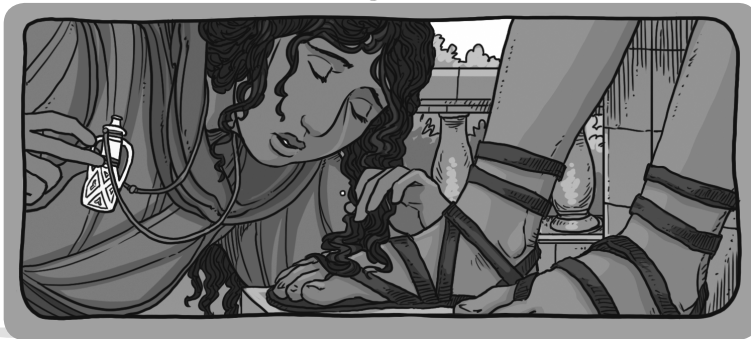


We Ask for Forgiveness



Background Focus

Identifying ourselves as sinners is not easy, but it is the honest truth. With this truth comes the humble realization that no one—not even the person I call *me*, *myself*, and *I*—is perfect. This truth can be humbly liberating, especially when we realize that God still loves us and wants to forgive us. As sinners, our imperfect love is met by perfect love. We are forgiven!

The expansion of the definition of sin presented in this lesson is very important and includes the distinction between serious sin (mortal sin), which completely breaks our relationship with God, and less-serious sin (venial sin), which nonetheless harms our relationship with God and others.

In this lesson, the truth of sinfulness and forgiveness is gradually opened up to the children through the account of the sinful woman who poured her perfume and her tears over Jesus' feet.

GO (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in the chapter 5 activity booklet and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have the children put their activity booklets away for now.

Chapter 5




Featured Story

Jesus Forgives a Woman's Sins (Luke 7:36–50)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that our sins can be forgiven if we are truly sorry
- to identify that we have more room for love when we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- to explain the difference between mortal sin and venial sin

Lesson at a Glance

-  **Go** (10 minutes)
 - Opening Prayer
 - Engage Activity
-  **Seek** (30 minutes)
 - Featured Story
 - Core Learning Activity
-  **Find** (20 minutes)
 - God's Treasure of Forgiveness
 - Lesson Wrap-Up
 - Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 5 activity booklet
- an empty square tissue box for each child, seven construction-paper "jewels" for each child, one envelope for each child, one-half of an index card for each child, tape, markers or crayons, paper and pencils for closing prayer (*optional*)
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- "Jesus Heal Us," by Sr. Kathy Bettencourt (Sr. Kathy Bettencourt)
- "We Are Marching," by Invitation Music (Invitation Publishing)

Engage Activity

- Ask the children to think about everything they own—their clothes, their toys, their books, their electronic devices. Have them share what their most treasured possession is and where they keep it. Record their answers on the board.
- Explain that some people keep their most treasured possessions at the bank, in a special box. Continue with the following points:
 - People sometimes keep their jewelry at the bank so the jewelry will be safe at all times.
 - People sometimes keep important papers at the bank so that they will not be lost or burned up in a fire.
 - Other people keep special boxes at home for their most treasured possessions.
- Tell the children that today they will learn about a woman who was so sorry for her sins that she gave her most precious possession to Jesus.
- Ask the children if they would be willing to give their most precious possession to Jesus. Remind them that Jesus does not really want or need what we have. Explain that he wants us to love God, ourselves, and others. Tell the children that Jesus wants us to be truly sorry, to not sin again, to do our penance, and to follow his command of love.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find Luke 7:36–50 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1595).
- Direct them to turn the page to the Featured Story on page 1596 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves on the page are a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous page.
- Ask the children what they think the woman in the artwork on pages 1596–1597 is doing.
- Invite a volunteer to read the title of the Featured Story. Explain that we do not know who the woman is, or what her name is, but she could have been Mary Magdalene, the woman who saw the Risen Jesus in the garden. Recall that you read the account of Mary Magdalene and the Risen Jesus in the first chapter.

- Read the Bible story to the children (either the short version on page 1596 or the longer version, Luke 7:36–50, on the previous page). Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Where was Jesus in this story? (*eating at the house of a Pharisee*)
 - Who came in with a special alabaster jar? (*a woman*)
 - What was in the jar? (*perfume*)
 - What was the woman doing at first? (*crying and wetting Jesus' feet with her tears*)
 - What did the woman do next? (*She dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured the perfume on them.*)
 - What did she show by doing this? (*her great love*)
 - What did Jesus say to her? (*"Your sins are forgiven."*)
- Explain that like the woman in the story, we have room in our hearts for two things: love and sin. Remind the children that sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against God's Law, especially the commandment of love. The more love we have, the less room we have for sin. The more sin we have—the more meanness and selfishness—the less room we have for love. When we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we have more room for love.
- Have the children turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bibles open. *Answers: "In that town was a woman who lived a **sinful** life. She heard that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee's house, so she brought an alabaster jar full of perfume and stood behind Jesus, by his feet, crying and wetting his feet with her hair. Then she dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured the perfume on them. [Jesus said] 'The great love she has shown proves that her many sins have been forgiven. . . .' Then Jesus said to the woman, 'Your sins are forgiven.'"*

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1597 to the children, or invite a volunteer or volunteers to read.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.

- Review these key points with them:
 - Jesus is a friend to sinners and forgives them.
 - This woman was sorry for her sins. She had true contrition, true sorrow for her sins.
 - She showed her sorrow and love with her tears, kisses, and gift of perfume.
 - Jesus forgave this woman's sins.

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read Live It! on page 1597 or read it aloud to the group.
- Explain that the Jesus Prayer can be said any time or in any place, and that some people carry a circle of ten beads with them, called "Jesus beads," so that they can move their fingers from bead to bead as they pray.
- You may want to ask the children to say the Jesus Prayer now, ten times, using their fingers as "beads."
- Assure the children that Jesus will always forgive them if they are sorry.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1597.
- Invite the children to find a partner and use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

A Treasure Box of Love

- Remind the children that the sinful woman gave her greatest treasure to Jesus to show her sorrow and love. Explain that Jesus forgave her sins, not because she gave her treasure, but because she had great love. Help the children understand that her love was a greater treasure than her perfume. Tell the children that we too can have the great treasure of love and offer this love to Jesus by doing good things for others.

- Distribute a tissue box, one-half of an index card, a small envelope, and seven paper "jewels" to each child. Cut out the "jewels" ahead of time. Each should be about 2 inches long or about 2 inches in diameter. Of the seven jewels, two should be "diamonds" (a diamond shape cut from white paper), two should be "rubies" (a round shape cut from red paper), two should be "turquoise stones" (an oval shape cut from turquoise paper), and one should be a "gold bar" (a rectangle cut from gold or yellow paper). Ask the children to write their names on the envelopes, and to keep the paper jewels in the envelopes.
- Ask the children to write "My Treasure Box" on the one-half index card. This should be taped to the front of the tissue box.
- Explain that each paper jewel represents a real jewel. Tell the children that there are seven of them, one for each day of the week. Name each jewel with a day of the week. Ask the children, starting today, to write something good that they did for someone else on a jewel each day. (*Suggestions: "I helped clear the table without being asked"; "I read a storybook to my baby cousin."*) Explain that they may make more jewels at home if they want to put more "treasure" into their boxes.

Process the Activity

- Invite the children to give examples of good actions they might write on their jewels. (*Responses will vary. Encourage the children to be alert to small things they can do to help others. Explain that love is often expressed in small and helpful ways.*)
- Remind the children that the more we love, the less room we have for sin in our hearts. Tell them that Jesus will always forgive our sins if we ask him.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on pages 46–47 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Explain that the sinful woman gave her greatest treasure—her love—to Jesus, so he forgave her all of her sins. Recall that sin is doing something that is against love. Remind the children that sin is a thought, word, or action that goes against God's Law, especially the commandment of love.
- Tell the children that there are two kinds of sin: **mortal sin** and **venial sin**. Write both of these terms on the board, leaving space for examples to come.
- Introduce the definition of *mortal sin*, giving examples:
 - Mortal sin is a serious sin, committed on purpose, that completely breaks our loving relationship with God. Mortal sin is a serious sin against the Ten Commandments and against God's Law of Love. Mortal sin is a sin like murder. (*Write this on the board.*) We sin by taking another's life. Or, we can sin against God by refusing to worship him as he deserves. We can refuse to go to Mass on Sunday or on Holy Days of Obligation. (*Write this on the board. The Holy Days of Obligation can be found on page 1991 in The Catholic Children's Bible.*)
 - Mortal sin cannot be committed by accident. It is very serious. To commit a mortal sin, you must first *know* it is a mortal and serious sin, you must *want to do it*, and you must *freely* do it.
 - If we commit a mortal sin and are sorry for it afterward, we must go to confession as soon as possible. We have broken our loving relationship with God, and we must ask forgiveness.
- Introduce the definition of *venial sin* by explaining that a venial sin is a less serious sin that weakens, but does not completely break, our loving relationship with God.

- Expand on this definition with the following explanation and examples:
 - Venial sin cannot be committed by accident. We must know something is a sin, must want to do it, and then do it freely. Venial sins are the kinds of sin that we might commit in our everyday lives. Some examples are: talking back to our parents and being sassy and rude, fighting with our brothers and sisters, cheating on a test, taking something that does not belong to us. (*Write these on the board and others that may apply to your group.*)
 - Even though venial sin is "less serious," we want to avoid it, because we do not want to harm our loving relationship with God or others the least little bit.
- Explain that venial sin is something that we can confess in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and we can ask God to forgive us. The sacrament helps us to be better and to follow Jesus more closely.
- Tell the children that there are other ways that venial sin is forgiven. We can also ask God to forgive us at the beginning of every Mass, in the Penitential Act. We can ask God to forgive us in our private prayer. Emphasize that the best way to receive God's forgiveness is in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, because the grace we receive from this sacrament helps us to grow in God's love.
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers:* 1. *freely*, 2. *as soon as possible*, 3. *weakens*, 4. *Reconciliation*, 5. *grace*

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God's Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 5 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under "Things to Remember" to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - God will forgive our sins if we are truly sorry.
 - We have more room for love when we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - There is a difference between mortal (serious) sin and venial (less serious) sin.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 5 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to open their Bibles to Romans 12:21 (page 1786). Invite a volunteer to read this verse. Remind the children to conquer evil with good by working on their treasure boxes this week.
- End with the "Morning Prayer." Write it on the board so that all can pray together, or if there is time, distribute paper and pencils so that the children can copy it for use at home. Pray the prayer together, then close with the Sign of the Cross.

Morning Prayer

O my God, I offer you this day
 All I do and think and say,
 In union with what was done
 On earth by Jesus Christ, your Son.
 Amen.



Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- a vial, spray bottle, or small bowl of perfume or essential oil
- tissues
- an index card for each child
- markers
- hole-punch, ribbon (optional)

Materials Needed

- instrumental music, both sorrowful and joyful (suggestion: "We Are Marching")

The Sweet Fragrance of Christ (15 minutes)

- Make sure that the children don't have any allergies to perfumes or essential oils. Direct the children to open their Bibles to 2 Corinthians 2:14–15 (page 1820). Explain that in these verses, Saint Paul is comparing the knowledge of Christ to a sweet fragrance. Tell them that just like the sweet fragrance of perfume spreads everywhere, so the followers of Christ bring the knowledge and love of Christ everywhere.
- Read aloud these verses to the children. Then ask the children to form a line. Sit in a chair and, as each child stands before you, say: "I mark you with the sweet fragrance of Christ in the sign of the cross. Spread the knowledge and love of Christ everywhere!" (*Spray or dip the perfume or essential oil on a tissue or on your thumb, and mark the child with the Sign of the Cross.*)
- Give each child an index card. Ask the children to draw a simple cross on it. Under the cross, ask them to write "The Sweet Fragrance of Christ." Again, using a spray, your finger, or a tissue, mark each card with the perfume or essential oil.
- You may want to punch two holes at the top and run a ribbon through the holes so the card can be hung over a doorknob at home.

Praying Our Sorrow, Dancing Our Joy (15 minutes)

- Explain to the children that we can pray with our bodies as well as with words. Explain that when we genuflect before we go into the pew in church, we are honoring God with our bodies. When we make the Sign of the Cross, we also are honoring God with our bodies.
- Play the sorrowful music for a few moments, and invite the children to move with it. Then ask them to hold still in a position that will let God know how sorry they are for doing wrong.
- Ask them to breathe quietly, in and out, and talk to God for a few moments. Instruct them to tell God what they are sorry for, and to ask for his forgiveness and strength to avoid sin from now on.
- Give them a few moments to say their thanks to God for his forgiveness and love. Then say aloud: "Thank you, God, for your forgiveness and love. We can be joyful in your forgiveness!"
- Play the joyful music and allow the children to march around the room, move, or dance to it. Remind them that when our sins are forgiven, we rise with Jesus to new life.

The Sinful Woman and Jesus (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Mary Magdalene Meets Jesus,” available on YouTube (6:25). The dialogue is based on the Gospel account in Luke 7:36–50. Some is fictionalized. The video ends after the Crucifixion (and Resurrection) of Jesus, with the woman helping the sick and sharing the love of Jesus with others.
- Invite volunteers to share scenes they remember from the video.
- Emphasize that we do not know if this woman is the same woman we know as Mary Magdalene in the Gospels. Tell the children that we also do not know what happened to this woman after the Resurrection of Jesus, but it is likely that she continued to share the love of Jesus with others.
- Explain that this is what we are called to do as well. Remind the children that the Sacrament of Reconciliation will give us the grace and strength to continue to follow Jesus and his way of love, as this woman did.

Materials Needed

- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector