

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



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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.