

November

OVERVIEW

LIFE IN CHRIST



VERSE OF THE MONTH

JEREMIAH 31:33

I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

SAINT OF THE MONTH

ST. MARTIN DE PORRES

LESSON 3

CONSCIENCE: GOD'S LAW IN OUR HEARTS



Overview

The aim of this lesson is for your children to understand that we have the freedom to choose between good and evil. God knows that choosing the good is not always easy for us. To help us, He gave us each a conscience, which is His law written in our hearts. A well-formed conscience makes it possible to live a moral life.

Catechism Articles to Read

- › 1776-1794
- › 241-243

Words to Know

- › Conscience

LESSON 4

WE MUST AVOID SIN AND GROW IN HOLINESS



Overview

In this lesson your children will learn that sanctifying grace is God's very life in our soul. Mortal sin destroys that life and leads to the death of the soul. But God in His mercy gives us countless opportunities to turn back onto the path of life. Children will also learn that the Church gives us five precepts or laws that show us the very minimum required to develop our spiritual lives and grow in love of God and of neighbor.

Catechism

Articles to Read

- 1846-1850
- 1855-1860
- 1857

Words to Know

- Mercy
- Sin
- Mortal Sin



BY THE END OF THIS MONTH, YOUR CHILDREN SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- ✓ Recite this month's Scripture Memorization
- ✓ Define this month's Words to Know
- ✓ Describe the difference between mortal sin and venial sin
- ✓ Understand that God is merciful and always ready to forgive us our sins if we are sorry
- ✓ Recognize the Precepts of the Church
- ✓ Tell you about St. Martin de Porres



YOUR *Catholic Home* ALL SOUL'S DAY



November is a month during which Catholics especially remember friends and loved ones who have died. We spend the month praying in a special way that they will be able to spend eternity in Heaven with God: that they will reach their final destination!

To begin this special month, the Church has set apart November 2, All Soul's Day, to honor the dead. And throughout November, Catholic parishes will invite parishioners to write the names of their deceased friends and loved ones in a book or on small pieces of paper that are kept on the altar as a reminder that we can pray for them during Mass.

Scripture tells us that we should pray for the dead: "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins" (2 Maccabees 12, 46). Praying for the living and the dead is also a Spiritual Work of Mercy. If your family is able, you can practice Christian solidarity (a concept we will learn more about later this year!) by visiting a cemetery and praying for the people buried there.

Practice It!

Display photos of deceased loved ones in a special place in your home, such as in your prayer corner if you have one, along with flowers, a crucifix, or an icon of Christ. Each day, light a candle and pray this traditional prayer:

Eternal rest grant them, O Lord; and let light perpetual shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

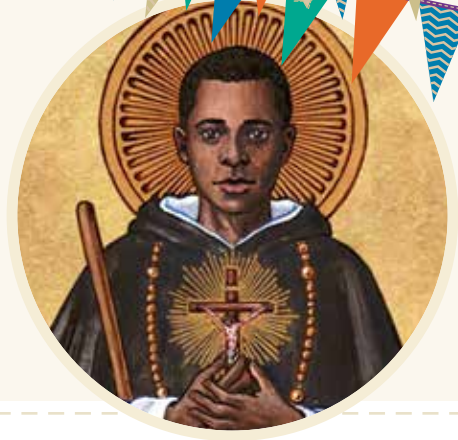
Celebrate!

ST. MARTIN DE PORRES NOVEMBER 3



Everything, even sweeping, scraping vegetables, weeding a garden, and waiting on the sick could be a prayer if it were offered to God.

—St. Martin de Porres



THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH:

- 1 Pray for the souls in Purgatory.
- 2 Learn more about your patron saint.

VERSE OF THE MONTH

JEREMIAH 31:33

I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

REMEMBER!

God wrote His law within the heart of every single human person.

MEMORIZE!

The Golden Rule is to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

ST. MARTIN DE PORRES

SAINT OF THE MONTH





CAR

Conversations

Has your conscience ever kept you from doing something wrong? **Describe what happened.** Has it ever encouraged you to do good? In what way? **How can you better listen to your conscience?**

Jesus in His great mercy forgives all of our sins if we are sorry and go to Confession. **Why do you think it is important that we are first sorry for our sins before Jesus forgives them?**










LESSON 3

CONSCIENCE: GOD'S LAW IN OUR HEARTS



Activities and Key Concepts

Activities you will do with your children	Key concepts the activity will teach	Recommended age and time
 Freedom for the Good Family Discussion	Choosing the Good leads to true freedom.	Ages: All ages Time: 10 minutes
 What Is a Conscience? Reading and discussion	Conscience is the voice of God in our hearts. We are obligated to form our conscience.	Ages: All ages Time: 10 minutes
 Conscience Fill-in-the-Blank	Review of what is a conscience.	Ages: 8 and up Time: 10 minutes
 Freedom and Conscience Scenario Activity	Listening to our conscience leads to true freedom.	Ages: All ages Time: 5 minutes
 Time to Be Silent Contemplative Prayer	God speaks to our hearts in silence.	Ages: All ages Time: 10-15 minutes
 Conscience Tug-of-War Outdoor activity	There is a struggle between good and evil in our souls because of our fallen nature.	Ages: All ages Time: 10-15 minutes
 God's Law in Our Hearts Reading and worksheet activity	A well-formed conscience makes it possible to live a moral life.	Ages: Ages 10 and up Time: 10-15 minutes

LESSON 3

WORDS TO KNOW



The Words to Know are words that you and your children should know and understand at the end of this month. Use your best judgment about which words you expect each of your children to learn. For older children, you may want to have them create flash cards to help them remember what they have learned.

Conscience A gift from God that guides us in making judgments or choices about right and wrong.

Please choose from the activities for the month.

It is not necessary to complete every activity. We offer a wealth of activities to choose from because each child learns differently, so select the activities that best suit the learning needs of your family. Feel free to shorten or improvise on each activity as necessary. You know best what your family needs!



Freedom for the Good

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Age level: All ages

Recommended time: 10 minutes

What you need to know before you begin:

Today's culture defines freedom as being able to do whatever we feel like doing whenever we want. We often hear people defending their actions (even though they frequently are immoral) by declaring that they are "free" to do as they wish. As parents we all have experienced, at one time or another, our children saying (or at least implying), "You can't make me do that!" But this attitude toward freedom is actually an abuse of the God-given gift of our free will. The *Catechism* tells us that "freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude" (CCC 1731).

Since God created us, He knows what is good for us. We find our ultimate happiness by growing in holiness and becoming closer to Him. We find true freedom by growing in truth and goodness because that ultimately fulfills our human nature, making us freer to be who we are meant to be. Choosing sin leads us into slavery, the slavery of losing control to our passions, addictions, and selfishness. We become less than what we were

created to be. The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. To start this process of choosing what is good requires faith. Then we find that true freedom is not the ability to do whatever we desire; rather, it is freedom for growth in holiness and goodness in relationship with our God.

Discussion

Explain to your children that the world's idea of freedom is often the opposite of the meaning of real freedom. The world sees freedom as being free from all rules and being able to do whatever you want. Often that means people want to be free so that they can do bad things, things that harm themselves and other people. It is true that in order to be free to do good, we must be free to do evil, but it is also true that when we do good, we become even freer, and that when we do evil, we become prisoners to sin.

You can explain what you mean with a few examples:

Drivers in front of a traffic signal are free to ignore the rules, but if they do that, they are not truly free to drive. If they ignore the rules, then chaos, standstill traffic, terrible accidents, and even death could occur. However, if all the drivers follow the rules of the traffic signal, then they are free to drive in their turn, and everyone will get to their destination smoothly.

Another example is that we are all free to lie or tell the truth. If someone chooses to lie, then that person is trapped by his or her lie. That person must constantly keep track of the lie, and maybe even lie some more to keep the story straight. He or she must live with a guilty conscience and the fear of being caught. If the person is caught, then broken relationships result, and the person will be considered untrustworthy. But if he or she had told the truth, even if it was difficult at the time, then he or she wouldn't have been trapped by those lies and weighed down with a guilty conscience; that person also would have shown that he or she could have been trusted.

Wrap up by saying that while it is true that freedom rests on being able to make a choice, the fullest sense of the word means being free to choose the good.

BONUS ACTIVITY

Scripture Reading

Reflect on this Scripture passage from John 8:31-32: “If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Ask your children: How will you know the truth? What will the truth do?



Jesus Speaks Near the Treasury, by James Tissot.



Connection to the Catechism

Freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude. (CCC 1731)



What Is a Conscience?

READING AND DISCUSSION

Age level: All ages

Recommended time: 10 minutes

What you will need: What Is a Conscience? (page 31 in the children's activity book)

What you need to know before you begin:

God knows that choosing the good is not always easy for us. He knows that we are attracted to sin and that the right choices are not always clear. So, to help us, God wrote His law in the heart of every single human person. This gift of His law is called a conscience. Our conscience guides us in making judgments and choices that lead us to the good. When we choose the good, our conscience confirms that we are acting according to God's will. When we choose evil, then our conscience tells us that we chose wrongly.

Our conscience, however, doesn't work like magic. It doesn't tell us the difference between right or wrong with no effort on our part. In fact, it is possible to leave our conscience undeveloped, as if it is sleeping, and it is even possible to form a bad conscience. That is why it is our moral obligation to form our consciences according to the truth.

Making good moral choices takes lots of training and study. After all, just because a baby comes into this world with legs, it doesn't mean that she can run. A baby needs to learn to stand first, then to walk, then to run. So it is with our conscience. We must study and pray continually in order to rightly form our conscience. Indeed, the formation of our conscience is a lifelong job.

Activity

- A. Read the essay on “What Is a Conscience?” below.
- B. Discuss the essay as a family. For younger children, go over the main points at a level they will understand. For older children, you may have them read the essay themselves and then discuss with them what they read. The essay is also in the children’s activity book on **page 31**.
- C. Make sure to discuss the following points:
 - You make decisions every day that involve right and wrong choices. Choosing the right one means doing good, and choosing the wrong one means sinning. Ask your children to give examples of moral choices.
 - Your conscience can help you in making the right decisions, but like a muscle, it needs to be exercised. Ways to help develop your conscience include reading the Bible and learning about Church teaching. You can also ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and spend time in silent reflection.
 - Temptation is not a sin. In moments of temptation it is our job to listen to our conscience and to avoid sin.

What Is a Conscience? Essay

You make many decisions every day. Most of these choices involve right or wrong choices. Choosing the right one means doing good, and choosing the wrong one means sinning.

Here are two examples. Your parents might ask you whether you cleaned your room, and you might feel tempted to lie. In this case, telling the truth means doing good, and telling a lie is sinning. Or you might be having trouble in math and feel tempted to cheat on a test. Choosing to do your best on the test without cheating means doing good; choosing to cheat means sinning.

The Lord wants you to choose the good. He has given you a conscience to help you hear His voice in those moments when you have to decide what is right. Our conscience is like an inner voice from God. It encourages us to do good. When we sin, our conscience reminds us to make things right with God.

How can you know your conscience is helping you make the right decisions? The Lord gave you a conscience, but you have to exercise it—kind of like a muscle. You can read the Bible and learn about Church teaching. The teachings of the Apostles help us grow closer to God. The

Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes also help form our conscience. You can pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to guide you. You can nurture, or feed, your conscience by praying and taking time in silent reflection. Just as it's easier to hear your friend speaking to you in a quiet place than from across a loud, crowded playground, so it's easier to hear the Lord speaking to you when you are quiet and still.

There are three rules that always apply, no matter what the circumstances:

1. You can never do evil so that good may come from it.

2. You should always follow the Golden Rule, which is to treat others as you would like to be treated.
3. Finally, you must be guided by selfless love for your neighbor. Remember, your neighbor has a conscience too!

It is okay to feel tempted? Yes. Feeling tempted to sin is not the same as sinning. Temptation is not sinful. In moments of temptation, it is our job to listen to our consciences. Our consciences can help us avoid sin. We must allow God to speak the truth to us. That's why our consciences are such an incredible gift from God.



Connection to the *Catechism*

Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed. In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right. It is by the judgment of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the divine law. (CCC 1778)



Conscience Fill-in-the-Blank

WORKSHEET ACTIVITY

Age level: 8 and up

Recommended time: 10 minutes

What you will need: Conscience Fill-in-the-Blank (**page 33** in the children's activity book)

NOTE This fill-in-the-blank activity is based on the “What Is Conscience?” essay from **Activity 2**.

Have your older children turn to **Conscience Fill-in-the-Blank (page 33 in the children's activity book)** and help them complete the fill-in-the-blanks activity. Then help them plug in the correct answers into the word puzzle to reveal the mystery word.

Answers

- › Choose
- › Obey
- › Sin
- › Spirit
- › Catholic
- › Inner
- › Teaching
- › Nurture
- › Commandments
- › Beatitudes

Mystery word:

Conscience



Freedom and Conscience

SCENARIO ACTIVITY

Age level: all ages

Recommended time: 5 minutes

What you will need: Freedom and Conscience (**page 35** in the children's activity book)

Ask your children if it seems strange to think that you become “freer” by doing the right things and following your conscience. Have them turn to **Freedom and Conscience (page 35 in the children's activity book)**. Review the scenarios together and have your children explain to you why each character in each scenario is more or less free.



ACTIVITY 5

Time to Be Silent

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

Age level: All ages

Recommended time: 10-15 minutes

What you will need: Bible

- A. Read aloud 1 Kings 19:11-13, which is about how the Lord appeared to the prophet Elijah at Mount Horeb.
- B. Ask your children if the Lord was in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire? When they answer that He was not, ask them in what manner the Lord appeared to Elijah. As a *light, silent sound*.
- C. Ask your children why they think the Lord appeared in the quiet. If the Lord comes in the silence, what happens when we surround ourselves with too much noise and distraction? Lead your children to the understanding that we have to quiet ourselves if we are to hear God's call in our lives. God cannot speak to us if we are not listening. Because He loves us, He doesn't force Himself on us. He speaks to us when we are ready to hear Him.
- D. Now give your children some time to spend in silence with God. They can go to a darkened, quiet space at your home. Or, if possible, see if there is a chapel nearby with perpetual Eucharistic adoration, and, if possible, spend some quiet time there as a family. Try to spend just simply 5 to 10 minutes in quiet. Consider letting your children write their reflections or compose a prayer to God in a journal.



ACTIVITY 6

Conscience Tug-of-War

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

Age level: All ages

Recommended time: 10 minutes

What you will need: Rope for Tug of War

If there are enough people in your family (if not, you can join with another family or draft some neighbors), a good game of tug-of-war can be a fun way to demonstrate the struggle between temptation and conscience.



God's Law in Our Hearts

READING AND WORKSHEET ACTIVITY

Age level: 10 and up

Recommended time: 10-15 minutes

What you will need: God's Law in Our Hearts (**page 37** in the children's activity book)

- A. Help your older children turn to **God's Law in Our Hearts (page 37 in the children's activity book)** and read *Catechism* no. 1176 and the paragraph from Pope St. John Paul II's *Veritatis Splendor*. Help them list the four most important points of each paragraph.
- B. Explain to your children that God is the source of morality, and conscience is God's voice in our hearts. Humans are the only creatures with this special gift. We do not merely act on instinct, nor do we need to always follow our feelings. We are free to choose how we act. A well-formed conscience makes it possible to live a moral life; a faulty conscience can ruin a moral life. A moral life is the only way to true happiness – the beatitude we are created for.



Connection to the *Catechism*







“Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment.... For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God... His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths. (CCC 1776)

LESSON 4

WE MUST AVOID SIN AND GROW IN HOLINESS



Activities and Key Concepts

Activities you will do with your children	Key concepts the activity will teach	Recommended age and time
 What Is Sin? Family Discussion	Sin is an utterance or a deed contrary to the eternal law of God.	Ages: All ages Time: 10 minutes
 Understanding Mortal Sin Discussion and Worksheet Activity	Three conditions must be met for sin to be mortal. They are: gravity, knowledge, and consent.	Ages: Ages 8 and up Time: 10 minutes
 Lost Journaling activity	God is a Father who seeks out His children.	Ages: All ages Time: 10 minutes
 Jesus' Parables: The Good Shepherd and the Lost Coin Scripture and art discussion	Jesus tells parables about Heaven rejoicing over each contrite sinner.	Ages: All ages Time: 10 minutes
 Identifying the Precepts of the Church Discussion and worksheet activity	The Church gives us five laws or precepts that are the bare minimum necessary for growth in holiness.	Ages: All ages Time: 10 minutes
 Growth in Holiness Journey board activity	Review of sin and the Precepts of the Church	Ages: All ages Time: 10-15 minutes

LESSON 4

WORDS TO KNOW



The Words to Know are words that you and your children should know and understand at the end of this month. Use your best judgment about which words you expect each of your children to learn. For older children, you may want to have them create flash cards to help them remember what they have learned.

Mercy	Compassion and forgiveness flowing from the eternal love of God
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Sin	An utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law
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Mortal Sin	Sin that destroys the supernatural life necessary for us to live in Heaven. It leads to the death of the soul. We cannot receive Communion when we are in a state of mortal sin until we go to Confession
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Venial Sin	Sin that wounds the love of God in our souls.
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What Is Sin?

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Age level: All ages

Recommended time: 10 minutes

Activity

The *Catechism* defines sin as “an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law.” Sin always sets our wills against the eternal love of God. It is a rejection of God and His love, and a choice for love of self.

Discussion

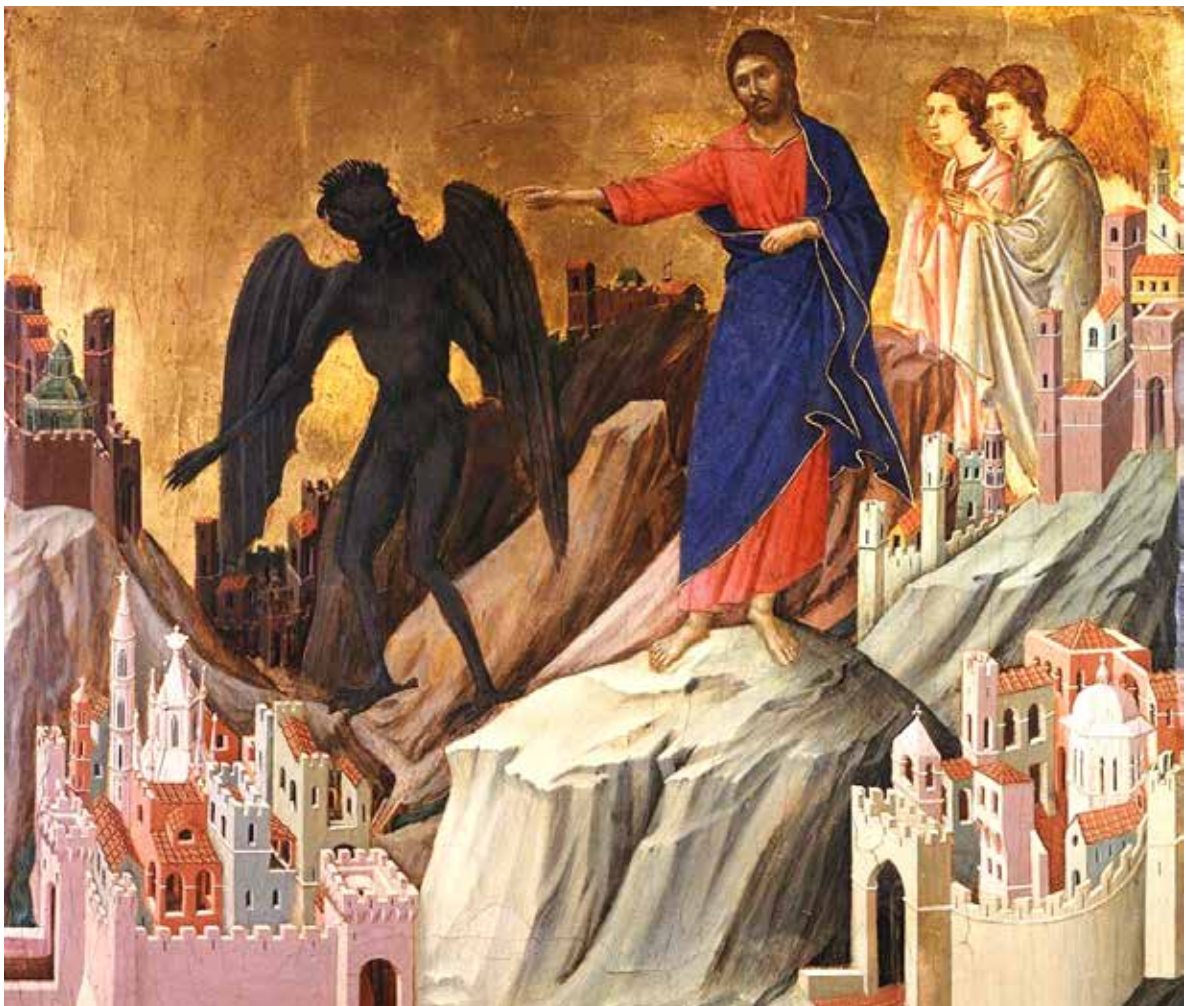
- A. Ask your children to imagine a driver on the highway. The road in front of him is clear. The road will take him where he needs to go. But then the driver sees another road that looks interesting. He wants to turn onto it to see where it goes. Next to that road is a huge red sign that says, “WRONG WAY – DO NOT ENTER.” The driver realizes what this sign means. It means he cannot drive down this road because cars will be coming toward him. Since it is a highway, those cars will be coming very fast. It would be very dangerous to turn down that road. He decides to turn down the road anyway.
- B. Then ask your children the following questions:
 - What do they think will happen? *The driver will get into a deadly accident.*
 - Who is responsible for the deadly accident: the driver, or the person who put up the Wrong Way sign? *The driver.*
- C. Explain to your children that, like the driver of the car in this story, we can choose which “roads” to follow in life. God is like the person who put the warning sign up

for us. He has marked some “roads,” or choices, as good, and others as deadly. Good choices show love for God and our neighbor. Actions that go against God’s law are called sins. Sins hurt God, us, and our neighbors. All sin is a wrong choice made on purpose – not by mistake or by accident.



Connection to the *Catechism*

Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as “an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law.” (CCC 1849)



The Temptation on the Mount, by Duccio.



ACTIVITY 2

Understanding Mortal Sin

DISCUSSION AND WORKSHEET ACTIVITY

Age level: Ages 8 and up

Recommended time: 10 minutes

What you need: Understanding Mortal Sin (**page 39** in the children's activity book)

What you need to know before you begin:

The Church distinguishes between two types of sins: mortal sin and venial sin.

When we sin mortally we lose the supernatural life that is necessary for us to live in Heaven. That is why we call mortal sins “mortal.” As a mortal wound leads to the death of the body, a mortal sin leads to the death of the soul. When we sin mortally, we cannot receive Communion until we seek forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. A good confession not only brings about forgiveness of our sin, but it also restores to our souls sanctifying grace, the gift of divine life.

For a sin to be mortal, the following three conditions must be met:

- The sin must be of grave or serious matter. Grave matter includes sins that are specified by the Ten Commandments, and some sins are more grave than others.
- The sin must be committed with full knowledge. This means that the person sinning must know that what he or she is doing is wrong and violates God's law.
- The sin must be committed with complete consent. This means that the sin must be a deliberate and personal choice: “The promptings of feeling and passions can also diminish the voluntary and free character of the offense, as can external pressures or pathological disorders” (CCC 1860).

Venial sin is all sin in which one or more of the conditions for mortal sin are not met. But even though venial sin does not destroy God's life within us, that does not mean that venial sins should be easily brushed off. Venial sins weaken our charity and get in the way of our doing good and forming moral habits; therefore, they make it easier for us to commit mortal sin.

Activity

- A. Explain to your children that God is love, and He created us in love. We all have this love for God in our hearts. That love for God and our neighbor is called charity. We also have sin in our hearts. All sin is evil, and all sin hurts charity. But not all sins are equally evil. Mortal sin is a grave (very serious) sin in which we freely choose to break our relationship with God. For a sin to be mortal, three things must all be true:
 1. It must involve grave (very serious) matter.
 2. One has to have full knowledge that it is wrong and do it anyway.
 3. One has to give complete consent.
 - B. Then explain to your children that venial sin is less serious. It hurts charity and our relationship with God, but it does not sever (completely break) it. We should try hard to avoid venial sin. If we don't, venial sin will lead to mortal sin. Mortal sin is "deadly" and is a spiritual death. Mortal sin destroys charity in our hearts. We cannot receive Communion when we are in a state of mortal sin until we receive God's mercy and forgiveness in the Sacrament of Confession.
 - C. Have your children turn to **Understanding Mortal Sin (page 39 in the children's activity book)**. Help them choose the examples on the worksheet that fulfill the conditions for what makes a sin mortal.
 - D. When they are finished, make sure to explain to your children that God loves us so much that He is always ready to forgive our sins as long as we are sorry for them. Explain that we have to be sorry for our sins because otherwise we will never want to do better, and God wants what is best for us.
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Answers

Grave (Very Serious) Matter

- › Stealing something very valuable
- › Failing to pray every day
- › Worshipping someone other than the Blessed Trinity
- › Committing murder

Full Knowledge

- › A college student who was raised Catholic and attended Catholic schools eats meat on a Friday during Lent.
- › A mother has been struggling to pay her bills, so she cheats on her income taxes even though she feels guilty about doing so.

Full Consent

- A boy is playing his favorite computer game on Sunday morning when his mother tells him to come join the family for Mass. He doesn't want to go, so, after thinking about it for a minute, he lies and tells her he isn't feeling well. He stays home and plays his game while the family is at church.
- A girl finds a wallet with a large sum of money inside. Since the wallet also contains a driver's license, the girl could contact the owner if she wanted to. A few days go by, and after thinking about it, the girl decides to keep the money.

BONUS ACTIVITY**Confession SketchPad Video**

Age level: all ages

Recommended time: 6 minutes

What you need: Sophia SketchPad Confession video, found at SophiaSketchPad.org.

Explain to your children that God's mercy is unlimited, and we can throw ourselves on His mercy in the pursuit of the moral life. No matter how much we stumble, our sins can be forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and we can start afresh in God's grace.

Together watch the six-minute Sophia Sketchpad video on Confession. The free video is available at SophiaSketchPad.org.

**Connection to the *Catechism***

Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to him. (CCC 1855)



ACTIVITY 3

Lost

JOURNALING ACTIVITY

Age level: All ages

Recommended time: 10 minutes

What you need: Paper, pencil, crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils

- A. Ask your children about a time when they lost something that was important to them. How did they feel when they lost it? Anxious, sad, or angry? What did they do to try to find it again? If they found it, how did they feel? Relieved? Overjoyed? Peaceful?
- B. Have your children write a journal reflection on, or draw a picture to illustrate, losing and finding their favorite item.
- C. Then ask your children what is God's most important thing. The answer is you and I! He made us and He loves us, and He is sad when we are lost. He will do all that He can to find us again!



ACTIVITY 4

Jesus' Parables:

The Good Shepherd and the Lost Coin

SCRIPTURE AND ART DISCUSSION

Age level: all ages

Recommended time: 10 minutes

What you need: Jesus' Parables: The Good Shepherd and the Lost Coin (**page 41** in the children's activity book)

- A. Have your children turn to **Jesus' Parables: The Good Shepherd and the Lost Coin (page 41 in the children's activity book)**. Read together Jesus' parables and look at the paintings.
- B. Then discuss the paintings with the following questions:

The Good Shepherd

- What stands out to you in this painting?
- What moment from the Parable of the Lost Sheep has the artist chosen to paint? Why do you think he chose this moment?
- In this parable, what does Jesus say that a person who had 100 sheep would do if he lost one? *Leave behind the 99 sheep and look for it.*
- What would the person do once he had found the lost sheep? How is this like the response in Heaven to one sinner who repents? *Call together his neighbors and friends and tell them to rejoice. There is more joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous people who have no need of repentance.*
- In John 10:11, Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." The Good Shepherd is also the title of this painting. Do you think the man in the painting is Jesus or the person from this parable? He is both!
- How is Jesus like the shepherd in the parable? Why is the Good Shepherd a good title for Jesus?

The Lost Coin

- What stands out to you in this painting?
 - What moment from the Parable of the Lost Coin has the artist chosen to paint? Why do you think he chose this moment?
 - What does Jesus suggest a woman with 10 coins would do if she lost one of them? *Search the house carefully.*
 - What would the woman do once she found her lost coin? How is this similar to the how the angels of God would react to one sinner who repents? *Call together her neighbors and friends and tell them to rejoice. The angels in Heaven will rejoice over one repentant sinner.*
 - In John 8:12, Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Describe how the light looks in this painting. where do you think the lost coin is in this painting? How does the light from the lamp or candle help the woman search for her coin? Why do you think the artist chose to paint the light in this painting the way he did?
 - When we sin, we are like the lost coin. We turn away from God and “walk in darkness.” How is Jesus the light of the world? Why is the Light of the World a good title for Jesus?
- C. Finally ask your children what the two parables teach us about being sorry for our sins and asking for God’s forgiveness. *When we sin, we turn away from God, or become lost. God is always “searching” for us and calling us to repent and come back to Him. When we do, He will always forgive us our sins if we are truly sorry and will welcome us back with love.*

BONUS ACTIVITY

Act of Contrition

Age level: all ages

Recommended time: 5 minutes

Before your children go to bed, have them reflect on all the good and the bad that they have done that day. Have them say a prayer thanking God for the day, and then pray together the Act of Contrition:

O my God, I am very sorry for having offended you, not only because I fear your just punishments but because you are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the occasions of sin. Amen.



ACTIVITY 5

Identifying the Precepts of the Church

DISCUSSION AND WORKSHEET ACTIVITY

Age level: All ages

Recommended time: 10 minutes

What you need: Identifying the Precepts of the Church (**page 43** in the children's activity book)

What you need to know before you begin:

- A. In our journey toward holiness, the Church gives us five precepts or laws that act as starting points to show us the very minimum required to develop our spiritual lives and grow in love of God and of neighbor.
- B. The five precepts of the Church are:
 - 1. We must attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.
 - 2. We must confess our sins to a priest at least once a year.
 - 3. We must receive our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist at least once a year during the Easter season.
 - 4. We must observe the days of abstinence and fasting. (The Church calls us to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, all Fridays during Lent, and Good Friday and to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.)
 - 5. We must contribute to the support of the Church.
- C. The Five Precepts of the Church are a basic framework of what is required for Life in Christ. If we follow these five precepts, we participate in the life of the Church that will help us on our journey toward holiness. These precepts are the barest minimum, however. We should try to receive the Sacraments, most notably the Eucharist and Penance and Reconciliation, as often as we can in order to ask God for His mercy and the strength to avoid sin.



St. Peter's Square, Rome.

Activity

- A. Explain to your children that the Catholic Church has five laws or precepts that are necessary for us to follow in order to be practicing members of the Church and to grow in holiness. These rules are only the barest minimum necessary to live a holy life.
- B. To explain what you mean by “barest minimum,” discuss the following scenario with your children:

Imagine a football team, the Vikings, made up of a great group of naturally talented athletes. They practice only three days a week, as opposed to other teams in the area that practice five days a week. The Vikings' practices are only 45 minutes long, and they run laps and lift weights only once a week. The other teams in the area practice for two hours and run laps and lift weights every day. The Vikings all enjoy playing but usually win only a few games each season. They have never made it to the playoffs or won a state championship.

- C. Now ask your children the following questions:
 - a. Do the Vikings meet all the requirements of a football team? Yes, *they can be called a team.*

- b. Are the Vikings the best team that they could be? No.
- c. If you wanted to play football, would you want to be a part of that team? *Accept reasoned answers.*
- D. Explain to your children that the Vikings meet only the minimum requirements necessary to be a team. If they did not do the little that they do, they probably would not win any games at all. However, if they want to be good at football, they have to work much harder.
- E. Then explain to your children that the Church has given us five guiding rules we must follow in order to start growing in holiness. Have them turn to **Identifying the Precepts of the Church (page 43 in the children's activity book)**. Go over and explain the Five Precepts of the Church given on their worksheet. They are:
 - 1. We must attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.
 - 2. We must confess our sins to a priest at least once a year.
 - 3. We must receive our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist at least once a year during the Easter season.
 - 4. We must observe the days of abstinence and fasting.
 - 5. We must contribute to the support of the Church.
- F. Then help your children complete the worksheet.



Connection to the *Catechism*

The precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. The obligatory character of these positive laws decreed by the pastoral authorities is meant to guarantee to the faithful the very necessary minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor. (CCC 2041)



Growth in Holiness

JOURNEY BOARD ACTIVITY

Age level: All ages

Recommended time: 5 minutes

What you need: Growth in Holiness (page 45 in the children's activity book), scissors, and glue stick

- A. Have your children turn to **Growth in Holiness (page 45 in the children's activity book)**. Remind them that sin leads us off of the path of life and away from Heaven. Have them create a false pathway that leads to a dead end. Then have your children color, cut out, and paste the Sin: Do Not Enter little beside the false path.
- B. Next point to the Halo little in your children's activity book. Explain that the halo is a symbol of holiness or blessedness; that is why Jesus, saints, and angels have halos around their heads in pictures. Then remind your children that the Church gives us five precepts or laws that are the bare minimum required to grow in holiness and in our love of God and of neighbor.
- C. Continue drawing your path toward Heaven and have your children color and cut out the Halo little. Paste the Halo little on the pathway toward Heaven.
- D. After your children have read about the Saint of the Month, have them color and cut out their St. Martin de Porres little, and ask them to describe to you ways that St. Martin lived a life of holiness. Paste him onto the journey board.

St. Martin de Porres

SAINT OF THE MONTH

Age level: All ages

Recommended time: 5 minutes

What you need: St. Martin de Porres (**page 49** in the children's activity book), crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils



Activity

Read the story of this month's saint aloud to your children. You may also want to show them the full-page saint image. While you are reading or sometime the next day, have them complete the coloring page on **page 49** of the children's activity book.

Biography of St. Martin de Porres

ST. MARTIN DE PORRES was born in Lima, Peru, in 1579. He was the son of a Spanish nobleman and a freed black slave from Panama. After the birth of Martin's little sister, Juana, two years later, their father abandoned them. The family grew up in poverty, with Martin and Juana's mother working as a laundress.

As Martin grew older, people mocked him for being mixed race. But even from the young age of eight years, Martin remembered the priest at Mass saying, "We were all made in God's image and likeness." He would tell Juana that God was concerned about the color of people's souls, not the color of their skin.

He became apprentice to a barber-surgeon (someone who practiced

medicine as well as cut hair) and learned to care for the sick. One day, when Martin was alone in the barber-surgeon's office, a man was carried in with a deep cut in his head. The people who carried him in wanted the barber-surgeon, not a twelve-year-old boy. But to everyone's amazement, Martin bandaged the wound and the man was able to walk home.

Martin spent many hours at night praying before a crucifix that hung above his bed. He knew he wanted to give his whole life to God. So when Martin was fifteen, he went to live with the Dominican order in Lima at the convent of Santo Domingo. One night He was praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament and the step he was kneeling on caught fire.

Despite all of the chaos the fire caused, Martin didn't even notice and continued kneeling in prayer.

The Dominicans gave Martin the duties of caring for the sick and the clothes room. When Martin was twenty-four, the Dominicans made him a religious brother, and he took charge of the infirmary. Later on he founded a residence for orphans and abandoned children.

When an epidemic struck Lima, the young novices (those who had just entered the order) were locked in a separate part of the convent to prevent the spreading

of disease. Martin miraculously passed through the locked doors to take care of the sick. Martin performed many other miracles: he could heal others instantly, light filled the room when he prayed, he could be in two places at once, and his ecstasies would lift him into the air.

When Martin turned sixty he fell ill and endured terrible pain. He suffered for almost a year and died in 1639. He was so famous for his miracles that crowds flocked to his body and took pieces of his habit for relics. St. Martin de Porres is the patron saint of people of mixed race and his feast day is November 3.



November in Review

THIS MONTH YOU EXPLORED AS A FAMILY THE QUESTIONS:

How does doing the right thing set me free?

What is my conscience and how do I form it?

What makes a sin mortal?

In Lesson 3 your children learned that:

- The freedom God gives us is freedom for the Good.
- God gave us each a conscience, which is His law written in our hearts.
- A well-formed conscience makes it possible to live a moral life.

In Lesson 4 your children learned that:

- Mortal sin destroys the life of God in our souls.
- The three conditions for a sin to be mortal are gravity, knowledge, and consent.
- The Five Precepts of the Church show us the minimum required to develop our spiritual lives.

In this space below, write some reflections about the past month. What was your favorite activity? What didn't go as well? Will you adjust anything about what you're doing? What special intentions do you have for next month?