

# St. Brigid's

## Family Faith Formation BREAD January Session#4

(Please note January session is in February workbook and February is in January)

# Sacraments of Penance & Reconciliation



**“Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgotten them, and whose sins you retain are retained” (John 20:22-23)**

BREAD Resource Page: [Latest News from Faith Formation](#)

This month we focus on:

- I. The Sacraments of Healing
- II. The Mercy and Healing Power of God: Reconciliation
- III. Sacred Art Discussion: *Return of the Prodigal So*

### Saints of the Month:



PG: 180-181  
AB: 198-201

### Word to know:

Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation Absolution

Chapter Overview  
John 20:22-23  
PG144-149  
AB164-167

Do activity #1  
“God Comforts Us in the Sacraments of Healing”  
PG:153-154

Do activity #2  
“Healing Spiritual and Physical Sickness”  
PG:155-156  
AB:168-169

Lesson 9  
Penance and Reconciliation

### St. Mary Magdalene:

St. Mary Magdalene (d. c. 63 AD) was a prominent follower of Jesus Christ, recognized as a primary witness to the Resurrection. She is often called the "Apostle to the Apostles" because she was the first person commissioned by the risen Jesus to announce the news of His victory over death to His disciples. She is first introduced in the Gospel of Luke (8:2) as a woman from whom Jesus cast out seven demons, which may symbolize severe illness or spiritual affliction. She followed Jesus throughout His ministry in Galilee and Judea, supporting Him and His disciples "out of her own resources". Unlike most of the male apostles, she remained present at the foot of the Cross during the Crucifixion and was a witness to Jesus' burial. All four Gospels agree she was among the first to find the empty tomb on Easter morning and was the first to encounter the risen Christ.

God created us to not experience sickness or death and meant for us to live forever. Death and sickness entered the world only through the devil's envy and man's sin. "As a result, the whole life of men, both individual and social, shows itself to be a struggle, and a dramatic one, between good and evil, between light and darkness." (CCC 1701)

### **I. The Sacraments of Healing**

- A. God, in His infinite Mercy, came up with a solution to this problem we created. **He sends His Son to reconcile us back to Him.**
  1. Scripture tells us that Jesus came into the world to destroy the works of the devil, to restore us to a full and abundant life, and to set us free from the bondage of sin.
  2. Jesus then came to bring HEALING to both our bodies and souls. This is why we refer to Him as the Divine physician.
  3. Jesus showed tremendous compassion to those who were sick. In fact, His compassion for those who were sick was so great that He identified Himself with them, "I was sick and you visited me." **Even more importantly, Jesus heals our souls by forgiving sins.**
  4. Jesus gives us the two Sacraments of Healing (Penance and Reconciliation & Anointing of the Sick) so that the Church can continue His work of restoration and healing until He comes again.
- B. Penance and Reconciliation
  1. This is the Sacrament that heals us from spiritual sickness (venial sin) and spiritual death (mortal sin)
  2. Through this Sacrament our relationship to God is restored.
- C. Anointing of the Sick
  1. Jesus comes to meet us in our suffering.
  2. In some cases we can receive healing from physical illness through this Sacrament.
  3. It provides us with strength for our final journey to God.
  4. It can also include receiving the Eucharist as Viaticum (Food for the journey)
- D. Our God is a **compassionate** God. Our God is a God of **deep love** and **unending mercy**.
  1. The Sacraments of Healing show us tangible proof of His compassion, love, and mercy.
  2. When we are sick, broken, wounded, and suffering, let us seek out these beautiful Sacraments.
  3. When someone we know is in a state of suffering or sin, one of the greatest gifts we can give them is to encourage them to seek God's healing mercy in these Sacraments.

Do activity #1  
“What is the  
Sacrament of  
Penance and  
Reconciliation?”  
PG:160-162

Do activity #2  
“God’s Love and  
Compassion”  
PG: 163-164  
AB: 170-172

Bonus Activity  
PG: 165

Do Activity #3  
“The Power to  
Forgive”  
PG: 166-167  
AB:172-173

Bonus Activity  
PG: 168

Do Activity #4  
“Jesus Welcomes  
Sinners Who  
Ask for  
Forgiveness”  
PG: 169-170  
AB: 174-175

Do Activity #5  
“Two Kinds of  
Sin”  
PG:171-172  
AV:176-177

Do Activity #6  
“The Sacrament  
of God’s  
Forgiveness”  
PG: 173-174  
AB:178-179 &  
180-183

Do Activity #7  
“Steps to a Good  
Confession”  
PG: 175-177  
AB:184-187 &  
188-191

Bonus Activity  
PG: 178

Do Activity #8  
“The Keys of St  
Peter”  
PG:179  
AB:193-195

Practice the Act  
of Contrition for  
the Sacrament  
of  
Reconciliation.

## II. The Mercy and Healing Power of God: Reconciliation

- A. If our Faith is truly rooted in a RELATIONSHIP with Christ, then the Sacrament of Penance makes perfect sense.
1. When we hurt our human relationships we seek the person’s forgiveness and hopefully in turn they extend their forgiveness. If we do this with our children, our spouses, or our friends, it makes sense that we need to do the same thing with Christ.
  2. This is what the Sacrament of Penance is. **In the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation we ask Christ for his forgiveness and promise to do better.** Then we hear Him tell us we are forgiven through the Priest.
  3. The Priest is acting in the person of Christ. When we go to confession, we aren’t telling our sins to a Priest, **we are telling them to Jesus through the Priest.**
- B. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a powerful and beautiful Sacrament that allows us to start over with a clean slate and helps us have a more intimate relationship with God.
1. It provides us with spiritual healing through the forgiveness of our sins and restores our relationship to God.
  2. It also gives us the grace to help us avoid sin in the future.
- C. Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Confession in John 20 when he appears to His disciples after His Resurrection.
1. *He says to them, “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” (John 20:23)*
  2. What sins would they know to forgive or retain if they didn’t hear them?
  3. The *Catechism* beautifully explains it: “Confession to a priest is an essential part of the sacrament of Penance...’for if the sick person is too ashamed to show his wound to the doctor, the medicine cannot heal what it does not know” (CCC 1456)
- D. How can we make a good **Confession**?
1. We begin by examining our consciences and creating a list of ways we have failed to love God, our neighbor, and ourselves in the way we were called to. You can write them down if you like or just keep a mental inventory.
  2. We then walk into the Confessional and say, “Bless me Father for I have sinned.” Tell him how long it has been since your last confession, then proceed to tell him your sins.
  3. There is nothing you can say to shock the priest. He has probably heard it all so do not be afraid.
  4. It is also important to note that the Priest will never share with someone what you share with him in the Confessional. “The Church declares that every Priest who hears confessions is bound under severe penalties to keep absolute secrecy regarding the sins his penitents have confessed to him.” (CCC 1467)
  5. There have been priests in the history of the Church who have suffered martyrdom for refusing to reveal what they have heard in the Confessional, so go with trusting confidence in our Heavenly Father.
  6. We need to have **contrition** (or sorrow) for our sins and sincerely commit to not committing this sin again. This means working as much as possible to avoid the circumstances that tempt us to sin.
  7. The priest will then assign you a penance (usually prayers to say or a good deed to perform)
  8. He will then have you say an **Act of Contrition** and then will give you **absolution**.
- E. The Fruits of Penance and Reconciliation
- It is often called the Sacrament of Joy because of the tremendous benefits it gives us.
  - God’s love is imparted to the sinner in a profound way through this Sacrament.
  - Through this Sacrament our sins are forgiven and we are restored to right relationship with God and the Church.
  - We are strengthened in our resolve to sin no more.
  - It brings about a “spiritual resurrection” in us.
  - It reconciles the sinner in his inmost being, enabling him to regain his true identity as a dearly loved child of God.
- F. Frequent confession truly strengthens us in the life of grace and virtue.
- The Church only requires us to go once a year. It is strongly recommended to go once a month. It is reported that some Saints went daily.
  - Confession is the key to breaking free of some of the sins that bind us.
  - Remember that “God never tires of forgiving us, it is us who tire of seeking His forgiveness.” (Pope Francis)
  - A wise man once said, “your sin is who you are not.” Seek God’s mercy in reconciliation and remember who you truly are!