



Reconciliation

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Communion

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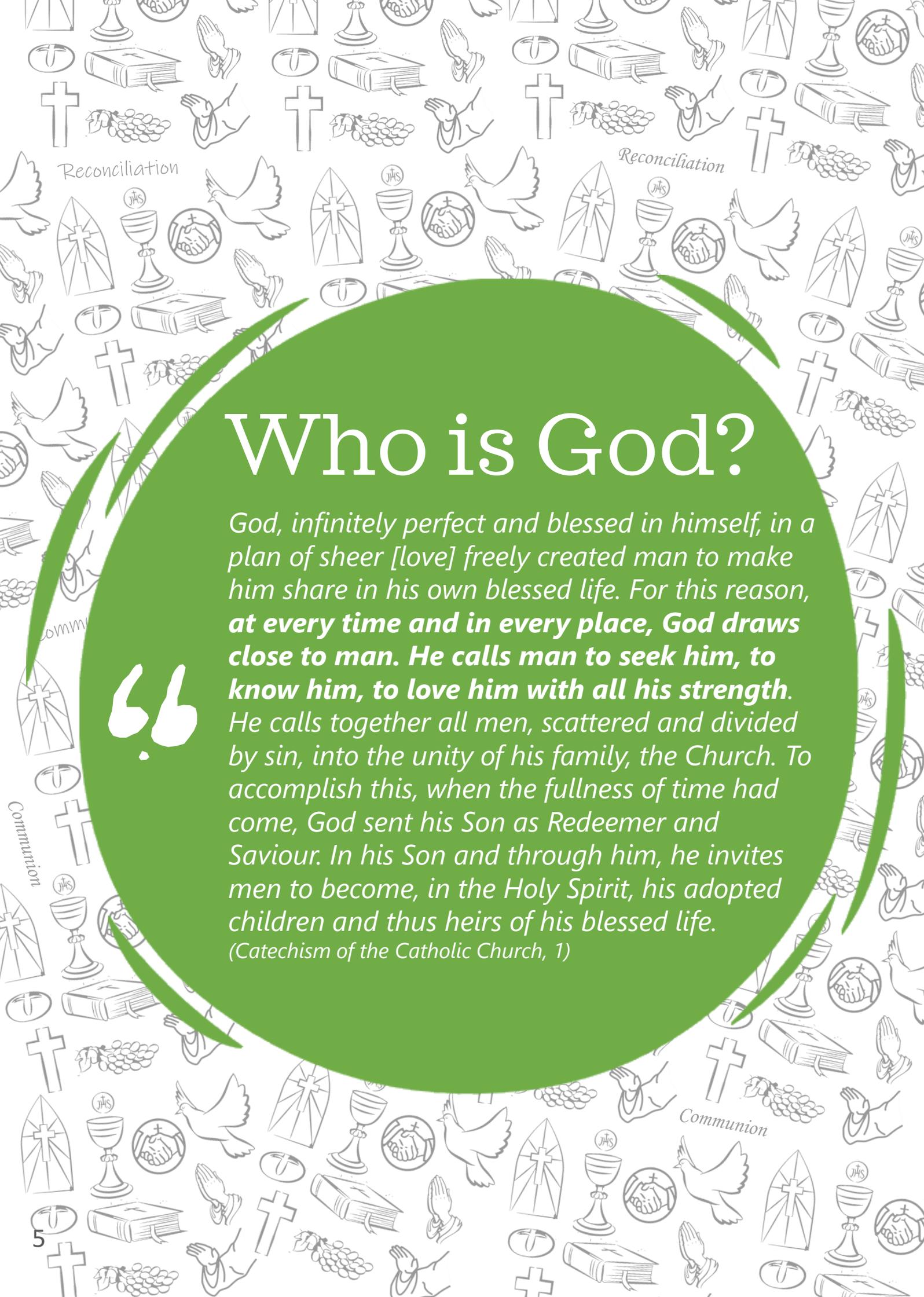
Communion



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Who is God?

*God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer [love] freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, **at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength.** He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life.*
(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1)

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Who is God?

It can be tricky to explain to our children who God is. But they have already experienced him through your love. God is love. As St Teresa of Calcutta once said, "where there is love, there is God".

God's love is the central message of Christianity and the source of our faith. God loves you and your child. God created all of us out of love. It is our choice whether to respond to his love.

How would you describe love?

*What happens in our hearts when we are loved?
How are we affected?*

God's personal love

(Page 5, Family Handout 1)

God's love for us is personal, proven, merciful and offered. It can be challenging to believe that God loves us as individuals, and knows, and cares about our own lives. The truth is that he knows each of us by name. God knows all the details of our lives, even to the number of hairs on our heads! He loves us and delights in us individually. We all need to hear these truths.

What strikes you about God's personal love?

Jeremiah 29:11 - ¹¹I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for.

Isaiah 49:15-16 - ¹⁵So the LORD answers, "Can a woman forget her own baby and not love the child she bore? Even if a mother should forget her child, I will never forget you. ¹⁶Jerusalem, I can never forget you! I have written your name on the palms of my hands.

Psalms 139:1-3 - ¹LORD, you have examined me and you know me. ²You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts. ³You see me, whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions.

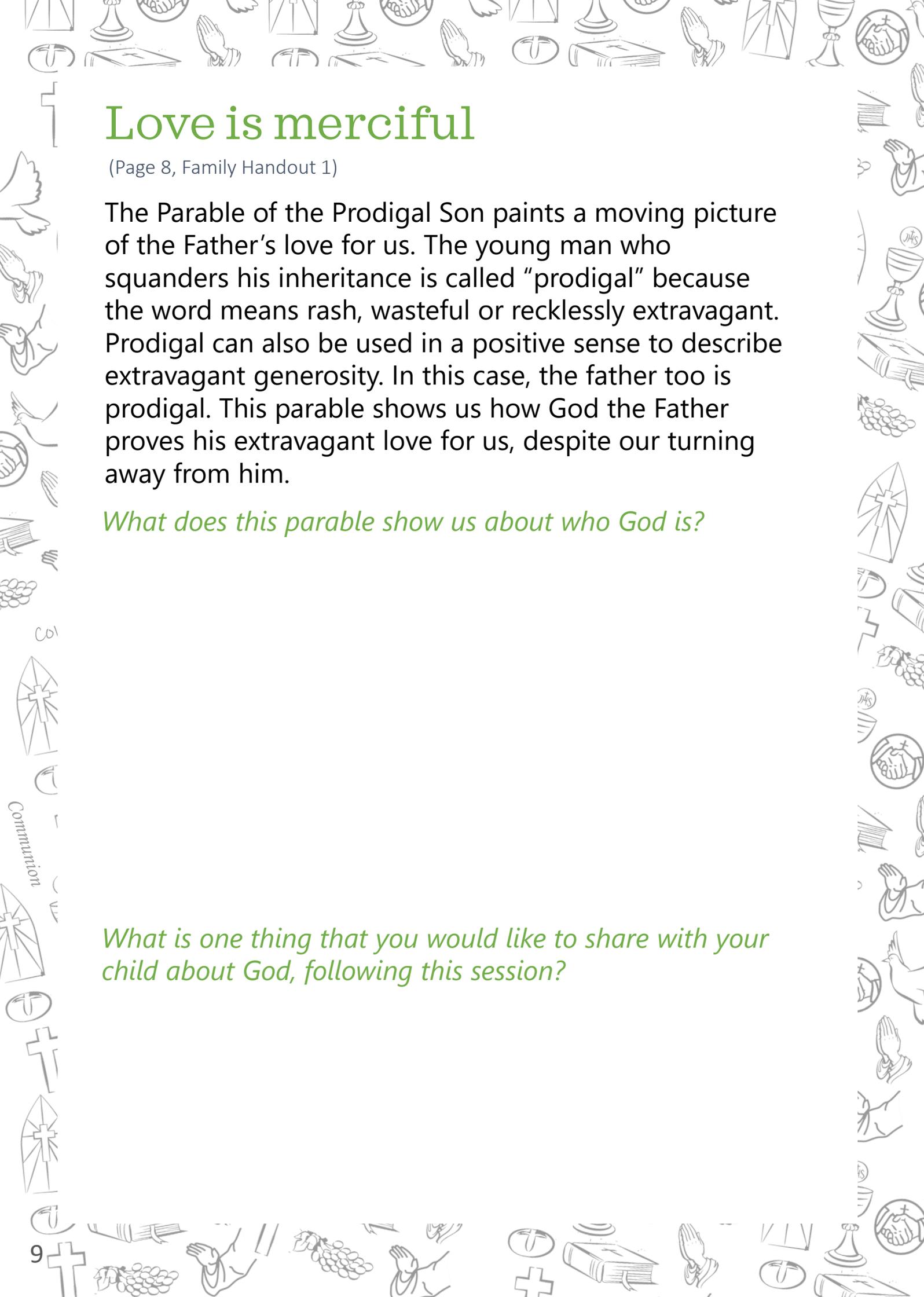
Love is merciful

Luke 15:11-24

The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother

¹¹ Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." ²² But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

Communion



Love is merciful

(Page 8, Family Handout 1)

The Parable of the Prodigal Son paints a moving picture of the Father's love for us. The young man who squanders his inheritance is called "prodigal" because the word means rash, wasteful or recklessly extravagant. Prodigal can also be used in a positive sense to describe extravagant generosity. In this case, the father too is prodigal. This parable shows us how God the Father proves his extravagant love for us, despite our turning away from him.

What does this parable show us about who God is?

What is one thing that you would like to share with your child about God, following this session?

Who is Jesus?

Supposing I had a cake here, which I had made, and I give it to a scientist. The scientist will be able to tell you how the cake was made, the ingredients of the cake & they may even be able to tell you when it was made. But only I can tell you who made it and why it was made. Only the creator of the cake can tell you, "I made that cake!" And I can tell you why I made that cake.

It is the same with this universe. Only the creator can reveal who made this world and why he made it. And the claim of Christianity is that he has done that. He has revealed himself in the person of Jesus. It is through Jesus that we can know who God is.



Who is Jesus?

All of the amazing things that Jesus said, that he did, taught and claimed about himself show us that he was more than just a good man, that he was God incarnate.

Remember, God is not a man sitting on a cloud with a long beard looking down at us, slightly disappointed and so that is why he sent his son. By becoming human, Jesus shows us, even just through his birth, how much God loves us, how much he cares about us, and how much he wants us to know that.

Jesus did amazing things

(Page 15, Family Handout 2)

Jesus lived a miraculous life – he multiplied food to feed thousands, walked on water, turned water into wine, brought Lazarus back from the dead and healed many.

Another thing that marked Jesus' life was his love for those on the margins of society.

Read Matthew 8:1-4 (Jesus healed the leper).

¹When Jesus came down from the hill, large crowds followed him. ²Then a man suffering from a dreaded skin disease came to him, knelt down before him, and said, "Sir, if you want to, you can make me clean."

³Jesus reached out and touched him. "I do want to," he answered. "Be clean!" At once the man was healed of his disease. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, "Listen! Don't tell anyone, but go straight to the priest and let him examine you; then in order to prove to everyone that you are cured, offer the sacrifice that Moses ordered."

What does this passage show us about Jesus?

Jesus said amazing things

(Page 18, Family Handout 2)

Forgiveness is right at the heart of Christianity. Jesus went up to multiple people and said, "Your sins are forgiven".

Now, if someone has sinned against you, you could forgive them. You can't just walk up to anyone and say, "your sins are forgiven". When Jesus said that, the Pharisees said, "who can forgive sins but God alone?" But Jesus claimed to be able to do that. Jesus said that he came to give his life so that people who believe in him can be forgiven.

Read Luke 5:17-26 (The paralysed man).

How does Jesus claim to be God in this passage?

17 One day when Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of the Law were sitting there who had come from every town in Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. The power of the Lord was present for Jesus to heal the sick. 18 Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a bed, and they tried to carry him into the house and put him in front of Jesus. 19 Because of the crowd, however, they could find no way to take him in. So they carried him up on the roof, made an opening in the tiles, and let him down on his bed into the middle of the group in front of Jesus. 20 When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the man, "Your sins are forgiven, my friend."

21 The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who speaks such blasphemy! God is the only one who can forgive sins!"

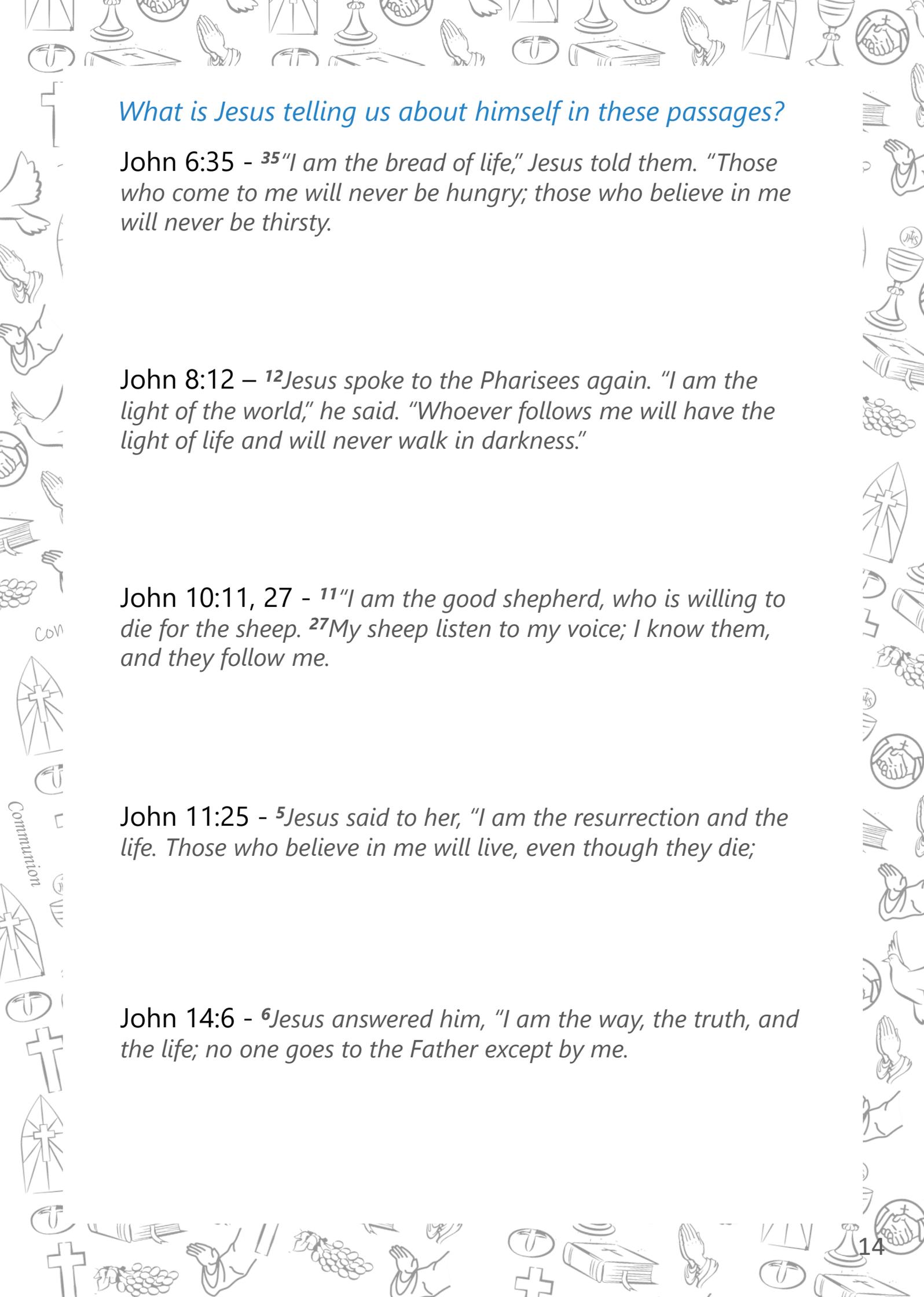
22 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Why do you think such things? 23 Is it easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? 24 I will prove to you, then, that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, pick up your bed, and go home!"

25 At once the man got up in front of them all, took the bed he had been lying on, and went home, praising God. 26 They were all completely amazed! Full of fear, they praised God, saying, "What marvelous things we have seen today!"

Who did Jesus think he was?

(Page 18, Family Handout 2)

Jesus caused controversy and curiosity wherever he went because of his powerful words and miracles. He left everyone wondering, "Who is this, man?" or even, "Who does this man think he is?" Scripture does not describe an occasion when Jesus said the words, "I am God". However, a careful look at the Gospels shows that Jesus did claim equality with God, especially taking upon himself attributes only God could possess.



What is Jesus telling us about himself in these passages?

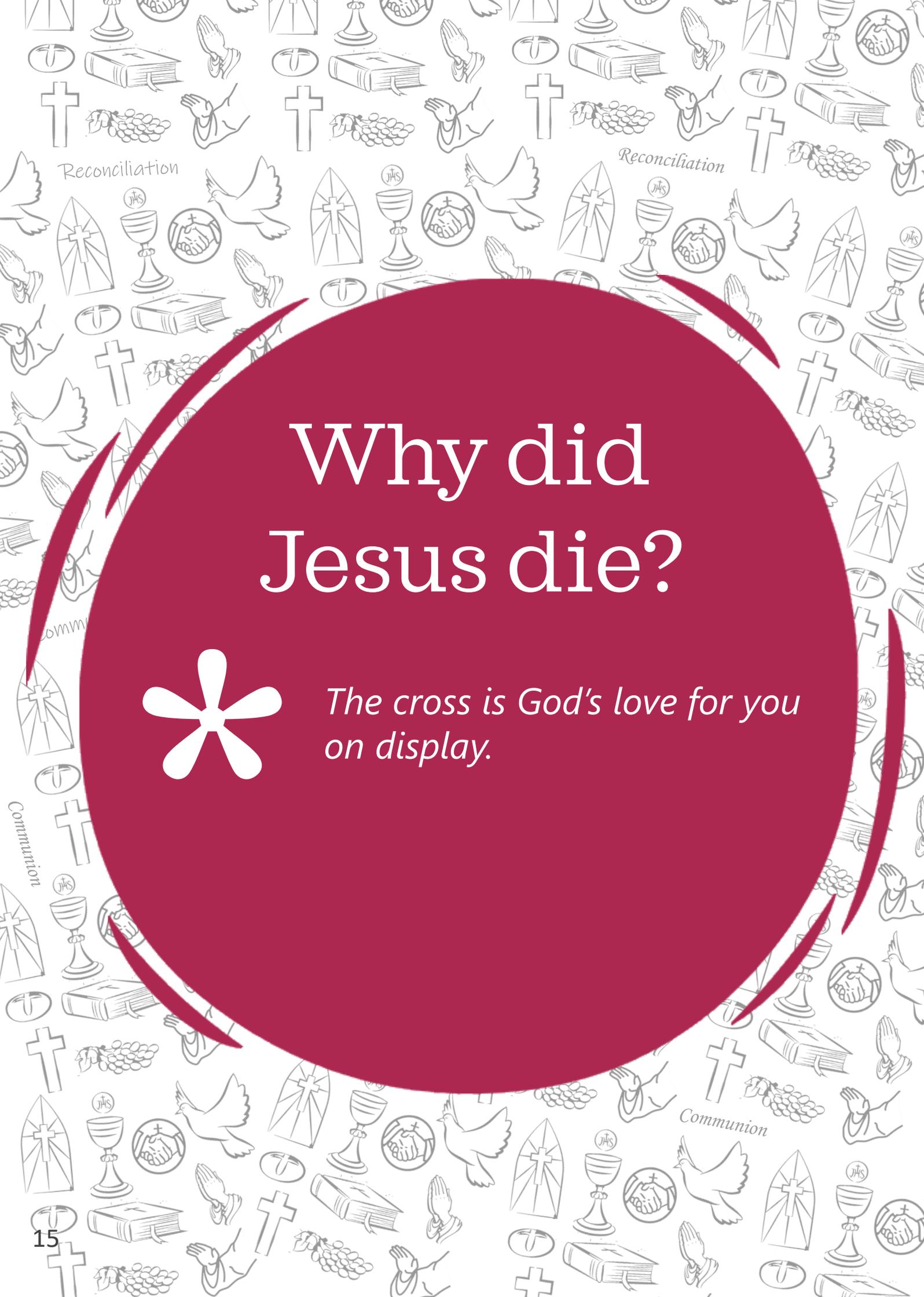
John 6:35 - ³⁵"I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "Those who come to me will never be hungry; those who believe in me will never be thirsty."

John 8:12 - ¹²Jesus spoke to the Pharisees again. "I am the light of the world," he said. "Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness."

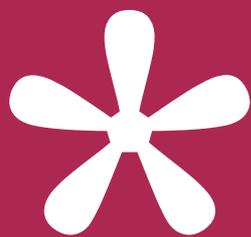
John 10:11, 27 - ¹¹"I am the good shepherd, who is willing to die for the sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

John 11:25 - ⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die;

John 14:6 - ⁶Jesus answered him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me."



Why did Jesus die?



*The cross is God's love for you
on display.*

Why did Jesus die?

Most often, we remember famous people for great events in their lives. But Jesus, the most famous person in history, seems to be remembered, most of all, for his death on a cross.

Why did Jesus have to die on the cross and what does it mean for you and your child today?

Jesus died on the cross because the authorities at the time did not like what he was saying or doing.

Death is the ultimate weapon for the bullies of the world. On the cross, it was as if all of sin met Jesus and it overwhelmed him.

However, Jesus has defeated that weapon because he rose again. Because of that, there is life, new life, resurrection life promised now and into the future.

In Christ, God has gone to the very limits of our forsakenness. Into our fear, into our dysfunction, into our weaknesses and sin and our death. He has gone there to not just sympathise with our pain and suffering but to find us and to bring us back, to swallow it all up.

What does the Cross mean to us?

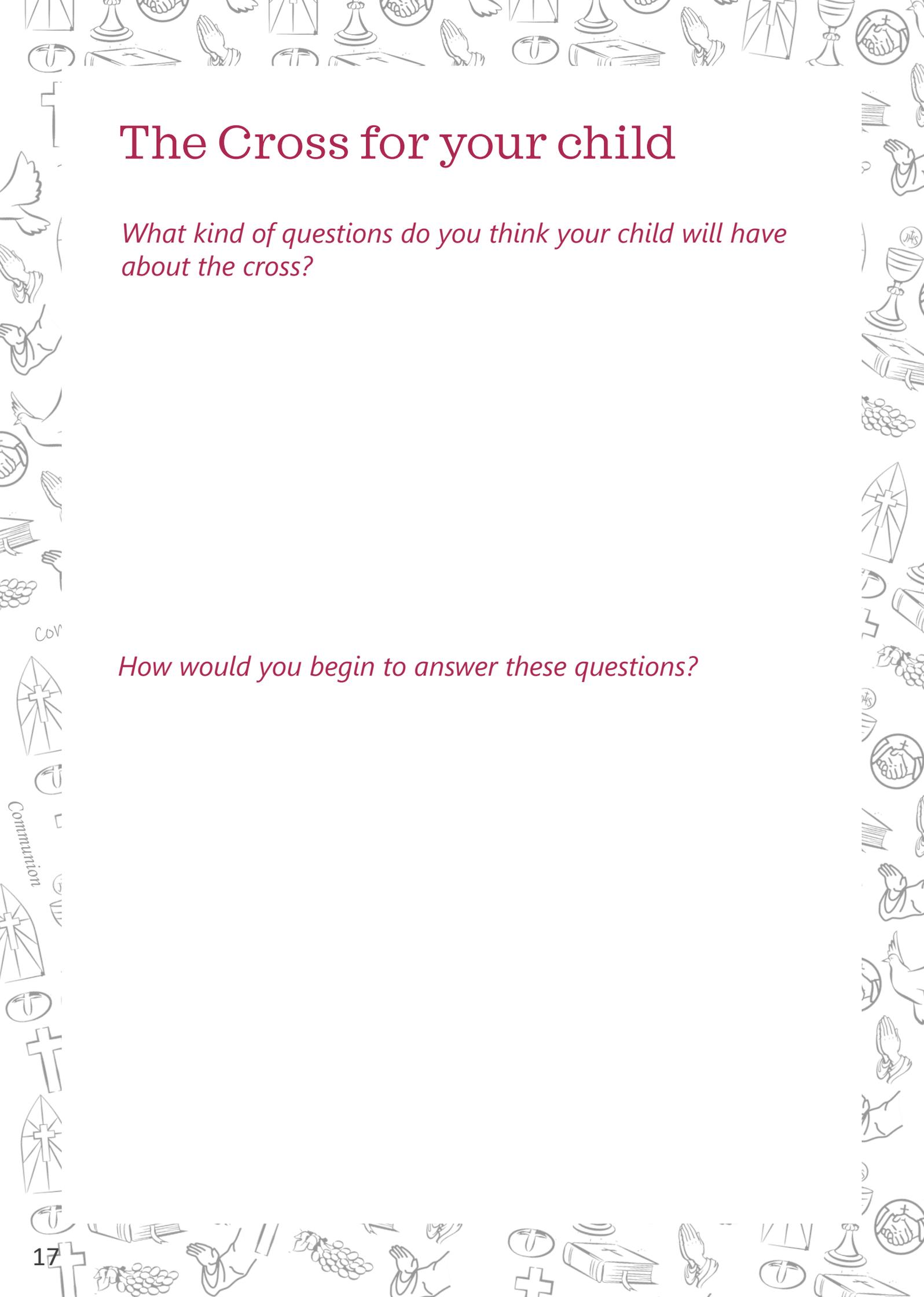
(Page 27, Family Handout 3)

The cross shows us that:

God is with us in our suffering.

God forgives – Jesus ended the cycle of hate by forgiving those who were crucifying him.

It made a way for us to be with God forever.



The Cross for your child

What kind of questions do you think your child will have about the cross?

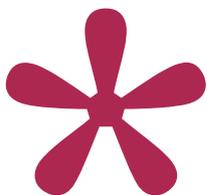
How would you begin to answer these questions?

What is sin?

(Page 29-31, Family Handout 3)

We are very used to hearing the phrase, "Jesus died for sin". But what is sin in the first place and how do we explain to our children?

The world isn't black and white; there aren't just good people and evil people. God didn't make good people and bad people. God made people. Because of our free will, we choose to do good or choose to do bad. Sin is a choice, not a mistake.



We need to stop looking at sin as the end of us but instead as an opportunity to lean on God, do better and to start again.

Sin can pollute our lives. If it goes unchecked, it can get a grip on us and have a destructive power over our lives. Sin can eventually build up a wall between God and us.



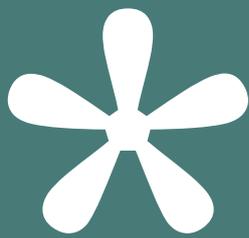
Rather, your iniquities have been barriers between you and your god, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)

It is our turning away from God's love that builds the wall; it is not God who turns away. God loves us no matter what.

How would you explain what sin is to your child?



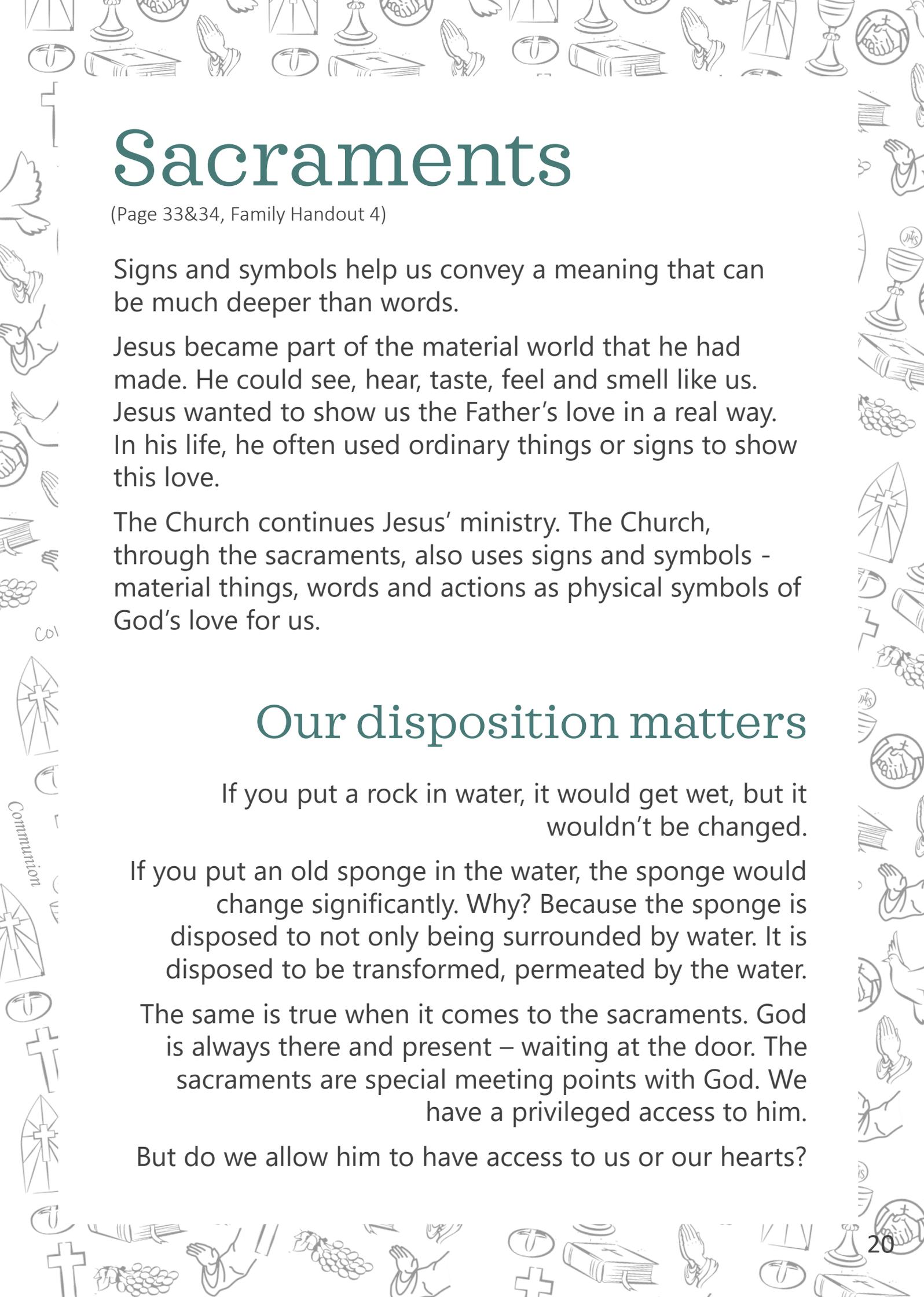
Sacraments & Baptism



The sacraments use things from God the Father's created world; it is Christ who works in them; the Holy Spirit pours into our lives through them.

The sacraments are seven meeting points, where God himself is present, waits for you, blesses you and leads you deeper into the community of the church. (YouCat for Kids, Question 64)





Sacraments

(Page 33&34, Family Handout 4)

Signs and symbols help us convey a meaning that can be much deeper than words.

Jesus became part of the material world that he had made. He could see, hear, taste, feel and smell like us. Jesus wanted to show us the Father's love in a real way. In his life, he often used ordinary things or signs to show this love.

The Church continues Jesus' ministry. The Church, through the sacraments, also uses signs and symbols - material things, words and actions as physical symbols of God's love for us.

Our disposition matters

If you put a rock in water, it would get wet, but it wouldn't be changed.

If you put an old sponge in the water, the sponge would change significantly. Why? Because the sponge is disposed to not only being surrounded by water. It is disposed to be transformed, permeated by the water.

The same is true when it comes to the sacraments. God is always there and present – waiting at the door. The sacraments are special meeting points with God. We have a privileged access to him.

But do we allow him to have access to us or our hearts?

The sacraments for your child

God is with us all the time but it is so easy to forget that he's there and to feel his presence. The sacraments are special meeting points or opportunities to meet with God regularly, especially through the sacraments of Holy Communion and Reconciliation.

How can you improve your relationship with the sacraments as a family?

Baptism

(Page 36&37, Family Handout 4)

It is only after Baptism that you can receive the other sacraments – which are meeting points with God received throughout our lives.

Baptism is called a gateway to a life with God; to his Holy Spirit who helps us through the many challenges that life will throw at us.

Through Baptism, you become a child of God.

It also means that at the end of your life, as you approach the “door” called death, it will not be the end. You will be able to walk through it to eternal life in heaven.



Your child's baptism

Recall your child's baptism. Why did you choose to have your child baptised?

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On your part, you must make it your constant care to bring [your child] up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life which God gives [your child] is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in [your child's] heart." (Baptism Rite)

How do you help keep the light of faith burning in your child's heart?

Communion

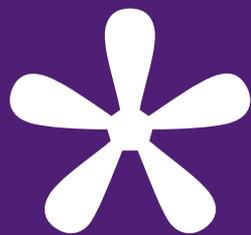


Reconciliation

The sacrament of Reconciliation offers us a wonderful meeting point with God that heals and restores us.

For most of us, healthily loving ourselves is an underdeveloped skill and spiritual practice.

Our relationship with ourselves is not informed by society or our other halves and not even our children but by God's love for us.



Reconciliation

If you were a Catholic as a child, reminisce. What was your experience of the sacrament of Reconciliation?

The prodigal son

(Page 41, Family Handout 5)

Nowhere did Jesus express more beautifully what happens in the sacrament of Reconciliation than in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

*“He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when **he came to himself [to his senses]** he said, “how many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and **I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned** against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.” **So he set off and went to his father.**” (Luke 15:16-20)*

Just like the Prodigal Son, we too need to:

- Come to our senses about how we've strayed from God (our sin)
- We need to rehearse our apology
- We need to say sorry out loud (confess)

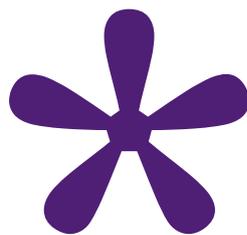
Don't forget the Father's response as well. The Father ran and embraced his son and restored his dignity.



It doesn't matter how far we stray, God will always welcome us back with open arms. Not just that he wants us to be free again and to be restored and built up.

Why we confess to a priest

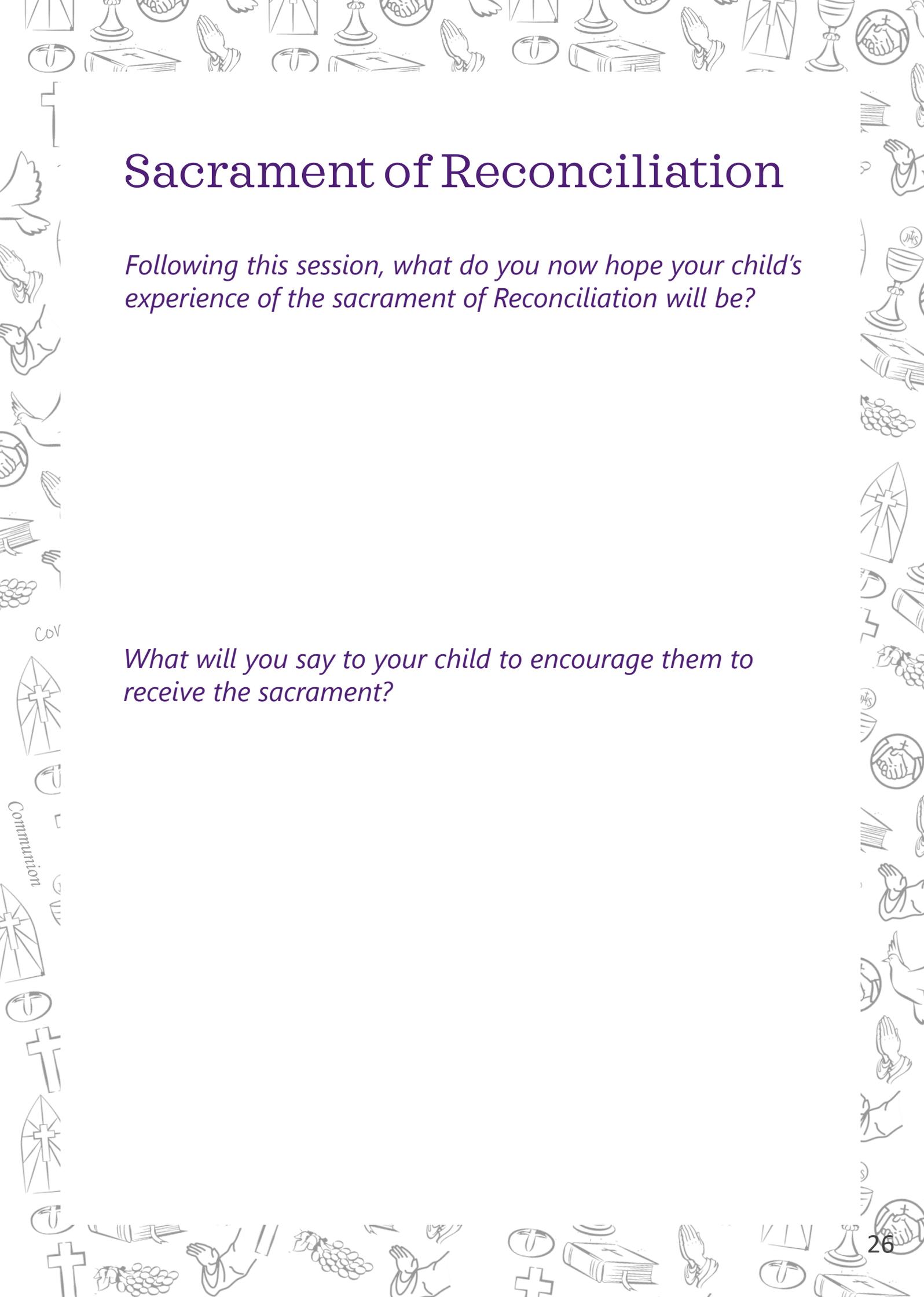
The priest acts in *Persona Christi*, the very person of Christ, speaks his words, and by the power of those words, he mediates Christ's forgiveness. The priest will never share what we say to him with anyone.



The sacrament of Reconciliation really is a method for dealing with the rubbish in our lives. It was not intended to make us feel guilty. It was supposed to set us free.

Penance is not punishment

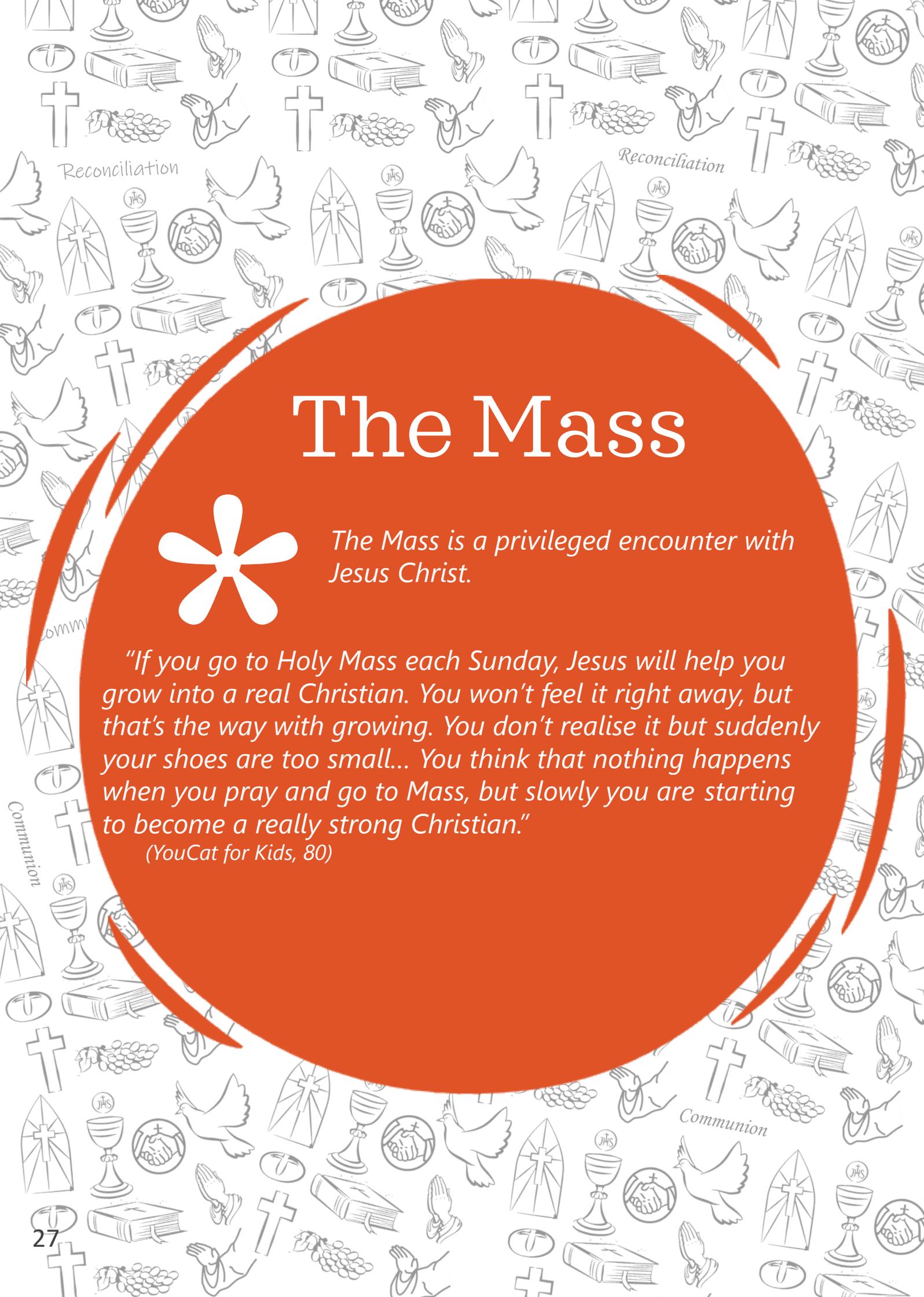
This is a sacrament of healing not punishment! We do not need to pay the price for our sin. Penance puts us back on the right path by making us love one another again and build up the body of Christ through acts of charity or praying or fasting or supporting the poor spiritually and materially.



Sacrament of Reconciliation

Following this session, what do you now hope your child's experience of the sacrament of Reconciliation will be?

What will you say to your child to encourage them to receive the sacrament?



The Mass



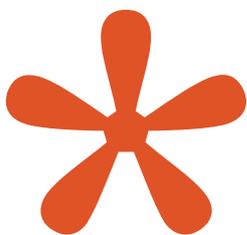
The Mass is a privileged encounter with Jesus Christ.

"If you go to Holy Mass each Sunday, Jesus will help you grow into a real Christian. You won't feel it right away, but that's the way with growing. You don't realise it but suddenly your shoes are too small... You think that nothing happens when you pray and go to Mass, but slowly you are starting to become a really strong Christian."

(YouCat for Kids, 80)

The Mass

Write down any things or questions that have arisen from the Taught Mass.

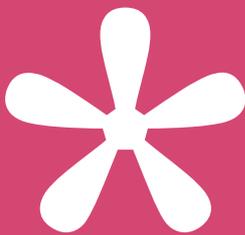


When we gather for Mass, we gather as God's family. We are united. We belong here.

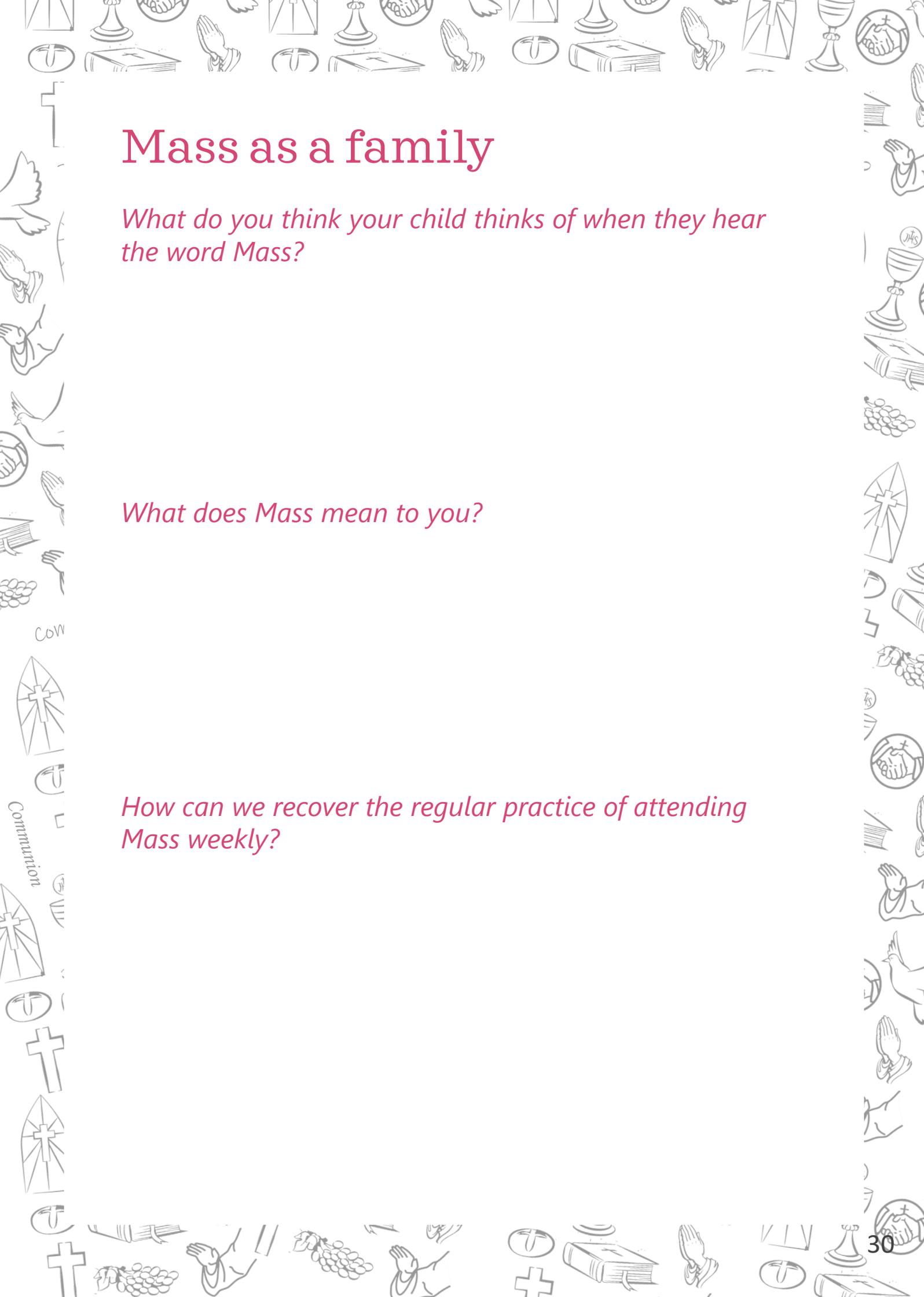
Is it authentic to say that I have a relationship with Jesus or that he is the centre of my life and then stay away from this privileged encounter with him?



The Eucharist



Each of us has a personal relationship with God but can only flourish in communion with others. We are built for relationship with others. We know that. We've come from a family and have created our own family. We do not live solitary lives. The same is true for our faith.



Mass as a family

What do you think your child thinks of when they hear the word Mass?

What does Mass mean to you?

How can we recover the regular practice of attending Mass weekly?

The Eucharist

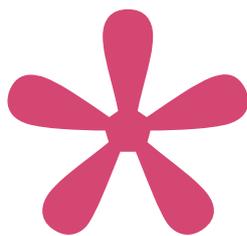


At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again. (CCC 1366)

Christ was sacrificed once in time upon the cross in Jerusalem. But every time the Eucharist is celebrated that one sacrifice and its fruits are perpetuated (made to continue indefinitely) throughout time.

**Let's take a Bible. Every leaf of this book is the number of times Mass has been celebrated over time. That is a lot of times!*

But God looks at things from a different perspective. God is outside of space and time, and for God, it is one sacrifice - a sacrifice perpetuated throughout time.



When we go to Mass we take part in this one sacrifice. That is amazing!

Appearance and Reality

(Page 66, Family Handout 7)

Reality and appearance do not always coincide.

The sun appears to move across the sky or around the earth. In reality, it is the earth that travels around the sun. Or when we look up at the sky on a clear night, it looks like we are looking at stars. We are looking at the past. The light has taken millions of years to get to the earth. What we are looking at is not what is there but what was there.

Bishop Robert Barron said, "appearance and reality do not always coincide". *How would you explain this to your children now or in the future?*

The Church says, in the case of the Eucharist, what appears to be ordinary bread and wine, in fact is "changed" at the deepest level of its reality. *How would you explain this to your child now or in the future?*

"Words not only describe reality, but under the right circumstances can change reality." *How would you explain this to your child now or in the future?*

Real Presence

When we talk about Jesus being present in the Mass, we need to remember that we need also to be present. We need to not just be present in our heads but also our body, heart and soul.

66

If you are not present to the presence then it can seem that there is no presence at all... Presence is always reciprocal, or it is not presence at all. (Richard Rohr, The Universal Christ)

Do you think your presence at Mass matters? Why?

Praying at Home

The Tsp Prayer

Perhaps the most simple way of structuring a prayer is to use the three themes **thank you**, **sorry** and **please**. Have a short time of chat and discussion focusing on what your child might want to say to God using these three themes. TSP, the first letters of Thank you, Sorry, Please, remind us of the recipe book abbreviation for teaspoon. It can be helpful to give your child a plastic teaspoon to remind them of these three basic categories for prayer.

The five-fingered prayer

A simple method that helps children to pray by assigning different groups to each of their fingers. Start with the thumb and end with the pinkie.



Reconciliation: Step by Step

BEFORE Take some time to think about the things you have done that you are sorry for.

Now you are ready, **LETS BEGIN....**

- ✓ When the priest welcomes you, make the **Sign of the Cross** together.
- ✓ Begin by saying

“Bless me Father for I have sinned.”

- ✓ **Tell the priest the ways you have sinned.**

Remember he represents Jesus, and he reminds you how much Jesus loves you and that Jesus forgives you!

- ✓ The priest gives you a **Penance** – it might be an action or a prayer
- ✓ You promise not to do it again by saying the **Act of Contrition**
- ✓ The priest offers you God’s forgiveness which is also called **Absolution. Make the Sign of the Cross**

AFTERWARDS Do your penance - then **CELEBRATE!**



Dear God,
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
I know you love me very much.
Please help me to do my penance, to do
better, and to avoid anything that might
lead me to sin.
Amen.

Traditional prayers for your child to learn

Our Father

Our Father, who art in Heaven,
hallowed by Thy name,
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace.
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed are thou
among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners, now
and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Glory be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

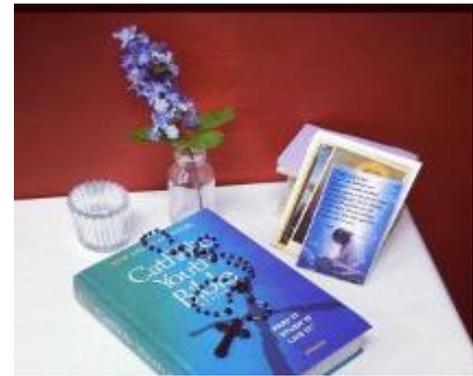
Apostles Creed

I believe in God,
the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ,
His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived
by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was
buried;
He descended into hell;
on the third day He rose again
from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of
God the Father Almighty;
from there He will come to judge
the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Holy Catholic Church,
the communion of Saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen

Prayer table at home

Prayer tables reminds us that Jesus is always with us, sharing in our family life. It is

a place to put small items, such as a crucifix, a candle or a Bible, that are special to your family and remind you of God's love. It can be put in your child's bedroom in a more communal family area.



Grace before family meals

Bless the food before us
The family beside us
And the love between us
Amen.

Bless us, O Lord, and
these, Thy gifts, which we
are about to receive from
Thy bounty. Through
Christ, our Lord. Amen.

For food in a world where many
walk in hunger; For faith in a world
where many walk in fear; For friends
in a world where many walk alone;
We give you thanks, O Lord.

Dear Lord, bless this bunch, as we
munch on our lunch. Amen.

SUPERMAN

To the tune of "Superman" you can find
here (40 seconds in):

www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9vrfEoc8_g

Thank you, Lord, for giving us food.
Thank you, Lord, for giving us food.
For this plateful, we are so grateful,
Thank you, Lord, for giving us food!

ADDAMS FAMILY

To the tune of "The Adams Family"
you can find here

www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZh43f0v3OU

Do do do do "Snap Snap"
Do do do do "Snap Snap"
Do do do do (x3) "Snap Snap"

We're hungry and we're thirsty;
there's nothing in our tummies.
The food looks really yummy,
so now we'll thank the Lord.

Some useful links

BibleGateway is a website designed to allow easy reading, listening, searching, and sharing of the Bible in many different versions and translations, including English, French, Spanish, and other languages. www.biblegateway.com



Care for the Family is a national charity which aims to promote strong family life and to help those who face family difficulties. www.careforthefamily.org.uk

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales The Bishops' dedicated Marriage and Family Life website signposts information and sources of support for marriage and family life across the Catholic Community in England and Wales. www.catholicfamily.org.uk



CHILDREN YOUTH & FAMILIES

Children, Youth and Families, Guildford offer lots of activities, courses and events for families, parents, and children in the Parish of Guildford. All CYF events are open to all families in the Guildford Deanery. www.cpg.church/family

Kitchen Table Project raises awareness of the role mums and dads play on the development of their children's faith and provide the tools and support to help parents succeed in inspiring faith at home. www.kitchentable.org.uk



Parent session dates

SESSION	MONDAY GROUP	THURSDAY GROUP
Parents' Session (Intro evening)	Monday 11 th October	Thursday 14 th October
Parents' Session (God)	Monday 15 th November	Thursday 11 th November
Parents' Session (Who is Jesus?)	Monday 6 th December	Thursday 9 th December
Parents' Session (Why did Jesus die?)	Monday 17 th January	Thursday 20 th January
Parents' Session (Baptism)	Monday 7 th February	Thursday 3 rd February
Half term	14th – 18th February	
Parents' Session (Reconciliation)	Monday 7 th March	Thursday 3 rd March
Easter Holiday	2 nd April – 19 th April	
Taught Mass via Zoom or in-person (TBC) FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY	Saturday 30 th April (& 7 th May), 9am	
Parents' Session (The Eucharist)	Monday 16 th May	Thursday 19 th May
Half Term	Monday 30th May – Friday 3rd June	

Family days

Advent – Saturday 27th/Sunday 28th November

Jesus – Saturday 29th/Sunday 30th January

Reconciliation – Saturday 26th/Sunday 27th March

FHC Masses

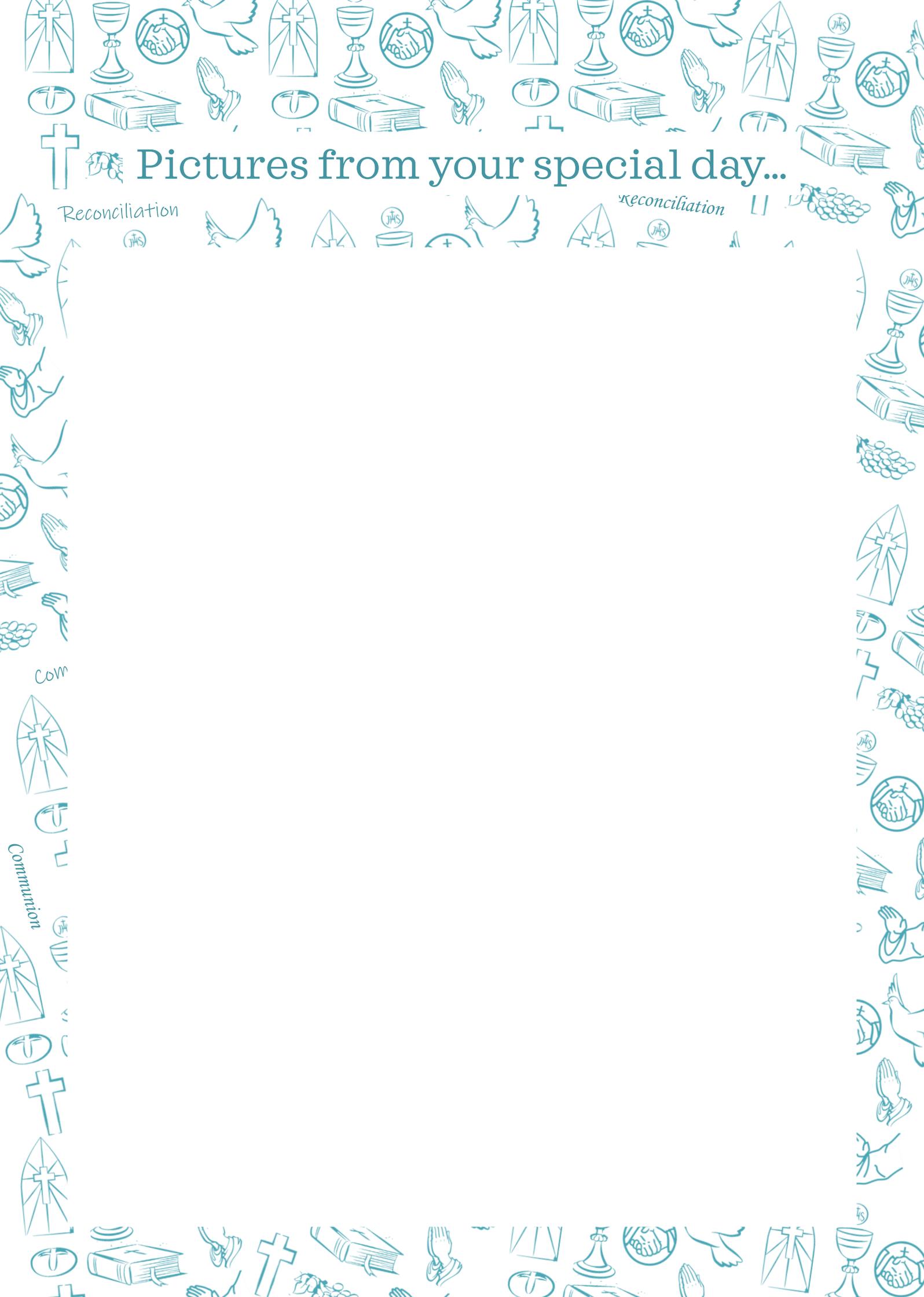
Saturday 11th or 18th June (TO BE CONFIRMED)

received the Sacrament of
Reconciliation for the first
time on

& received the Sacrament of
Holy Communion for the
first time on



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION
GUILDFORD



Pictures from your special day...

Reconciliation

reconciliation

Com

Communion



Reconciliation

Reconciliation

Reconciliation

Visit the FHC Parents Blog: www.cpg.church/fhc-parents

Communion

Communion

Communion

Reconciliation

CHILDREN YOUTH & FAMILIES

WWW.CPGCHURCH/FAMILY

Communion

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