (Y. 232, 226 C. 303)
- The last part of confession is to do penance for our sins. Penance is a way to repair the damage done by our sins. We do whatever penance the priest tells us. We do penance by doing acts of charity, supporting the poor spiritually and physically, praying, or fasting. (Y. 230, 232 C. 301 303)

Additional Resources/Activities:
- practice going to confession with your children. This will help allay fears. (the routines/prayers, etc.) The resources listed above and below will have guides on this process.
- [http://www.daniellesplace.com/HTML/bible_themes_f_.html#forgiveness](http://www.daniellesplace.com/HTML/bible_themes_f_.html#forgiveness) : good for younger children
- [http://sundayschoolnetwork.com/sermon_confession.html](http://sundayschoolnetwork.com/sermon_confession.html)
- [http://catholiceducation.org/articles/parenting/parents0040.html](http://catholiceducation.org/articles/parenting/parents0040.html) : good article for parents on getting your children to go to confession
Lesson Plan #3

Objectives:
- Children will be able to discuss what sins must be confessed
- Children will be able to discuss when a Catholic should go to confession and how often.
- Older children should discuss mortal and venial sins. Younger children can tell that sins are a way of saying “no” to God and thus, keeping them from being as close as possible to Him.
- Children will know that a priest cannot break the seal of the confessional.

Discussion Points:
- Review previous lessons and talk about what sins we should be confessing. Discuss with children that this is not easy for many people to do but that everyone does this, even the Pope. God is a merciful God and wants us to be closer to Him. He is a forgiving God and wants to do this for us. (Y. 226, 227 C. 295, 297)
- All of our sins that we remember after doing an examination of conscience should be told at confession so that we may receive forgiveness. (Y. 233 C. 304)
- Most children receive the Sacrament of Penance around the age of 7, when they are able to understand and take responsibility for their actions. They know the difference between good and bad. (Y. 234 C. 305)
- The Church says that each of the faithful receive confession at least once a year and always before receiving Holy Communion if you have committed a serious sin.
- Confessing venial sins will keep your relationship with God strong and allows them to be healed by God. (Y. 205 C. 306)
- Remind children that what is said by them in confession is between them and God. The priest is never allowed to speak about something he has heard or learned in confession, not even to the police. A phrase used in the Youcat is that in confession, the priest’s job is to be entirely “the ear of God”. (Y 238 C. 309)

Additional Resources/Activities:
- www.ncregister.com/info/confession_guide_for_children/ : good examination of conscience and questions
- www.therealpresence.org>Archives Index>Sacraments index : article for parents about teaching children about importance of confession
- www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/activities using water to show how confession makes us clean
- circle.adventist.org/files/download/TeachingChildrenAboutConfession.pdf : good activities for use with children