

## **Activity Sheets Information**

Children are great observers and often have insights about people and situations that could surprise us. These Activity Sheets are designed to give the opportunity for more developed thought and engagement with everyday situations in order to see how *reconciliation* is all around us in every situation that we encounter.

In every moment, we are making CHOICES. Only by becoming more aware of this fact and seeing it can we “inform” those choices or choose a different way to get a different outcome. Making the right choice does not come automatically and needs to be practised and accepted as available to us as part of our uniqueness in God’s eyes.

All answers are therefore valid as it is about thinking around the situations, engaging with things we could encounter any day particularly outside any religious context or setting. Reconciliation has a place in every human interaction and, with our example from Jesus, it is applied in every human context.

### **Activity 1: How Honest are YOU?**

There are eight multiple choice questions to discuss and the instruction is to think about what “most people would do”.

There are many reasons why people do not always choose the HONEST thing to do and the activity provokes reflection on this. It is designed in quiz form to be done by individuals and does not seek personal disclosure as this could be uncomfortable, difficult, or embarrassing: if someone is willing to share, that should be valued as very special.

As a quiz, the answers can be summarised as follows. For those choosing:

- Mostly **a**: these people do avoid telling lies but are not quite fully honest
- Mostly **b**: these people are very honest all the time
- Mostly **c**: these people find telling the truth a bit challenging

Follow-up questions include:

- Is it acceptable to tell ‘little’ or ‘white’ lies?
- Why do people sometimes find it easier to lie than tell the truth? [*Answers may include:* because of: fear of getting into trouble; wanting to be part of a social group; not wanting to be seen as a ‘snitch’ or ‘tell-tale’; trying to keep someone happy; not wanting to disappoint; not wanting to hurt someone’s feelings (see Question 8); fearing consequences, etc.]
- What would Jesus say about that? [*Answers may include:* Jesus would always want us to be honest and to tell the truth.]

## Activity 2: What Happens Next

The activity presents six situations which could be encountered in everyday life. It is designed to help look at the different choices that can be made for each situation. For the first situation examples of the choices made are provided (one of a 'good choice' and one of a 'bad choice'). Try and give similar suggestions for the other situations. Many different answers are possible because there will be many different reasons why someone chooses to behave in a particular way.

There are clues in the situations about what choice should be taken but why they might not be, e.g. "Harry wants to be popular.."; "His mates tease him...."; "Sam wants to be accepted..."; "Lara felt sad for her"; "his little sister who always seemed to get away with things"; "She knew it would have lots of secrets in it".

There is an opportunity at the bottom of the activity sheet for the children to think about and describe another situation where different choices could be made.

## Activity 3: The Quality of Sorry

There are many ways we use the word 'SORRY': this activity provides 13 Examples. You may be able to think of other examples.

The instruction is to think about and discuss: 'How would Jesus want us to say SORRY?' Another way of seeing this is to ask: 'WHY do we say SORRY?'

The second sheet gives the reasons why each is or is not an acceptable way of saying sorry, e.g. someone who says "BUT..." does not accept responsibility; repetition of the same mistake does not show a genuine desire to change or do better; saying sorry just to avoid punishment or an angry reaction; ignoring the hurt or harm your action or words have caused, etc.

The Example that Jesus would want us to follow is: 'I'm sorry, I know that I hurt you; it is my fault and I want to make it better and not hurt you again.' This contains all aspects of **reconciliation** which we are familiar with from the Sacrament and is a **genuine** apology.

The purpose of the activity to raise awareness of how often the word 'sorry' is used in different ways without making a full apology. The misunderstanding is that just saying the words makes everything better.

## **Activity 4: Restoring Relationships**

The purpose of this Activity is to look at the experience of forgiveness and reconciliation in everyday family life. Hence the Question: 'Does this sound familiar?'

How does your family restore relationships? Discuss how your family experiences forgiveness in everyday life.

The first half of the sheet gives examples of interactions that could cause conflict in any household or situation. These may not all lead to a need for forgiveness or reconciliation, but some of them probably will. Without ways of restoring them, our relationships can soon become badly damaged: anger, sadness, low self-esteem, continuous low-level conflict, misunderstanding and many other negatives easily result.

Families develop their own unique ways of dealing with conflict. On the second part of the sheet there are suggestions about how conflict and disharmony can be eased and managed. It may be through humour or shared activity, family meetings or praying together. This healing is often expressed through hugs, kisses or handshakes or in ways unique to each family.

The focus of this activity is on the positives and that families are already managing conflict in different ways all the time. We have to accept that we do this with varying levels of success, but we can always try to repair the damage in any situation we find ourselves in. It may well be that this activity offers some families the examples for conflict resolution which they need and provides them with ideas for them to try in future.

We all need ways of finding forgiveness and healing in our relationships, with God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation but also with others in our daily lives. It also connects with the restorative justice undertaken within our schools and society. The fair system of discussing (regret, remorse) and accepting responsibility (confession) and making appropriate restoration (penance) leading to reconciliation (forgiveness, healing).