

Service of Reconciliation for young people

A service of Reconciliation can be a special moment in the lives of young people. We need to create a space and atmosphere that is reflective whilst being non-threatening. It is important that, with any Youth Ministry activity, you consult the Diocesan online Safeguarding Manual for guidance on correct ratios of leaders to young people and a risk assessment should be carried out. Please contact the Youth Ministry team for guidance if you require it.

Introduction

Why are we here?

Introduction to reconciliation – what is it?

Ask the young people to share their ideas before giving an explanation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is where we celebrate the gift of forgiveness and are forgiven of our sins. It is an opportunity for you to confess your sins to God and become reconciled with God and the Church (YouCat #239). God has given us this gift of forgiveness because he loves us so much: “We are forgiven because God loves us. Nothing we do will ever change that” (Romans 8:38-39).

St Padre Pio also reminds us: “Love Jesus! Have no fear! Even if you had committed all the sins in this world, Jesus repeats these words to you: Your many sins are forgiven, because you loved much”.

When you celebrate this sacrament you tell a priest your sins, as he has been given the authority by Jesus. This can either be a list of specific sins you have committed, or a chat with the priest about areas of your life that you need to ask forgiveness for too. The Church urgently advises us to do this at least once a year (YouCat #234).

We can experience the boundless love and mercy of God through reconciliation. We can become an echo of God’s mercy in our world.

Liturgy

Sign of the Cross

Opening prayer:

God our Father,
give us the courage and faith in you to be true to ourselves,
recognising both our faults and the good in ourselves and each other.
We ask you to be with us today as take a step closer to you.
Amen.

Scripture: Matthew 18: 12-14 - The Parable of the Lost Sheep

A reading from Matthew's Gospel.

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Then Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Explanation of scripture:

Do we welcome sinners? Do we forgive what has been done to us by others? Sometimes we find it easy to forgive and we can move on, but it's not always that easy. We are all human and our capacity to forgive and love can be limited by so many distractions in our lives. God's love for us is never ending, never conditional and never limited. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation we can receive that unconditional love and mercy. We are the lost sheep and when we return to God by accepting this love God rejoices, because God knows us by name and values who we are.

Examination of conscience

See separate resource

Explanation of the prayer stations

See individual prayer station explanations

Prayer Stations

Letter to God

Pens, A4 paper, Envelopes, Scripture passage.

Graffiti wall

Large black card or poster paper, coloured chalk.

Light a light

Tea lights & holders, taper candles, Mercy images PowerPoint, projector & Laptop

Stars in water

Large, shallow glass dish, water, stars pre-cut out, pens, Scripture passage.

Receive the sacrament

Priest, quiet area of the church, Guide to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

It is important that the leaders also make the effort to receive the sacrament to show they are part of the group. During this time quiet music will be playing and various prayer stations will be available for the young people to reflect on.

When the young people have finished the stations gather back together as a whole group.

Prayer of thanksgiving

Merciful God,

We trust in your unfailing love.

We give you thanks for your forgiveness which draws us closer to you and inspires us to a new start.

We commit ourselves to you and to each other.

Amen.

Final blessing

To be given by the Priest

May the Father, who has reconciled us in his love,
continue to give us the courage to act with mercy and humility.

May He continue to bless us and those we love.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. R. Amen.

After the service spend some social time with the young people as they may need time to process their experience in their own way.