

Journey of Faith



The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

Terrence and Tomás were best friends. They played basketball and rode bikes together. They even built a secret fort in Tomás' back yard. But one day they got in a fight. Terrence was angry so he threw Tomás' ball into the neighbor's yard. The neighbor's dog chewed it up.

Tomás was really angry. Tomás told Terrence he never wanted to play with him again.

Now Terrence and Tomás don't even talk to each other. Terrence misses his friend and feels sad and lonely. Tomás is sad, too. Terrence's mom told him he should say he's sorry, but now Terrence is worried Tomás will never forgive him.





If you were Terrence, what would you do?

If you were Tomás, what would you do?

Friendship With God and Others

It's sad when our actions hurt our friends. Friendship is important. When we are lonely or sad, happy or excited, it's good to have a friend to turn to. That's why Jesus tells us to love one another. He knows that the secret to happiness is keeping our friendships strong. We do this by saying we're sorry and forgiving when bad things happen.



God is the best friend we have. God will never abandon us. The secret of God's friendship is forgiveness.

Here is a story Jesus told about how God forgives.

The Brother Who Ran Away

Once there was a brother who wanted to live on his own. He asked his father for his share of the family's money and left his home.

He traveled all over. He only did things he wanted to do. He made a lot of friends who showed him new ways to spend his money. But the money didn't last forever. One day the brother found he spent all his money. There was nothing left. He turned to his friends for help, but they had all left him.



He thought about his father and older brother. It was time to go home. "I'll tell my father I'm really sorry and ask if I can sleep in his barn. I'll tend his sheep and do all that he asks me, if only he will take me back again," he thought.

When the father saw his son in the distance, he ran to greet him with open arms. "Call my friends," he said. "We'll have a party for my son was lost and now has come home."

Adapted from Luke 15:11-24

Jesus told this story to teach us that no matter how far from God we wander, our loving Father waits for us to come back.



What are some ways you can tell someone you're sorry?

Already Forgiven

Did you notice that even before the son said, "I'm sorry," the father had forgiven him? That's like us and God. In the sacrament of penance, we can talk about things we are sorry for and for things we wish we never did. The priest reminds us of God's loving mercy and tells us a way to fix our friendship with God and anyone we might have hurt.

Read these stories about Jesus' forgiveness.

- Luke 7:36–50

How did the woman say she was sorry?

What did Jesus do?

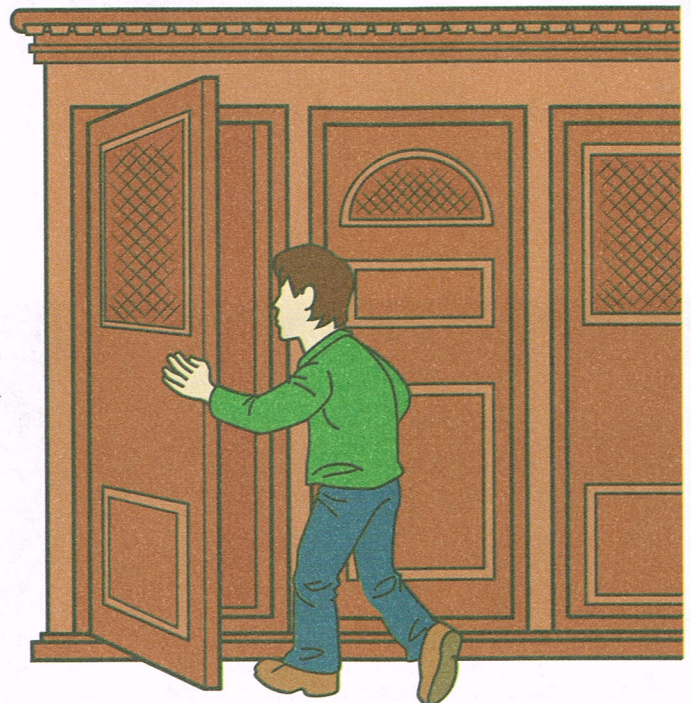
- Luke 19:1–10

How did Zacchaeus say he was sorry?

What did Jesus do?

What Happens in Reconciliation?

1. Enter the **confessional**, a small room or space where the priest is seated.
2. Greet the priest and say, "Bless me Father, for I have sinned." Then tell the priest that it's your first confession (or how long it has been since your last confession).
3. Name any sins you are sorry for. Don't worry about listing each one in detail. Just explain what you did and why you feel sorry for it.
4. Listen carefully to the advice the priest gives you.
5. The priest will give you a penance. A **penance** is a simple action or prayer you can do to help make up for what you did and heal your friendships. Your penance will also help you grow closer to God.
6. Say an Act of Contrition prayer. Your catechist or the priest will give you a copy.
7. The priest will pray over you and God, through the priest, will **absolve**, or erase, your sins through a special prayer of absolution that ends with a Sign of the Cross. This sign also gives you special grace to live more like Jesus.
8. You really are forgiven! Thank the priest as you leave, and go do your penance!





DECODE THE MESSAGE

Cross out every other letter below. Use the remaining letters to complete the sentence.

HVER WLAOS KLCOYSKTB AMNPDI HUAZS

BBIEFEMN EFUOOUVNSD

" _____

_____."

(Luke 15:24, 32)

In Short

- Sin isn't hidden from God.
- Sin has consequences beyond yourself.
- Scripture supports penance.



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