

**Heart Speaks to Heart
The Gift of Reconciliation**

*HOW TO CELEBRATE THE
SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION*

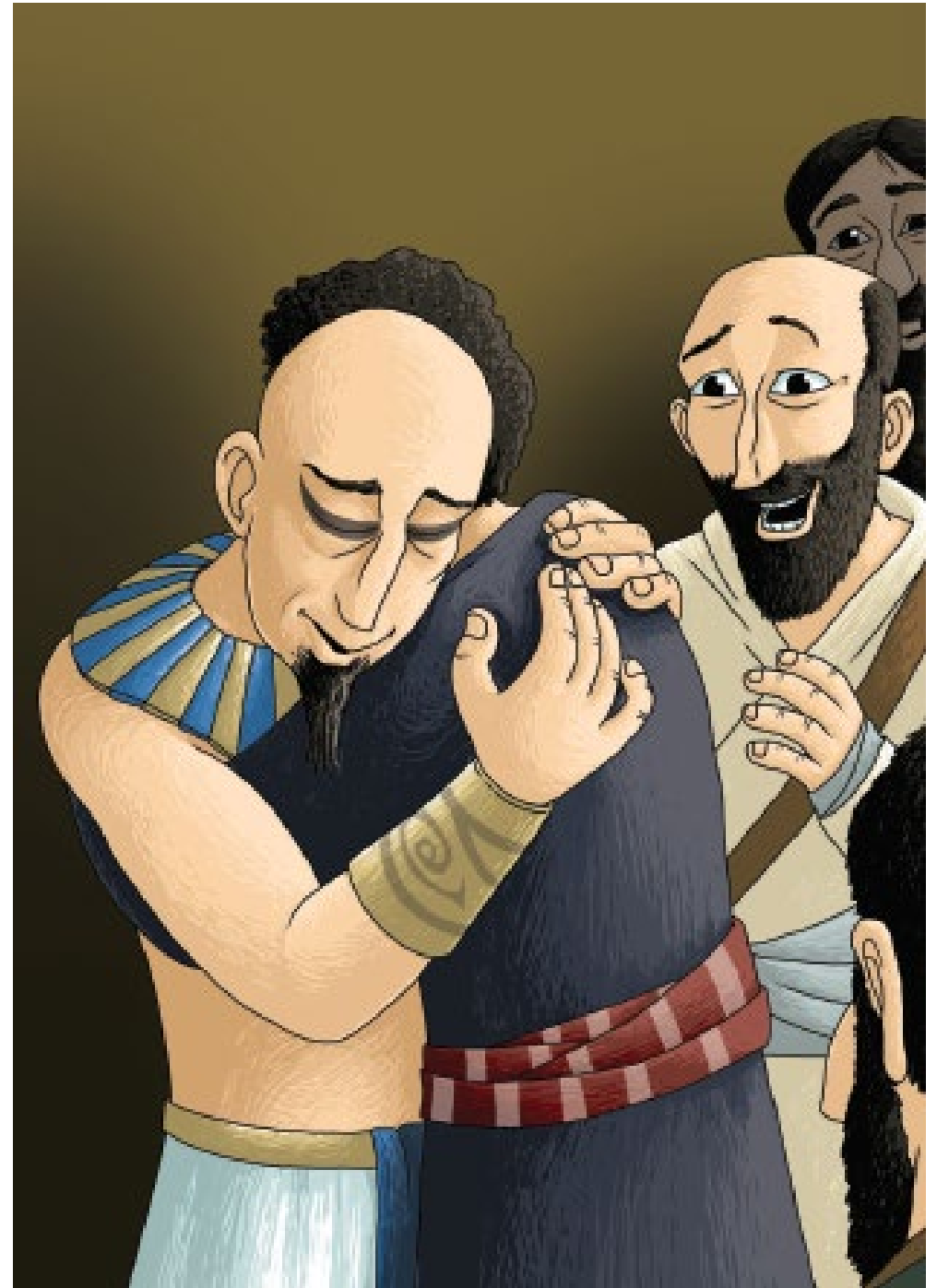


We celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with a priest. Before we go to the priest we prepare for the Sacrament by making an **Examination of Conscience**. We take time with God in prayer, asking Him to help us to recognise those times we have sinned.

Below are some questions to help you reflect as you make your **Examination of Conscience**:

- Do I pray every day?
- Do I always show respect for God?
- Do I use God's name in a bad way?
- Do I go to church on Sundays and other holy days?
- Do I always show respect for my parents and other adults?
- Do I disobey or not listen to my parents or others who care for me?
- Do I get angry and fight with others?
- Do I steal?
- Do I lie or cheat (at school, at home, in games, in sports)?
- Do I refuse to help others?
- Do I refuse to share with others?
- Do I hurt others?
- Do I make fun of others?
- Do I exclude others e.g. by ignoring them or not playing with them?
- Do I remember to thank people, especially those who care for me?
- Do I forgive others?

Are there things that you have done which you want to confess to God and say sorry for?



Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Listen carefully to the beautiful words of the prayer. As the priest ends the prayer, make the Sign of the Cross and say **Amen** with the priest.
- The priest will then say:
 "The Lord has freed you from your sins.
 Go in peace."
You reply:
 "Thanks be to God."
- Thank the priest and leave him.

After the Celebration of the Sacrament

- Give thanks to God in church for His loving forgiveness.
- Do your **penance** as soon as you can.

To celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation you will either sit beside a priest in a special place in church or another public space or the priest will be behind a screen in a Confessional. Usually you would kneel on your side of the screen in the Confessional.



Find out where and when Reconciliation takes place in your church. If it is in a Confessional, try and find out exactly what you have to do there.

During the Celebration of the Sacrament

- The priest welcomes you. The priest may say a few words or read a short passage from the Bible.
- Make the Sign of the Cross and say **Amen** with the priest.

- Say:



Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned.
This is my first Confession.
These are my sins.

After your first Confession you will need to say:
“It is xx weeks [or months] since my last Confession.”

- **Confess** your sins (the sins you identified in your Examination of Conscience) to the priest. At the end of your Confession, say: “Those are all the sins that I can remember.”
- The priest listens to you. He asks you to:
 - do an act of **penance** to make up for your sins and to show how much you now want to follow Jesus by doing acts of love. Your penance may be to say a prayer or do a simple act of kindness.
 - make an Act of **Contrition** now.

- You say:



O my God, because you are so good I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, and by the help of your grace I will not sin again.
Amen.

- The priest prays the Prayer of **Absolution** forgiving you your sins:

God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace,
and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

