

Jesus Forgave Sins and Gave His Apostles the Power to Forgive Sins

UNIT 3, LESSON 1

Learning Goals

- › Jesus' ministry of the forgiveness of sins continues.
- › Jesus gave His Apostles authority to heal as He healed and to forgive sins as He forgave sins.
- › Jesus came to heal our bodies and our souls.
- › Sin is any thought, word, or action that hurts our relationship with God.
- › Sin is a burden that God wants to lift from us through His gift of forgiveness.



Connection to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- › CCC 362-368
- › CCC 541
- › CCC 545
- › CCC 547-549
- › CCC 553
- › CCC 613
- › CCC 1427
- › CCC 1441-1446



Vocabulary

- › Apostles
- › Holy Spirit
- › Authority
- › Forgiveness of Sins
- › Soul

BIBLICAL TOUCHSTONES

And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

MATTHEW 16:18-19

“But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth” – he said to the paralytic, “I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.”

MARK 2:10-11

Lesson Plan

Materials

- › The Holy Spirit and the Church
- › From Jesus to the Apostles, from the Apostles to Today
- › Body and Soul
- › St. Ambrose and St. Augustine
- › The Gift of Forgiveness
- › Teacher Resource: Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man Skit
- › Crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils
- › A large box
- › Random items for the “obstacle course”

Prayer

O my God, I am sorry for my sins. In choosing to sin, and failing to do good, I have sinned against you and your Church. I firmly intend, with the help of your Son, to make up for my sins, and to love as I should. Amen.

DAY ONE

Warm-Up

- Teach your students the prayer for this lesson and lead them in praying it. This is a children’s version of the Act of Contrition. If your school teaches children a different version of the Act of Contrition, feel free to substitute it here.
- Have your students turn to **The Holy Spirit and the Church (page 126)**. Project the images and give your students a few moments to observe the images. Then ask your students the following questions:
 - › What stands out to you about each of these images? *Accept reasoned answers.*
 - › What is happening in each of the pictures? *In the first picture, Jesus is being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River at the beginning of His ministry. In the second picture, the Holy Spirit descends upon the Apostles and Mary at Pentecost after Jesus’ Death and Resurrection.*

The Holy Spirit and the Church



The Baptism of Christ
by Verrocchio



Representation of the Pentecost
Stained-glass window

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- ▶ Who are the people in the second picture? *Mary (center) and the Apostles (surrounding her). Explain that the Apostles were twelve men whom Jesus called to follow Him during His earthly life and who continued His work after His Death and Resurrection. Jesus gave them the authority to teach in His name, to heal in His name, and to forgive sins in His name.*
- ▶ What similarities do you see between the pictures? *A dove with rays of light coming forth from it hovers at the top of both images. Both Jesus' and Mary's hands are in prayer as they receive the Holy Spirit with their whole hearts. Accept other reasoned answers.*
- ▶ What differences do you see between the pictures? *In the first, Jesus is the only one receiving the Holy Spirit. In the second, both Mary and the Apostles receive the Holy Spirit. The first happens at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The second happens after Jesus' Death and Resurrection. The Apostles and Mary have tongues of fire above their heads. Accept other reasoned answers.*
- ▶ Whom does the dove represent? *The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.*
- ▶ Why do you think the Apostles received the Holy Spirit after Jesus' Death and Resurrection? *Accept reasoned answers. Help your students recognize that the Holy Spirit helped the Apostles to do what Jesus did during His earthly ministry. This includes forgiving sins in Jesus' name. The Apostles needed the help of the Holy Spirit in order to continue Jesus' work.*

Activity

- A. Have your students turn to **From Jesus to the Apostles, from the Apostles to Today (page 127)**. Ask (or tell) your students the name of your local bishop (or bishops), and have them write his name in the bubble. Then ask them to name the local priests from your school, parish, or other parishes and have them write their names in the bubbles.
- B. Next, make crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils available. In the space on the right side of the worksheet, have them write "Holy Spirit" in yellow, "Authority" in red, and "Forgiveness of Sins" in purple.
- C. Explain what the words mean as they trace the dotted line with the appropriate crayon or marker, going from the first image at the top, through the others leading to the bishop and priests in their community: The **Holy Spirit** is the third person of the Blessed Trinity and is

**From Jesus to the Apostles,
from the Apostles to Today**

Jesus teaching the Apostles

St. Peter, Apostles, and first Pope

Popes and bishops throughout the Church's history

Bishop of your diocese

Local priests Local priests Local priests Local priests

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God present among us even today. **Authority** refers to the ability and power to do something. In this case, God gives the Apostles (and the bishops and priests who have come after them) the ability to work on His behalf. **Forgiveness of sins** refers to Jesus' unique authority to forgive sins, passed on to the Apostles (and the bishops and priests who have come after them). An **Apostle** is one of the twelve men whom Jesus appointed to spread the Kingdom of God throughout the world as the first priests and bishops in His Church.

- D. Explain to the students that the Apostles and the bishops and priests who have come after them continue Jesus' work today in a special way. They carry with them the Holy Spirit, the same authority, and the same ability to forgive sins.

Formative Assessment

- A. Have your students turn to a neighbor and discuss the following questions:
- ▶ Who were the Apostles? *The Apostles were twelve men whom Jesus called to follow Him. They continued His work after His death and Resurrection.*
 - ▶ Who stands in the place of the Apostles today? *The bishops and priests who continue Jesus' work today.*
 - ▶ What could the Apostles (and the bishops and priests who have come after them) do that Jesus did? *Teach in His name, heal in His name, and forgive sins in His name.*
- B. After giving sufficient time for your students to discuss the questions, review and discuss the answers as a class.
- C. Allow the students to ask any questions they may have about the lesson.
- D. Then have your students come up with a couple of questions to ask your local priest when he is next able to visit the classroom – questions about what it is like to be a priest and to be able to forgive sins. If possible, arrange for a priest to visit the classroom to tell the students more about what it is like to forgive sins in Jesus' name.

DAY TWO

Warm-Up

- A. Lead your students in praying the prayer for this lesson.
- B. Review with your students that they learned in unit 1 that we are made in the image and likeness of God. That means we have a body and a soul. Both a body and a soul together make up a human being. Our bodies and souls work together. When good or bad things happen to us, we might feel it more in our body or in our soul.

- C. Have your students turn to **Body and Soul (page 128)** and read each statement (or read the statements together as a class). If we experience the feeling that is described more in our bodies, have your students make an X under the heading “Body.” If we experience the feeling that is described more in our souls, have your students make an X under the heading “Soul.” You could also make this a kinesthetic activity by having students stand on one side of the room “soul” and the other for “body,” for example.

- D. Debrief for a minute or two about this activity. Then explain that our **body** is the physical part of who we are. It is made up of our hands, feet, head, heart, teeth, and so forth. Our body is where all of these things work together. Our **soul** is the spiritual part of who we are that

allows us to communicate with God. It is the soul that gives our body life. Our soul lives on even when our body dies. God created all of us as human beings with a body and a soul that work together. Therefore, both the body and the soul are good and are essential to being human.

Body and Soul

Directions: Read each sentence. Then put an X under “Body” if it is something you feel mostly in your body. Put an X under “Soul” if it is something you feel mostly in your soul.

	Body	Soul
1. You forgot to eat breakfast this morning, and it is almost lunch time.		
2. You eat your favorite dessert after dinner.		
3. Your best friend moves to a new state.		
4. You get a bad grade on a test.		
5. You wake up with a stomachache.		
6. Your parents surprise you with a present.		
7. You tell a lie and feel bad about it.		
8. A picture you drew wins a special award.		
9. On a cold day, you stay inside under your favorite blanket.		
10. After an argument with a friend, the two of you make up and become good friends again.		

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Activity

- A. Guide your students through a skit about Jesus healing a paralyzed man (from Mark 2:1-12), using the guide from **Teacher Resource: Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man Skit (page 210 in this guide)**. Assign the following roles to students: Jesus, the paralyzed man, the paralyzed man’s friends (four students), the scribes (three or four students), and Jesus’ audience (the rest of the class). You will be the narrator. You may have the characters repeat the narrator’s words or have them simply act out what is happening.
- B. Then tell the story of Jesus healing the paralyzed man and have your students act out your narration. Ask them to listen to the story, keeping in mind the difference between pain in our body and pain in our soul. Before the skit, explain that, in the story, the house that Jesus is teaching in is likely not much bigger than your classroom. The student playing the role of Jesus should be standing in the front and center of the room. The audience should be gathered in front of him, toward the middle of the room, sitting on the floor. The scribes should be off to the side, standing around the audience. The paralyzed man and his friends are close to the door.

Formative Assessment

After the skit, ask your students the following questions:

- › What did Jesus come to heal when He came to live among us? *Our bodies and our souls.*
- › How did Jesus first heal the paralyzed man? *He forgave his sins.*
- › Why was Jesus able to forgive the man's sins? *Because He is God.*

DAY THREE

Warm-Up

- A. Lead your students in praying the prayer for this lesson.
- B. Before class, arrange the desks to create a path (if possible, a path that curves around the room). Also before class, fill a box with more random items than one person can carry. Arrange the items throughout the path that you have made to create a sort of obstacle course.
- C. Tell your students that they will play a game whose goal is to reach the end of the path and write their name on a piece of paper at the end of the path. To do that, they have to pick up and carry everything that stands in their way and write their name at the end while holding everything they have picked up. Anyone who can write his or her name wins.
- D. Have a few volunteers try to do it. When they aren't able to, explain that this obstacle course is like sin. Sin is a burden that we carry through our lives. Often, we even collect sin, just as we collected all of this junk on the path. Sin prevents us from being what God wants us to be and from doing what He wants us to do. We can't be who God wants us to be if we carry around sin as we try to carry the items on our path.
- E. Next, draw a large cross on the box in which you collected the items and place it at the beginning of the path. Once again, ask for a few volunteers. Tell your students that this time, the goal is the same: to make it through the obstacle course as fast as they can. This time, when the obstacles become too much to carry, they may bring the items back to the box, leave them there, and continue on the path until they reach their goal. Time the students and see who can complete the path the fastest.
- F. Then explain that while the obstacles are like sins, the box with the cross is like our giving our sins to Jesus and receiving His forgiveness. Once the obstacles of sin are removed, we are free to start again and continue with our lives without the burden of sin.

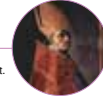
Activity

- A. Explain to your students that soon they will learn more about the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. It is through this Sacrament that the Church continues the work of Jesus and His Apostles. Today they will learn about two bishops who continued the work of the Apostles in forgiving sins. Remind your students that bishops are the successors of the Apostles and continue their mission, which is the same mission of Christ.
- B. Have your students turn to **St. Ambrose and St. Augustine (page 129)** and read about these two saints. Then have them answer the focus questions.
- C. After they have finished the activity, review and discuss the correct answers.

Assessment

- A. Have your students turn to **The Gift of Forgiveness (page 131)** and complete the reflection over the lesson from the past few days. You can do this out loud, or by having students write their answers.
- B. After they finished the reflection, call on students to share their responses.

St. Ambrose and St. Augustine



Directions: Read about St. Ambrose and St. Augustine and then answer the questions.

Long ago, St. Ambrose became a great bishop of Milan, Italy. Ambrose was well known for his goodness and his love for Jesus. So when Milan needed a new bishop, the people shouted that it should be Ambrose. The problem was that Ambrose wasn't a priest. He had never had his First Communion, and he wasn't even baptized!

But Ambrose loved Jesus so much that he agreed to be made bishop. He was baptized, received his First Communion, and was made a priest. After that, he was made a bishop and went on to become one of the great saints of the Church.

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The Gift of Forgiveness

Directions: Answer each reflection question.

1. Jesus gave the power to forgive sins to the Apostles. The Apostles passed that power to the bishops and priests who took their place. How do you think a priest feels when he shares the power to forgive sins with Jesus?

2. Jesus met a man who was paralyzed. First Jesus forgave the man's sins. Then Jesus healed the man so he could walk again. Which do you think was more important: that Jesus forgave his sins or that Jesus healed his body?

3. Sin can make us feel sad and guilty. God wants us to experience His mercy and forgiveness in this life. He wants us to feel His help when we don't make good choices. What would you say to thank Jesus for the gift of His forgiveness?

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The Holy Spirit and the Church



The Baptism of Christ
by Verrocchio



Representation of the Pentecost
Stained-glass window

From Jesus to the Apostles, from the Apostles to Today



Jesus teaching the Apostles



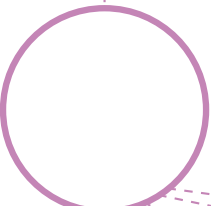
St. Peter, Apostles, and first Pope

Holy Spirit



Popes and bishops throughout the Church's history

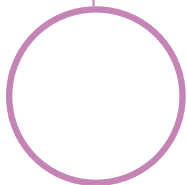
Authority



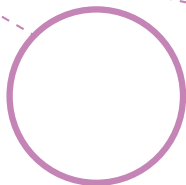
Bishop of your diocese

Forgiveness

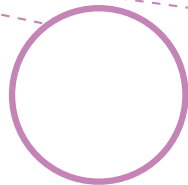
of Sins



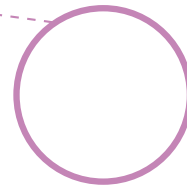
Local priests



Local priests



Local priests



Local priests

Body and Soul

Directions: Read each sentence. Then put an X under “Body” if it is something you feel mostly in your body. Put an X under “Soul” if it is something you feel mostly in your soul.

	Body	Soul
1. You forgot to eat breakfast this morning, and it is almost lunch time.	X	
2. You eat your favorite dessert after dinner.	X	
3. Your best friend moves to a new state.		X
4. You get a bad grade on a test.		X
5. You wake up with a stomachache.	X	
6. Your parents surprise you with a present.		X
7. You tell a lie and feel bad about it.		X
8. A picture you drew wins a special award.		X
9. On a cold day, you stay inside under your favorite blanket.	X	
10. After an argument with a friend, the two of you make up and become good friends again.		X

St. Ambrose and St. Augustine



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But Ambrose loved Jesus so much that he agreed to be made bishop. He was baptized, received his First Communion, and was made a priest. After that, he was made a bishop and went on to become one of the great saints of the Church.

One day, a man named Augustine heard Bishop Ambrose preach. St. Augustine lived a sinful life. He was so moved by the words of Ambrose that he decided to change his life and follow Jesus.

Answer Key

1. He had to be baptized, receive His First Communion, and be ordained a priest.
2. They forgave the sins of the people with the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

St. Ambrose welcomed Augustine with great love. He taught Augustine about Christianity and baptized him. Augustine eventually became an even more well-known bishop and saint. The Church still learns from his work today.

The Church continues Jesus' work of forgiving sins. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation helps people remove sin from their lives. Both St. Ambrose and St. Augustine continued the work of Jesus and the Apostles when they forgave the sins of the people with this Sacrament.

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1. What did Ambrose have to do before he could be made bishop?

2. How did St. Ambrose and St. Augustine continue the work of Jesus and the Apostles?

Answer Key

1. Accept reasoned answers
2. Accept reasoned answers
3. Accept reasoned answers

The Gift of Forgiveness

Directions: Answer each reflection question.

1. Jesus gave the power to forgive sins to the Apostles. The Apostles passed that power to the bishops and priests who took their place. How do you think a priest feels when he shares the power to forgive sins with Jesus?

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Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man Skit

TEACHER RESOURCE

Directions: Guide your students in acting out the story of Jesus healing the paralyzed man (based on Mark 2:1-12). Have your students do the actions described in the Scripture text. Then pause at the designated places and use the discussion guide to help your students engage the story.

Scripture Text	Discussion Guide
<p>vv. 1-2: When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was at home. Many gathered together so that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door, and he preached the word to them.</p>	<p>Remind students that people were so amazed at Jesus' teachings that they would travel from faraway places to hear Him. In this story, they fill up an entire house.</p>
<p>vv. 3-4: They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying.</p>	<p>The friends of the paralyzed man carry him into the house and lay him down next to Jesus. The friends are so eager to have their friend healed that they take the roof off the crowded house to get him in.</p> <p>Q: How much faith do you think the friends had in Jesus?</p> <p>Q: Do you believe Jesus can do great things in our lives today?</p>
<p>v. 5: When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven."</p>	<p>Q: How do you think the paralyzed man's friends felt when Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven"?</p> <p>Q: Is that what they wanted to hear Jesus say?</p> <p>Q: Were they disappointed that He didn't help him walk again?</p> <p>Q: What is forgiveness?</p>
<p>vv. 6-7: Now some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves, "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?"</p>	<p>The scribes get mad at Jesus for saying that the man's sins are forgiven because only God can forgive sins.</p> <p>Q: Do they understand who Jesus is?</p> <p>Q: What would you tell the scribes?</p>

Scripture Text	Discussion Guide
<p>vv. 8-9: Jesus immediately knew in his mind what they were thinking to themselves, so he said, “Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, pick up your mat and walk?’”</p>	<p>Q: Jesus looks at the scribes and tries to get them to see the truth. For Jesus, what was worse for the man: to be paralyzed or to live in sin?</p> <p>Q: Which do you think the paralyzed man felt worse about: being paralyzed or his sins?</p> <p>Q: Which do you think is worse: when our body hurts or when our soul hurts because of sin?</p>
<p>vv. 10-12: “But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth” —he said to the paralytic, “I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.” He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.”</p>	<p>Jesus commands the paralyzed man to walk, and he walks! The audience is amazed because they have never seen anything like this before.</p> <p>Q: How would you have felt if you were in the audience?</p> <p>Q: For Jesus and for us, which one is the bigger miracle: allowing the man to walk or forgiving His sins?</p>

The Holy Spirit and the Church



The Baptism of Christ
by Verrocchio



Representation of the Pentecost
Stained-glass window

From Jesus to the Apostles, from the Apostles to Today



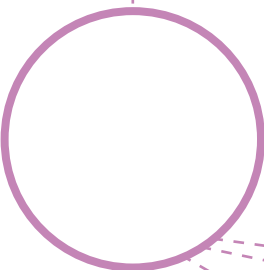
Jesus teaching the Apostles



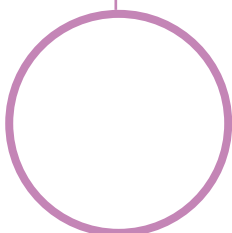
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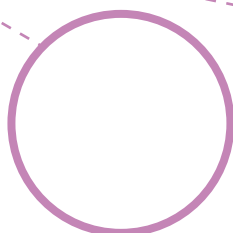
Popes and bishops
throughout the
Church's history



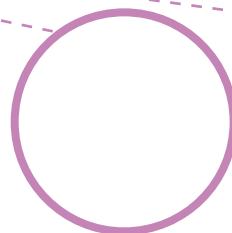
Bishop of
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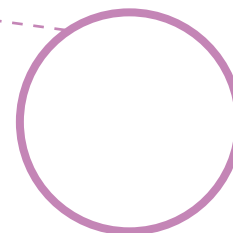
Local priests



Local priests



Local priests



Local priests

Holy Spirit

Authority

Forgiveness

of Sins

Body and Soul

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2. How did St. Ambrose and St. Augustine continue the work of Jesus and the Apostles?

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