

Call to Celebrate: Eucharist

Chapter 3 We Are Forgiven

Theme: We have the opportunity to receive God's mercy and forgiveness during Mass.

Doctrinal Content

Included in the Introductory Rite of the Mass is the Penitential Act. We are asked to prepare ourselves for a sacred encounter with the Lord every time we go to Mass. We draw near to the very body and blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. We are not worthy to participate in all this. So, the priest invites us to "prepare ourselves to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries" by humbly confessing our sins publically before almighty God and those at Mass. We need to cleanse our souls from sin before we approach God in the Mass. Washing is a biblical image for removal of sin: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin...wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (Psalm 51: 2,7) This passage, from the Psalms, probably sounds very familiar because it is said by the priest during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. During the Penitential Act, we sometimes confess our sins by saying the Confiteor, which in Latin means, "I confess". If we don't recite this, we are always invited by the celebrant to reflect on our sins from the past week and ask for God's mercy and forgiveness.

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers
and sisters,
that I have **greatly sinned**
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have don
and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault,
through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary
ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.



When we say this, we are really acknowledging that we have sinned in different ways: in thoughts, in our words, in what we have done, and what we have failed to do. We also, acknowledge that we are responsible for these, "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault". We acknowledge it THREE times. If we are truly sorry for something we have done, we usually don't apologize once to get the point across, and we repeat it. We also reflect on our most grievous sin of the week.

Kyrie or the "Lord Have Mercy" is part of the Penitential Act. We are asking the Lamb of God, who is Jesus, to have mercy on us before we take part in the Eucharist. Again it is a way of acknowledging our sins before we encounter the Sacrament of a most profound encounter with Him in the Eucharist.

Acknowledging our sins is very Biblical. It is a common practice in the Old Testament. Some Old Testament law required people to confess certain sins and the sins of all of Israel were confessed. This practice is continued in the New Testament in Matt 3:6, Mark 1:5, 1 John 1:19 (“if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”, and James 5:16.

The Didache, a first century document that is referred to as the Teaching of the Apostles, describes how Mass was celebrated as early as the late first century, “Assemble on the Lord’s Day and break bread, and offer the Eucharist, *but first make confession of your faults*, so that your sacrifice might be a pure one”.

Parent /Child Activity

1. Say the following as the opening prayer:

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers
and sisters,
that I have **greatly sinned**
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done
and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault,
through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary
ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

2. Discuss together times that you “get ready for something” that’s very important. How do we get ready? (we put on special clothes, take a shower, get a haircut, go somewhere, eat a meal together, something that we don’t do every day) Why do you suppose we do special things to get ready sometimes? (It is something very important, like a wedding, a funeral, a family activity, a recital, etc)
3. Explain: During Mass, as we get ready to really receive Jesus, or God in the bread and wine, there are several things we have to do in order to get ready. When we get ready for supper, we wash our hands. When we get ready for Mass we ask God to cleanse or wash us from our sins. We have to think about what it is we need to cleanse ourselves of. In order to do this, we say special prayers.

4. Read page 5 of your *The Mass for Children* book together.
5. Ask your child if they are familiar with these prayers or if they remember saying them.
6. Tell them you're REALLY going to think about this prayer now by playing a game.
7. Play the matching game with your child:

Matching game:

Show your child the pictures of the examples of the sins from the Confiteor below these instructions.

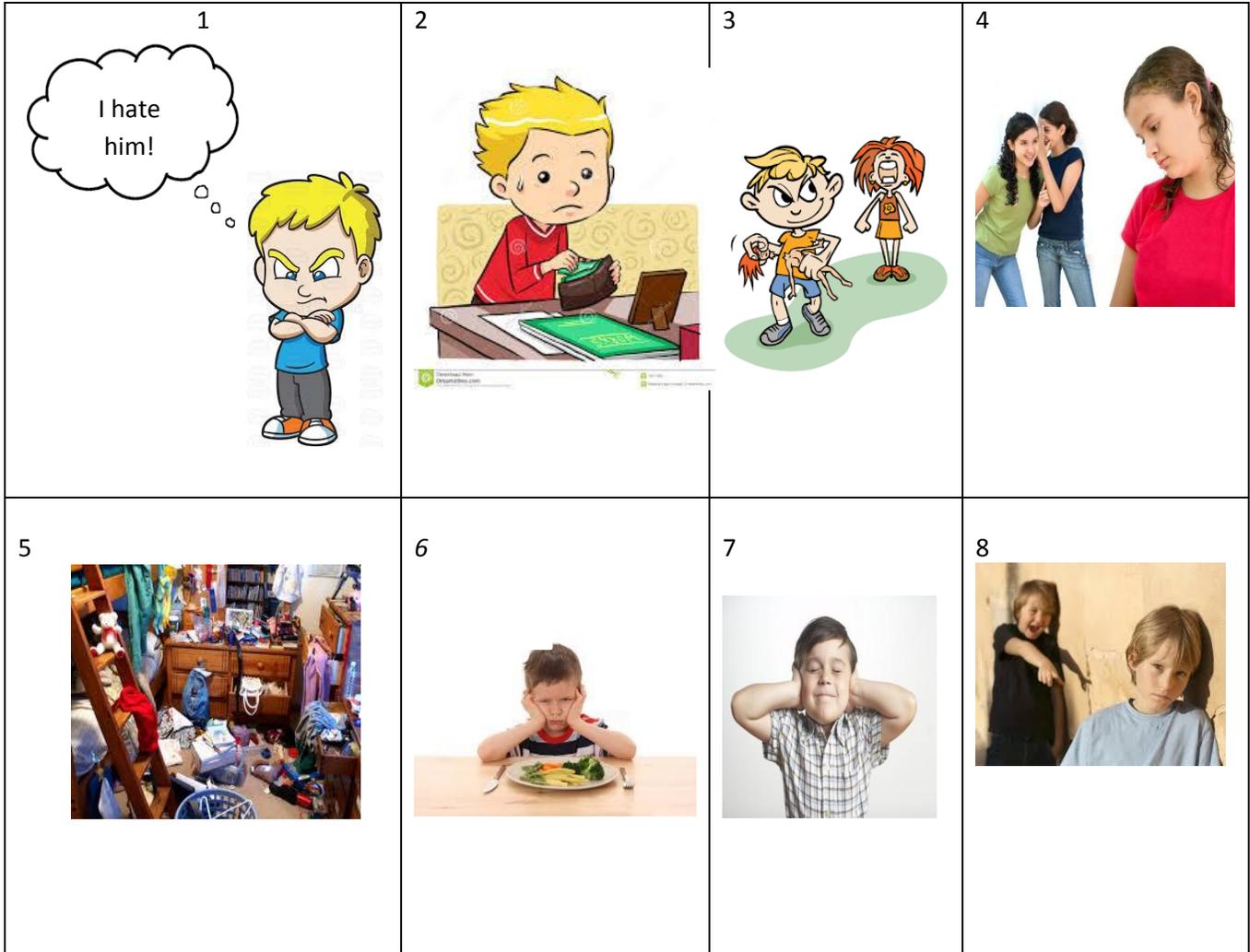
Give them a minute to look at the photos.

Point to each picture and see if they can identify which sin it is.

- In my thoughts
- In my words
- In what I have done
- In what I have failed to do

Once this has been completed, ask your child to come up with one of their own examples. The next time you go to Mass, remind them to listen for this prayer or the Kyrie (Lord Have Mercy) and really think about what we say during this prayer.

Close with a prayer of the thanksgiving for the time you just spent together.



Answers are on the following page.

Picture 1- Thinking bad thoughts when angry-In my thoughts

Picture 2-Stealing money-What I have done

Picture 3-boy destroying the girl's doll-What I have done

Picture 4-Girls whispering about someone and making them feel alone-In my words

Picture 5-Messy room-In what I have failed to do

Picture 6-Boy refusing to eat and thinking "No" to his parents-In my thoughts

Picture 7-Boy not listening-In what I have failed to do

Picture 8-Boy making fun and ridiculing another boy-In my words