

MEND

*At-Church
Support Materials*



Faith and Family Life
Catholic Ministries

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TIME IS HOLY

PARENTS

(For use when beginning Family Meetings at-home with Mend. If they have already experienced Time is Holy, you can include the below introduction to Mend in another session or meeting. Parents and children will be separated for the first part of the Session.)

Supply List:

- Printable PDFs
 - Small Group Question 1/2 Sheet (1 per parent)
- Mend Boxes
- Family Meeting Guide Videos ([Download Link](#))
- Candle
- Lighter
- Pens (1 per parent) ([Purchase Here](#))

Set-Up:

- Group Table
 - Small Group Question Sheet (1 per parent)
 - Pens (1 per parent)
- Prayer Table
 - Candle

GATHER

Thank you for joining us today. Our goal for this meeting is that you leave here feeling inspired and prepared to lead Family Meetings in your home.

The theme is: Time is Holy. How we spend our time matters.

Somehow I think we have been programmed to think holiness happens only at Church, or in Mass, or when we are reading the Bible. We matter to God all the time. His holiness is in the midst of life, all around us. I think he loves to see us laughing together, building with Legos at home, out at the park, at a birthday party, in a classroom, at work, and spending time with him.

We all know that time is finite, there is a limited amount of it and we can't get more. So we as parents have to decide how we want to spend it. We set schedules and decide what we feel is important for our children.

CHECK-IN

Keeping in mind our “time” theme - I am going to have you reflect on 2 questions. A paper with these questions and a pen to journal with are available at your place. Take a few minutes to reflect and write.

**How does your family rest and relax?
Personally, how do you rest, reflect, and evaluate?**

We will now take some time to share with one another. **Introduce yourself by sharing your name, the ages of your children, and a simple outline of your day so far, how you have spent your time.** Then discuss a couple of your answers to the reflection questions you just journaled about.

(Give them some time to pair share or share in their family pod or small group.)

Let's take a moment and look at how God spent his time as he was busy creating the world. God created the world for six days. He spent this time working, designing, dreaming, and creating. Then he took a day to rest, reflect, and be present to it. We call this day the Sabbath. The seventh day!

God knew we needed a seventh day, a sabbath, and he included it as one of the 10 Commandments: “Keep holy the sabbath.” A day to worship, to be with those we love, to rest, and rejuvenate. He knew how important this time would be for us to be happy, holy, and healthy.

Our Jewish brothers and sisters have taken to heart this message. At sunset on Friday evening, as the sun leaves the earth, the woman of a Jewish home gathers her family, lights her menorah (candelabra), and prays a special prayer over all of them. As she prays, she invites her family to make three circles with their arms, bringing the light from the candles toward themselves. Then, she asks them to cover their eyes with their hands, in order to be completely present to the light as she finishes the prayer. She tells them to be with God, the light of the world, who leads them through the darkness.

For the next 24 hours, they do not work. The food will have already been shopped for, the house cleaned, and the meals prepared. Sabbath is their time to stop and enjoy the most important things. To spend time eating around a table, to enjoy quiet time, to worship together, visit, and play. A time to let the rush and anxiety go. A Jewish young

TIME IS HOLY - PARENTS

adult once said, "When my mom lights the candles on Friday evening - I find myself again."

How do we as families find ourselves again? How do we center ourselves to be present to the most important things? How do we schedule time to be with the people we love and have conversations that help form and inform who we are? If we are honest with ourselves, I think most of us would agree that we really don't want "more" but we do want "meaningful."

But somehow Sunday's have become just another day. There are sports games, practices, shopping to do, work, etc. Sometimes it even seems difficult to squeeze in an hour for Mass. A complete 24 hour sabbath does not seem realistic for most of us, but maybe we can find moments to set aside for a "holy pause" throughout our week. Say that together with me: "Holy Pause." It just sounds good! Moments to sit in the same room together with your family and talk about things that are important, surrounded by God's presence.

You are being given resources that invite you into a "holy pause." Each time you engage the materials I want you to think...holy pause. This book and/or box will be your faith formation experience. It is intended to help you have meaningful moments with the people you love most! Will it be perfect, no. Will there be meltdowns, probably. But there also will be silly and profound things said, prayers read, and little voices sharing about who God is. Time well spent!

OPENING PRAYER

Before I introduce you to the resources I want to invite you into a holy pause. To pray for a few moments in the light.

(Light a candle.)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I invite you to make three circles with your hands, bringing the light towards yourself. *(Model it for them.)* Now completely cover your eyes with your hands. For a few moments be only with the light, completely in the presence of God. *(Model it for them.)*

TIME IS HOLY - PARENTS

God of light, light our paths and fill our homes. Help us to stay close to you as we parent and lead. God, you have given us the greatest gift, our children, and for that we are so grateful.

Right now I invite you to say the name of each of your children quietly. *(Pause and wait.)*

God I give you my children by name - I love each one so very much, as I know you do. Please help me lead them toward your light. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

TEACHING

We are now going to dive into the resources that you will be provided to help you facilitate holy pauses in your home with your family. These holy pauses will follow the pattern of a Family Meeting.

We will now watch a video that breaks this open more, with some real parents.

(Play Family Meeting Guide for Parents. After the video, if needed, talk to them a little bit more about their role and see if they have any questions.)

MEND

(Pass out the boxes or refer to the digital version.)

You may feel ill-equipped or unprepared for the task of being the primary catechist of your children. Don't worry, you are not alone. That is a feeling many parents experience. We may be tempted to delegate this responsibility off to a trained catechist at-church, but the truth is that your voice is the most important in the life of your children. Even more important is the witness of your life. When your life and your words point to Jesus we can be sure your children will get to know him through you.

Mend is a first Reconciliation family experience designed to equip you to teach, share faith, and pray with your children as you lead 7 Family Meetings in your home through a variety of hands-on and innovative activities. We pray that your family will encounter Jesus and experience the beauty of Reconciliation as it connects to daily life by forming clay, making field goals, reading Scripture, engaging in meaningful conversation, and much more. We hope you will be able to dive deeper into the incredible gift God gives

us of Reconciliation. Inside your *Mend* Box you will find the Family Meeting sheets. The first sheet is entitled Welcome Home, and is a Parent Meeting just for you. Please take the time to complete this, it will prepare your heart for everything else. There is a short video link to watch, please do. Please do not miss this essential piece of the process, it really will make a difference. This process is an investment into both you and your children.

You will also be accompanied by a catechist or coach and pod or small group of parents who you will check-in with periodically to share your reflections, encourage each other on the journey, and have any questions answered. Each at-church Session you will be given an opportunity to share your experiences with the Family Meetings you recently completed. You will be asked: How did the Family Meeting go at-home? What went well? What was difficult? We hope through this process that you will learn to share your faith with your family, not just as an idea, but as a lived experience. It may be awkward at first, but trust us, the results will be life-giving. The meetings will also include separate content for parents and children, ending with a shared prayer experience.

Take a moment to look through the box as your children return to the room.

(Have the children join their parents and when sit at a new table all together.)

We are now going to experience a Family Meeting together with another real family through a video.

(Play Family Meeting Guide for the Entire Family. Pause and play as instructed. No additional supplies will be needed.)

Family Meetings can be fun and meaningful moments to connect as a family and learn about our faith. You will be sent home with a box full of Family Meetings. When you get your box, open it up and take a peek inside. Be sure to bring this box out of your car and into your home when you get back. Parents you may not remember, but I'm sure your children will.

We will now take a quick look at all the materials inside. *(Do a quick overview about the box with children present. Help the families to get excited, by highlighting certain parts. Let them know each lesson has something to learn and something hands-on to play or do. Their living room will be their "classroom" and their parent/s are the "teachers.")* It's going to be fun!

Time together, just your family, getting to know more about Jesus.

TIME IS HOLY - PARENTS

(Ask the children to help them out by listening and getting involved. Be sure to review the schedule for the Mini-Series, at-church Sessions, and Family Meetings including how they will complete the Family Follow Throughs, on Martha or another way. Let them know you are with them every step of the way. If they are struggling, or have questions, invite them to let you know. If needed, you can conclude by answering any questions. This may be difficult with restless children, read the room.)

CLOSING PRAYER

We will now conclude with a prayer as a group. Make one big circle around the room facing inward towards each other.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God, bless all our families. Help us to grow closer to you and each other as we begin to find moments for holy pauses in our homes.

Please now turn around and face outwards (not looking at each other).

God, help us to take our faith and your love out of this room. Guide us as we share our faith with others outside these doors, with our friends, neighbors, in our classrooms, and workplaces. You send us out to be your hands and feet in the world. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Add any last minute announcements. If possible, be at the door to say goodbye as families leave. This can be tough, usually people want your individual attention about something. Your team members can also be at the doors to say: "Goodbye, we can't wait to see you next time! Don't forget to get the box out of your car. We are praying for you." etc.)

TIME IS HOLY - PARENTS

How does your family rest and relax?

Personally, how do you rest, reflect, and evaluate?

Share your name, the ages of your children, and a simple outline of your day so far,
how you have spent your time.

TIME IS HOLY - PARENTS

How does your family rest and relax?

Personally, how do you rest, reflect, and evaluate?

Share your name, the ages of your children, and a simple outline of your day so far,
how you have spent your time.

TIME IS HOLY

CHILDREN

Supply List:

- Printable PDFs
 - Clock Craft Sheet (1 per child)
- Clock ([Purchase Here](#))
- Candle
- Religious Images or Statues
- Music & Speakers
- Markers ([Purchase Here](#))
- Scissors ([Purchase Here](#))
- Glue Sticks ([Purchase Here](#))
- Brad Pins ([Purchase Here](#))
- Prize for the Game

Set-Up:

- Prayer Table
 - Religious images or statues
 - Clock

GATHER

(Welcome and gather children together as they are being dropped off and parents are moving to their own meeting space. Set a clock in the center of a table with a candle.)

Welcome everyone! We are so happy to spend this time with you. I have set a clock on our prayer table today, because we are going to talk about time and the different ways we spend it.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us begin with a prayer.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

TIME IS HOLY - CHILDREN

Jesus, thank you for this time we have to spend with you. Help us to remember that you are with us every second of every day. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

GAME

We are now going to play a game. God's word, in the Bible from the book of Ecclesiastes, tells us that he has provided us with a time for every purpose under heaven. He has given us time for so many different and important things! There is a time to be born, a time to be silent, a time to talk, a time to laugh, and even a time to dance. We are going to celebrate these different times by sharing and acting some of them out.

God has given us a time to dance:

(Have a short freeze dance. Play Pharell Williams' song "I'm Happy" or a Christian song children can move to. Let them dance and then periodically stop the music and have them "freeze" in place. You can work towards a winner by having children sit out if they move, or just keep playing all together.)

God loves to see us rejoicing! In the Scriptures we know Jesus attended weddings and celebrations and I'm sure he danced with his family and friends, too.

God has given us a time to laugh:

(Ask if anyone has a funny joke to tell. Have them share a few. Prepare a few in case no one volunteers.)

Giggling and laughing together is an important use of our time. God made a world that has funny moments in it!

God has given us a time to be born:

(Have the children share with the person next to them when their birthday is. Give whoever has a birthday closest to today a small gift/prize.)

God decided perfectly the day and time each of us would be born, and what family we would be born into! Our Birthdays help us to always remember our first "birth" day.

God has given us a time to speak:

(Have the children share with the person next to them what their favorite time of the day is and why.)

Aren't you glad God gave us language so we can have conversations with one another? Life would be really boring if no one ever talked. Thank you God for allowing us to get to know each other with our words.

TIME IS HOLY - CHILDREN

God has given us a time to be silent:

(Gather children and challenge them to be silent for 1 minute. Then you can double it to 2 if possible, deciding the time length based on the age of the children.)

We know Jesus took time on earth to be quiet and talk to God when he was troubled and worried. Prayer is the time we can talk quietly to God.

Jesus knows how important all of these different “times” are in our lives. He knows because he lived on this earth and spent time experiencing them, as well.

ACTIVITY

We have talked about some of the ways we spend our time, now we are going to do a craft where we each make a clock.

The middle of our clocks say: “Time is Holy”, this reminds us that Jesus is present in everything we do. He loves to see us laugh and play, he also knows our sadness and disappointment.

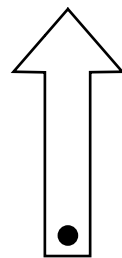
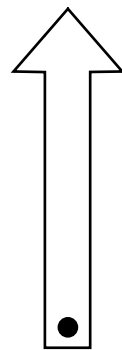
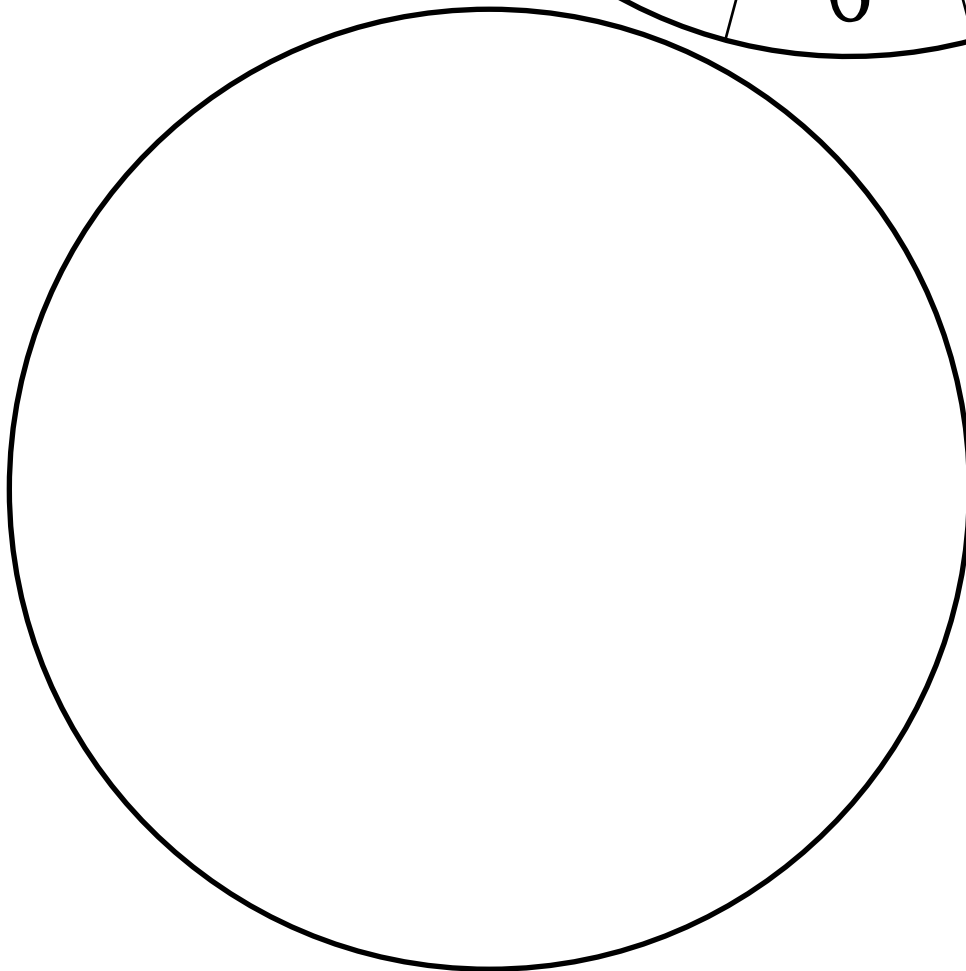
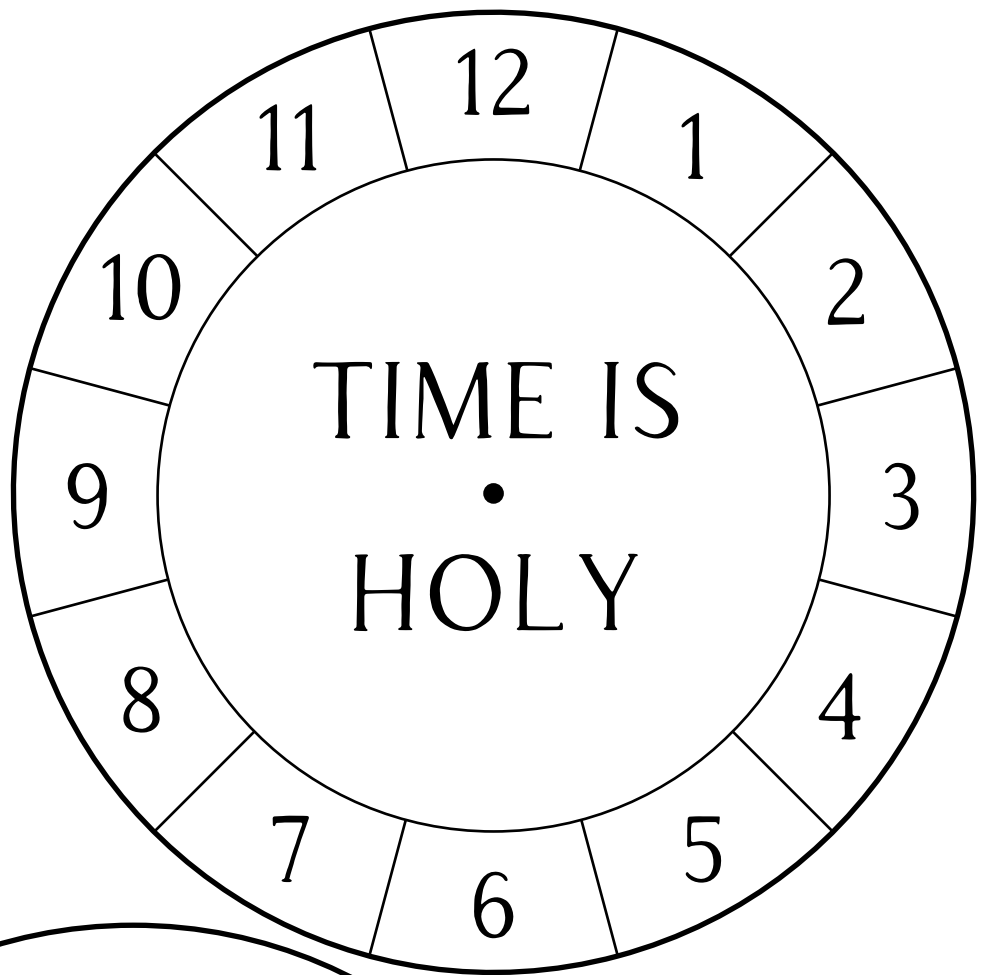
(Lead the children in completing the Clock Craft. Instructions can be found on the printable PDF. You may need to provide some examples, such as: if you eat dinner when it's dark outside it's probably 6:00, if you go to baseball or dance after school it's probably 4:00, if you say bedtime prayers that's probably at 7:30, etc. Children may not know exact times, and that's okay!)

We are going to meet back up with your parents. They too have been talking about “time”. You are going to hear about something called a “holy pause” that you will be doing together as a family. You will be given a special box to help with this. Listen closely because you are going to be an important part of helping your mom and dad share this time with you! Don't forget to share your experience and the clocks you made with your parents.

(Return to parents.)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Color then cut out all of the pieces.
2. Cut the lines between the numbers on the clock.
3. Glue the clock to the back circle.
4. With the brad pin attach the clock arrows to the center.
5. Write some things you do at the different times behind the numbers.



MEND AT-CHURCH

It is important to have parents gathered periodically throughout the *Mend* process.

The goal of gathering is to:

- Find out what is going well and what parents are struggling with in the *Mend* Box Family Meetings.
- To encourage, deepen, and support their experience of the Family Meetings with any tips, inspiration, or information.
- To meet and hear from other parents on a similar journey. There is wisdom in any room of adults, especially parents!
- To give children a positive and meaningful experience at-church.
- To pray together - for each other and for their families.

This resource has been provided to support you in facilitating family Sessions held at-church throughout the *Mend* experience. The sessions include separate experiences for parents and children, and a combined family prayer experience to close your sessions.

There is plenty of content to fill a 1-1.5 hour time frame in the Sessions and a 3 hour time frame for the Mini-Retreat. The Sessions from the Mini-Retreat can also be broken up into additional individual Sessions. This material could be used from start to finish or you can use different sections to supplement things you may have already planned. We realize each of our directors have different gifts; some are wonderful teachers, some are storytellers, others are better facilitating small groups, some are gifted in finding volunteers to present material. Use your strengths to lead your family sessions, and look for others who can take the pieces you are not as confident in. It takes a team!

There are supplies that need to be pulled together to help bring these lessons to life. We have given you supply lists. We have also suggested ways to set a mood in the room; candles, music, dimming the lights etc. We feel it is critical to set holy spaces to lead parents into deeper intimacy with Christ and themselves. The children's sessions always begin with gathering around a prayer table covered with different items for each lesson to help draw them into the experience. Depending on the size of the group, you may decide to break the group up into classrooms led by catechists and helpers. We cannot over emphasize the impact of simple but beautiful decor, great hospitality, and intimate prayerful spaces. Your attention to detail tells everyone this is important, we prepared for you!

As a Church we are just beginning the journey of calling parents into the opportunity of forming their children and themselves more deeply. We realize parents are in different places and stages in their own faith journeys. We have written sessions we feel best take into account today's parents. The majority of the parents we encounter have very little theological background, but have the wisdom of their own lives to reflect on. We have found that when we give them helpful prompts and time to process, they do very well in sharing with each other. Parents, for the most part, are coming to these sessions because they've been told they have to, and probably aren't expecting anything that will truly impact their lives. It is our hope that these sessions meet them where they are at and slowly lead them into something more. Feel free to scale the material up or down. It is most important that families leave with a positive experience of Church and community, feeling like they have a place in it.

SESSION 1

PARENTS

(To be used between Family Meeting 2 and 3. Parents and children will be separated for the first part of each session.)

Supply List:

- Printable PDFs
 - Double Sided Small Group Question Sheet (1 per parent)
 - Cut-out Sheep on Cardstock (1 per parent)
 - Good Shepherd Image
- Roll of Poster Paper (with image of a shepherd and a pasture)
- Glue ([Purchase Here](#))
- Cotton Balls ([Purchase Here](#))
- Tape (to attach sheep to poster) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Pens (1 per parent) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Video 1 ([Link](#))
- Video 2 ([Link](#))

Set-Up:

- Group Table
 - Small Group Question Sheet (1 per parent)
 - Cut-out Sheep on Cardstock (1 per parent)
 - Pens (1 per parent)
- Prayer Table
 - Any images you may have of Jesus the Good Shepherd
 - Any images you may have of sheep
 - A lit candle
 - A cross or crucifix

GATHER

Welcome to our first session for *Mend*! Thank you so much for making the time to be here! We know life is full and we value your time. We gather together to unite ourselves in Jesus and our community so we can all be inspired and supported as we work to help our children remain united to Jesus. The work is hard, but worthwhile, and we are all together in it.

MEND SESSION 1 - PARENTS

At the time Jesus was on earth, sheep were very important. Their wool was made into clothes and blankets and it provided relief from the cold. Sheep were kept for long periods of time, and their wool was sheared year after year. Shepherds were tasked with taking care of the sheep, and were an important part of the community.

Jesus liked to use images the people could understand to teach them. He referred to himself as the Good Shepherd and there are many Scriptural references about him as shepherd and us as his sheep.

Today we are going to look at some of these Scriptural references and how they relate to us and the sacrament of Reconciliation. The image of the Good Shepherd is often used for children preparing for Reconciliation. As parents we are both sheep and shepherds. We, too, have been given a flock to raise and care for. We can learn a lot about parenting from the Good Shepherd as well.

We are going to begin with a short video clip of a shepherd calling to his sheep. (*Play Video 1 of a shepherd calling sheep. You can end the video after the last sheep passes over water at 1:58.*)

For a moment close your eyes. Where do you see yourself as the shepherd is calling: close, far away, running forward, ignoring the sound and continuing to graze, uncertain, jumping forward at the last second?

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray together.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Jesus, You tell us that you are the Good Shepherd. You are trying to lead us on this journey called life. Sometimes we stay close with the flock, sometimes we stray, and sometimes we are that last sheep afraid to jump forward. You patiently wait for us and you continue to keep calling. Help us to listen to your voice as we gather today. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CHECK-IN

In *Mend* Family Meeting 1 we learn that we are all created in love and for love by God, each handmade and unique, by molding our creation dough into unique shapes. In Family Meeting 2 we learned about how God created human beings with free will, with the ability to choose him or choose to act against his will for our lives, thus creating the possibility of sin. We ended that Family Meeting with the promise of Jesus being sent to save us from our sin and reconcile us with the Father.

Let's take a few minutes to share your experiences with the Family Meetings you recently completed.

How did Family Meeting 1 and 2 go at-home? What went well? What was difficult?
What did you and your family learn?

Today, we will do a few activities and some sharing to offer support as you move toward the next Family Meeting all about the Good Shepherd, Jesus.

REFLECT AND SHARE

Sheep know the sound of the shepherd's voice. It lives deep inside of us, and it calls to us. Sometimes we listen attentively, sometimes we hear it and turn the volume down, and sometimes we are encouraged by the sound of Jesus calling to us like an old familiar friend. The other day I saw something saying "conscience is God's presence in man." The Church reminds us that our conscience is "man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths" (*Gaudium et Spes* 16). We have a voice in us that knows right from wrong, what is good for us and what is not. When we don't listen to that voice we become conflicted, and after a while we can talk ourselves into just hearing our own voice. The process of Reconciliation allows us the chance to be honest with ourselves again and for God's voice of truth and peace to be heard.

Take a few moments to reflect and journal on the first set of prompts for yourself, they will not be shared. Then complete the parent prompts, when ready share your responses with your pod or small group (or the person sitting next to you)

MEND SESSION 1 - PARENTS

Personal: (not shared)

What do you think the Good Shepherd wants to say to you right now? What does he want you to hear?

When have you been comforted by his voice?

When have you ignored the shepherd's voice?

Can you hear him? What does his voice sound like? Is his voice loud or quiet, encouraging or judgmental, loving or angry?

Parent: (shared)

We, too, have been tasked with raising and herding sheep. The Good Shepherd is our best example for parenting. Our children know the sound of our voice.

What do you think your child would say your voice sounds like?

What do they need to hear you say more? Say less?

TEACHING

Sheep are not the smartest of animals, and they need to be led. Without a shepherd's eye on them they would be destroyed by the wilderness. The shepherd brings them to graze in the grass. When that grass source is exhausted, without a shepherd leading them to another spot, they will eat each other's feces. The shepherd continues to move them and bring them to healthy pastures. Let's watch a video that helps us visualize this.

(Play Video 2, an aerial view of sheep being led.)

The sheep don't know exactly where they are going, but trust that the shepherd will take care of them. From the ground it looks like chaos, but from up above it is beautiful to watch. And you can see that no one gets left behind.

The Good Shepherd wants to lead us through our own wilderness. The world we live in can be tough terrain. He has a destination for us, a life with him and those we love forever. He can see it all perfectly from above.

The problem with that beautiful image is that humans don't always like to be led. Everyone at some point turns their back on God and goes their own way. Often these moments lead us to sin and separation from him. It is us who leave him, not him who leaves us.

Take a few moments to reflect and journal on the first set of prompts under Teaching for yourself, they will not be shared. Then complete the parent prompts, when ready share your responses with your pod or small group (or the person sitting next to you).

MEND SESSION 1 - PARENTS

Personal: (not shared)

Do you ever invite God to lead you, to just take you to the next thing. Do you trust him that much?

What are the feelings you have from watching the aerial view of the sheep?

What is separating you from God right now?

Parent: (shared)

Is it getting harder for you to lead your children? In what areas do you see them becoming more independent, wanting things their way?

Do you think it is peaceful for them to know God has a plan for their life? Do you ever tell them this?

Sheep don't always listen to the shepherd, sometimes they ignore the sound of his voice. The shepherd had a tool, called a staff, to help lead and manage the sheep. The staff was a long and sturdy stick with a hook at one end. The shepherd used the staff to catch the sheep, and pull them out of tough spots, and to protect them from danger or predators. They also used it to help point the way for the sheep and lead them in the right direction. The shepherd spent a lot of time prodding the sheep along.

Are you in any tough spots right now that you need the Good Shepherd to lead you out of? Do you feel God prodding you along? As parents we are also called to lead and manage our flock. Sometimes our children can push boundaries and think they know best. But parents know the terrain and the threats their children might not be able to identify just yet.

(Slowly read through these questions, giving some time for silent reflection.)

How could you use a staff? Do you feel like you spend a lot of time prodding children along? What are some real threats you worry about your children getting lost or caught up in? What are things you worry about for them? Why is it hard to say no or set limits? What is toughest right now in your parenting?

Sheep are known to be very unsteady on their legs, especially when their coats are extra heavy or when pregnant. They often fall over and land on their backs. This is called a "cast" sheep, they are completely helpless. If left on their backs they can die within a matter of hours as their stomach gases build up and prevent them from breathing.

In the Scriptures, it says that the Good Shepherd would leave the 99 to take care of the one lost sheep. This was because a cast sheep left unaided was in imminent danger. Jesus is always on the lookout for us when we get lost. We can get pretty unsteady and get

MEND SESSION 1 - PARENTS

ourselves into some pretty messy situations. When we get off the path, and left to our own devices, we can get very far from our best selves.

When the shepherd would find the cast sheep they would sit with it. They would massage its legs to help get the blood flow back. Then the shepherd would wrap the sheep around his neck and continue to work its legs as he returned to watch over his flock. Eventually after the sheep's legs had been revived the shepherd would put it back down amongst the others.

This is a beautiful image of Reconciliation. Jesus finding us, reviving us, and returning us to the flock, so we can hear his voice again.

(Slowly read through these questions, giving some time for silent reflection.)

How do you view the sacrament of Reconciliation for yourself? Has your opinion of the sacrament changed at all as you are preparing your child to receive it? As a parent can you see how you have had to go after the one? Where do you see each of your children struggling? When your child has done something they know is wrong and they are sorry, how do you offer forgiveness?

The most beautiful thing about the Good Shepherd is that he would do anything to help care for his sheep. After the sheep had been grazing all day, and as darkness set in, the shepherd would establish a pen for the sheep to sleep in. The shepherd would actually lay himself at the foot of the pen. He laid his own life down for the safety of the sheep. He became the gate that kept the sheep from becoming food for others.

Jesus, our Good Shepherd laid down his life for us. He gave his life in exchange for the eternal life that is offered to all of us. He did this out of complete love for us. We as parents can understand sacrificial love. We too lay ourselves down for the good of our children. We love them in a way that is different from any other type of way that we love. We love them with our entire being. God loves us in this same radical way.

Take a few moments to reflect and journal on the second set of prompts under Teaching, when ready share your responses with your pod or small group (or the person sitting next to you.)

**What does it feel like to hear about the love of God who laid down his life for us?
Reconciliation is a chance for us to be loved in that completely unconditional way. In
what ways do you need that?**

MEND SESSION 1 - PARENTS

Do your children need to earn your love for you to love them, why not? Why do you love them even if they disobey?

What are a couple words to describe the way you love your children?

How can they use the peace and grace of Reconciliation?

WITNESS

We are now going to hear from a member of our community about their experience with the sacrament of Reconciliation and the Good Shepherd.

(Have someone prepared to share about their experience with the sacrament of Reconciliation. Why do they choose to receive it? How do they feel before? How do they feel when they walk away? Have they ever had any bad experiences? Why do they continue to go back?)

ACTIVITY

In front of you, you have a small sheep. Take a moment to write your name on the bottom and add some glue and cotton balls. We will use this for our closing prayer experience with the children.

The children are returning and they too have a sheep with their name on it. Take a moment to share your sheep with one each other.

CLOSING PRAYER

(You should have your poster roll with the Good Shepherd and the pasture hanging in front. You can use the Good Shepherd PDF to enlarge and then draw some simple hills and grass for the pasture. At the top you can write in big letters: "We Are LOVED By The Good Shepherd.")

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Jesus, you gave us the example of a shepherd leading sheep. You tell us that you are the Good Shepherd and that we are your sheep. You want to lead us, find us, and care for us. The sacrament of Reconciliation is an important part of how you keep us close to you.

(Invite parents and children to come forward and tape their sheep to the poster up front. Return to prayer.)

MEND SESSION 1 - PARENTS

Jesus help us to follow you. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We hope you had a meaningful time together today and we pray your conversation about the Good Shepherd in your next Family Meeting is fruitful. Have a great week!

REFLECT AND SHARE

Personal: (not shared)

What do you think the Good Shepherd wants to say to you right now? What does he want you to hear?

When have you been comforted by his voice?

When have you ignored the shepherd's voice?

Can you hear him? What does his voice sound like? Is his voice loud or quiet, encouraging or judgmental, loving or angry?

Parent: (shared)

We, too, have been tasked with raising and herding sheep. The Good Shepherd is our best example for parenting. Our children know the sound of our voice.

What do you think your child would say your voice sounds like?

What do they need to hear you say more? Say less?

TEACHING

Personal: (not shared)

Do you ever invite God to lead you, to just take you to the next thing. Do you trust him that much?

What are the feelings you have from watching the aerial view of the sheep?

What is separating you from God right now?

MEND SESSION 1 - PARENTS

Parent: (shared)

Is it getting harder for you to lead your children? In what areas do you see them becoming more independent, wanting things their way?

Do you think it is peaceful for them to know God has a plan for their life? Do you ever tell them this?

What does it feel like to hear about the love of God who laid down his life for us?

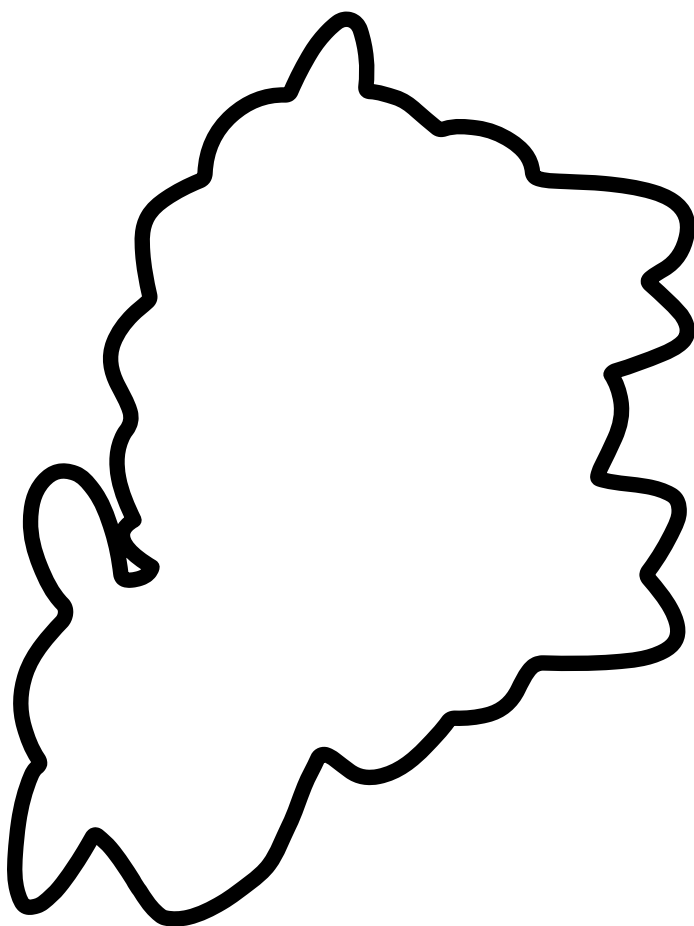
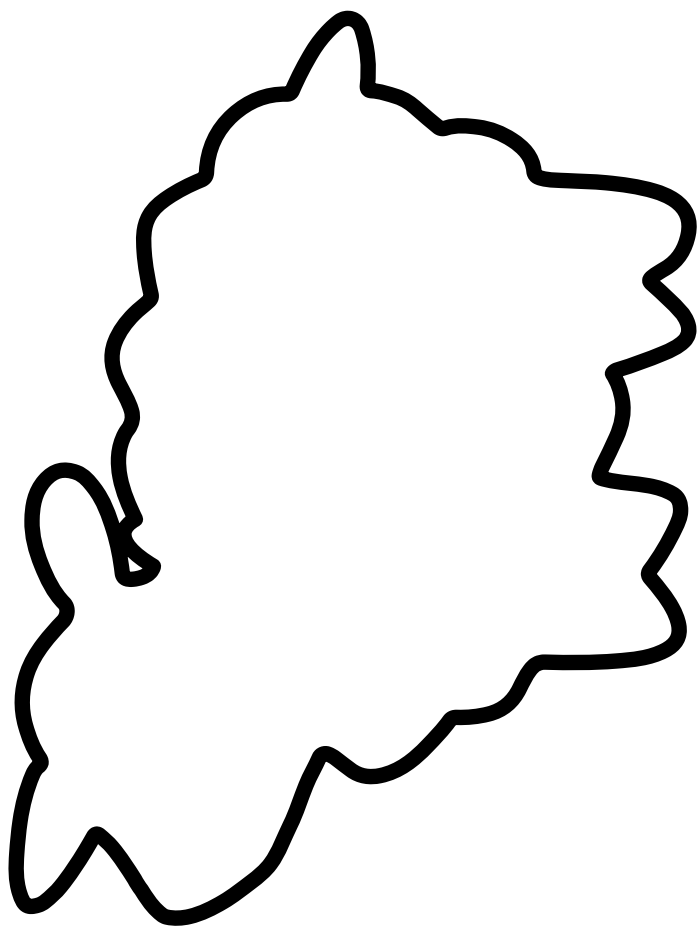
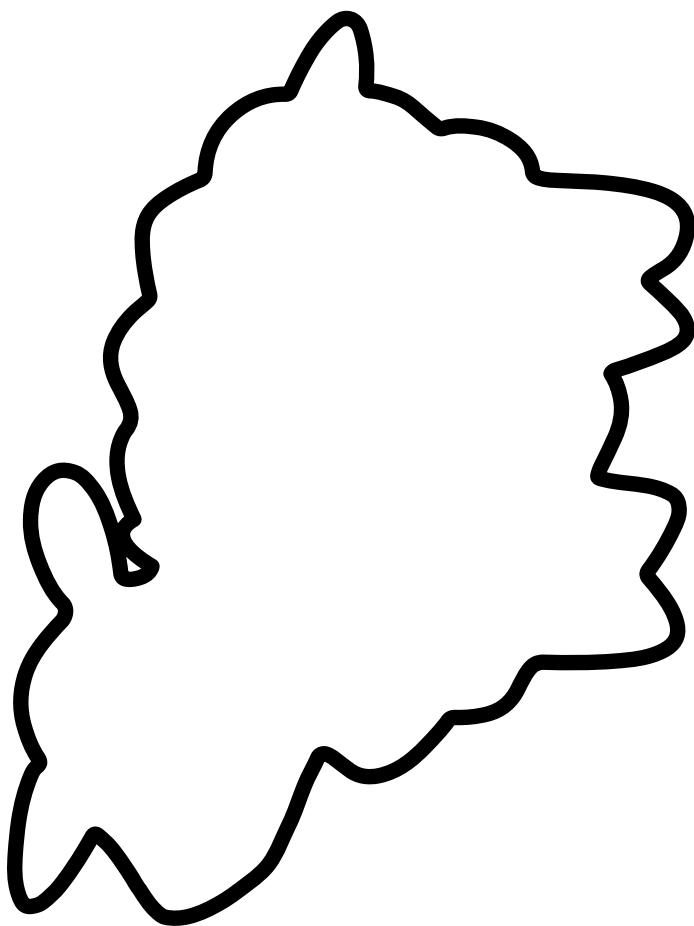
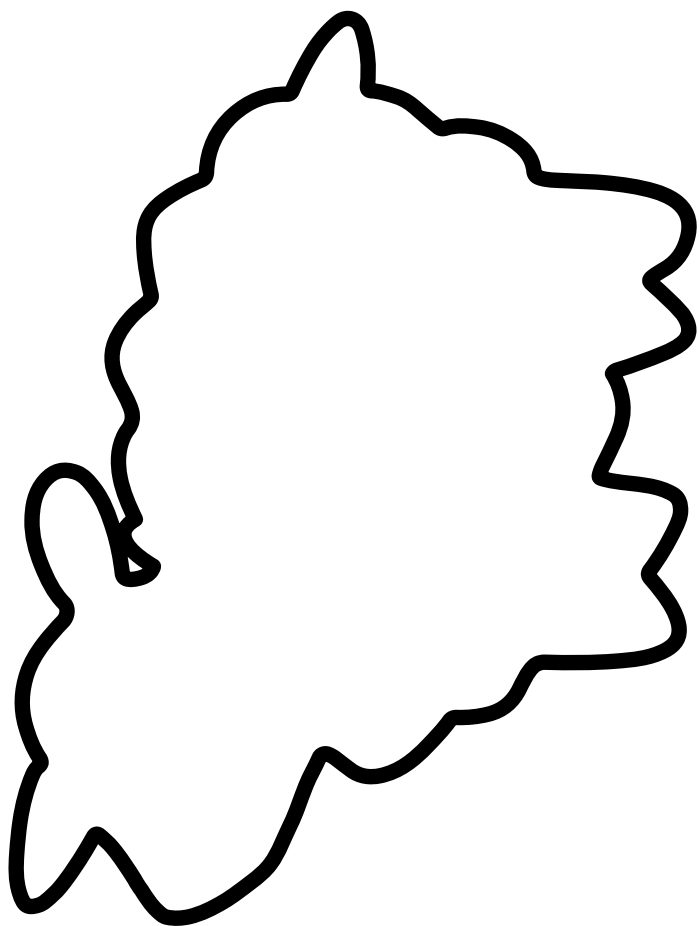
Reconciliation is a chance for us to be loved in that completely unconditional way. In what ways do you need that?

Do your children need to earn your love for you to love them, why not? Why do you love them even if they disobey?

What are a couple words to describe the way you love your children?

How can they use the peace and grace of Reconciliation?





SESSION 1

CHILDREN

(To be used between Family Meeting 2 and 3. Parents and children will be separated for the first part of each session.)

Supply List:

- Printable PDFs
 - Cut-out Sheep on Cardstock (1 per child)
 - Good Shepherd Image
- Balloons (1 per child + some extras if they pop and 1 for the prayer table, blown up and tied) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Large Box or Tub (for balloon game)
- Wood Dowels or Sticks (1 per child and 1 for the prayer table) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Items to change the child in the chair for the glasses game
- Pair of Glasses
- Large Question Mark (cut out of poster board)
- Crucifix
- Images of the Good Shepherd
- A baggie filled with cotton balls to hide
- Small soft balls to use for dodgeball ([Purchase Here](#))
- Glue ([Purchase Here](#))
- Cotton Balls ([Purchase Here](#))
- Pens (1 per child) ([Purchase Here](#))

Set-Up:

- Prayer Table
 - Balloon
 - Stick
 - Pair of Glasses
 - Large Question Mark
 - Crucifix
 - Images of the Good Shepherd

GATHER

(Gather around the prayer table. On the table include the following items: a balloon, a stick or staff, a pair of glasses, a large question mark cut out of poster board, a crucifix, any image you may have of Jesus as the Good Shepherd - a printable one is included.)

OPENING PRAYER

Today we are going to talk about the Good Shepherd. Let's say a prayer first.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Jesus, thank you for bringing us here together. Each of us is very different, some of us have curly hair, long hair, short hair, some of us love sports, some like dance, and others like to read. (You can put in your own images here, to help your group reflect on.) But no matter how different you made us, you tell us that you love us all the same. It is impossible for you to love us any more or any less than you do. Thank you for loving us all. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

TEACHING

Today we are going to talk about Jesus, our Good Shepherd. At the time Jesus was on earth sheep were very important to the people. Their wool was used in many ways. The people who took care of the sheep were called shepherds. Some of the shepherds didn't do their jobs that well and didn't care for the sheep in the way they should. But then there were the good shepherds who cared for, protected, and loved their sheep very much.

When Jesus talked to the people he used this example about sheep and shepherds because they could understand what this meant. He told them to think of him as the Good Shepherd. There are many different ways he described what the Good Shepherd does for his sheep. In each of these examples he was talking about us as his sheep and him as our shepherd. We have some different items on our prayer table that are going to explain this to us even more.

MEND SESSION 1 - CHILDREN

A balloon. The shepherd's job was to lead his sheep across the hillsides while they ate lots of grass. It was tough sometimes to get the sheep to follow and stay out of trouble. The shepherd had a tool called a staff that was a long stick with a hook on top. The shepherds would use this hook to pull the sheep out of bushes they got stuck in and they used the stick end to poke the sheep along in the right direction.

Right now you are each going to get your own balloon. *(Have them blown up ahead of time.)* This is going to be your sheep, and you will be the shepherd. You also get a stick to help you move and guide your sheep balloon along. You are going to lead it into the large box at the end of the room. The one thing you cannot do is raise your stick too high or hit anyone else with it. If you do, you will be removed from the game. I will show you an example of how to lead your sheep. *(Show them how. Have them play a few rounds depending on time.)*

(Sit them back down.) The Good Shepherd, Jesus, loves and cares for us very much. He wants to lead us to heaven, which is a life with him forever. Sometimes we get ourselves in some bad situations. *(Ask for life examples.)* Reconciliation is him pulling us out of our messes and helping us get back on the path to follow him.

Glasses. The Good Shepherd knows his sheep. He keeps a close eye on them and knows them by name.

We are going to play a game to help us understand more about "seeing" the sheep. In this game we are all going to be shepherds looking at one sheep together. Who wants to be the sheep first? *(Have that child sit in a chair and let all the shepherds examine the sheep closely for 30 seconds. Then have a couple people hold up a dark sheet or have the child leave the room. Have someone change something about that child. Untie a shoe, add or subtract something, etc. Next, put down the sheet or bring the child back in to sit down. See if the shepherds can see what is different about the sheep. Have them try a few rounds with different sheep depending on time.)*

Our Good Shepherd, Jesus, sees us and knows everything about us. We are each created differently, but loved the same. He can tell when things change about us, especially when it comes to our behavior. He sees when we disobey and sin. Reconciliation is the chance for us to admit to Jesus about things that have changed, and some of our not so great choices. The Good Shepherd loves his sheep and wants them free from feeling bad about things they have done. He is able to still see the best in us.

MEND SESSION 1 - CHILDREN

A large question mark. Sometimes the sheep would get distracted and become separated from the flock. They could get lost in all kinds of different spaces that would make it hard for the shepherd to find them.

(Have one child leave the room. While that child is gone, choose another child to hide the sheep - cotton balls stuffed into a zip-lock bag. Have the child hide the bag, as all the other children watch. Invite the first child back in, the children are not allowed to tell them where the sheep is hidden. They are to guide the shepherd to his sheep by yelling "hot" or "cold" as they get closer or further away from the sheep, until the sheep is found. Pick new children to look for and hide the sheep. Play more rounds depending on time.)

In the Bible, it tells us that the Good Shepherd would leave his 99 sheep to find the one that is lost. We each mean that much to Jesus. Sometimes we walk away from Jesus by our choices and decisions. He never gives up on us. Reconciliation helps lead us back to him. We are that found sheep! In the Bible, it says the Good Shepherd gets so excited upon finding his lost sheep!

Crucifix. The Good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. After the sheep had spent the day wandering and feeding on grass, the shepherd would find a spot for them to sleep. Because they were always looking for fresh grass for the sheep, oftentimes they had to establish a makeshift pen far away from their farm for them to rest for the night. The good shepherds who loved their sheep would actually lay their own bodies down as a fence in front of the sheep as they slept. This was to help protect the sheep from wolves and other animals that could destroy them.

We are going to play a small game of good shepherd dodge ball. *(Have a few soft balls to use. Choose some to be sheep, who stand along the back wall. Choose some to be shepherds who stand in front of them and protect them from the balls. Choose some to be wolves who try and hit the sheep with the balls. The sheep can only try and move out of the way of the ball, but if hit, get out. The shepherds can get hit with the ball but remain in. The shepherds can also throw the balls back to hit the wolves who, if hit, get out. The side with all sheep or wolves out wins. You can play multiple rounds rotating around the group as time permits.)*

(Sit them back down.) Our Good Shepherd gave his life for us, his sheep. He died on the cross to protect us from the evil of sin. But sin still has a way of sneaking back into our lives. Reconciliation allows us to get rid of our sins, and give them back to Jesus.

CRAFT

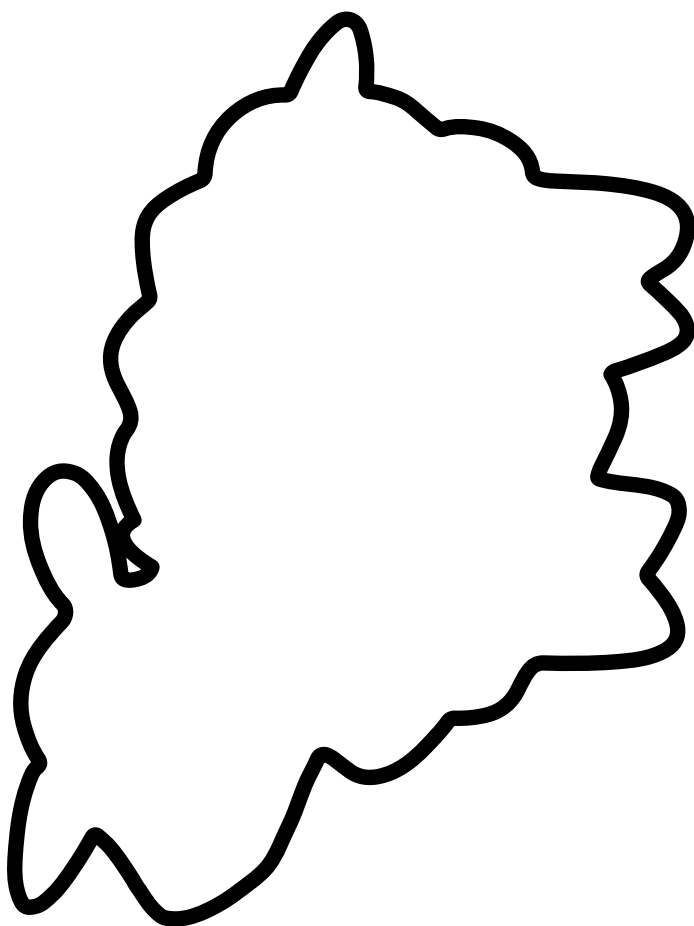
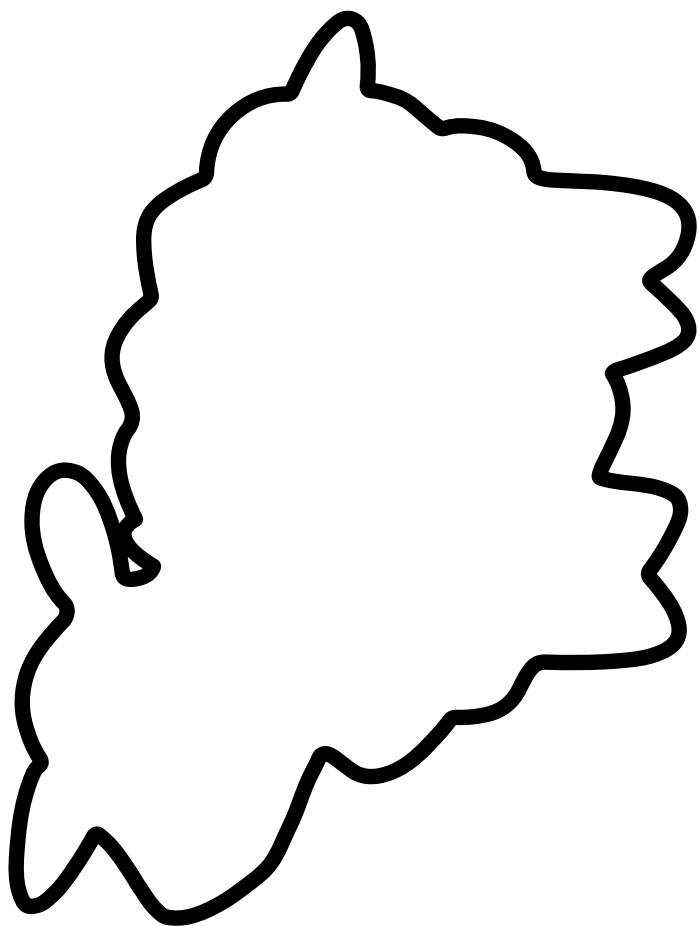
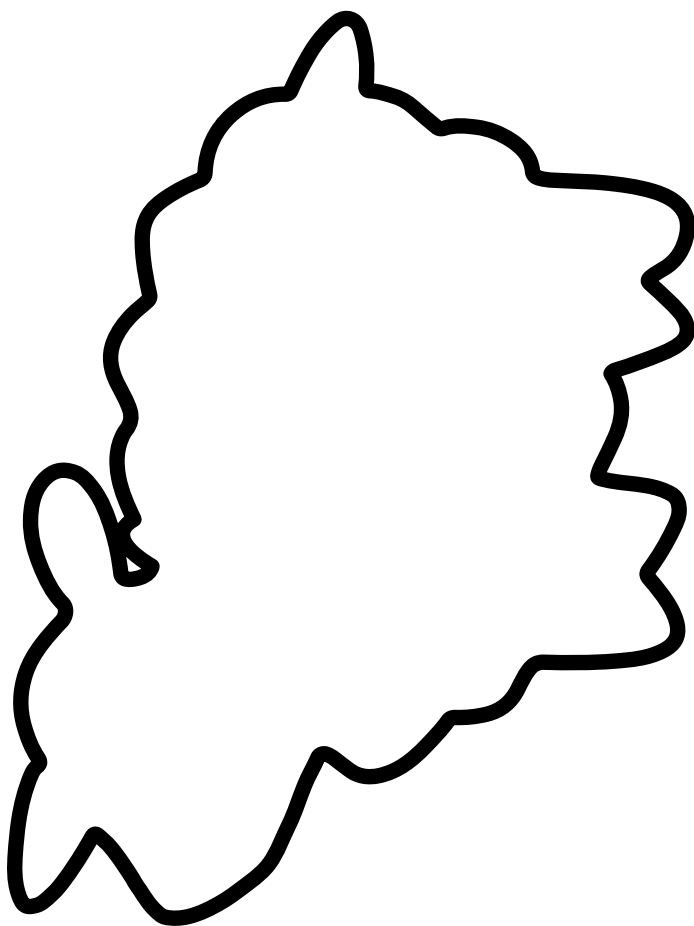
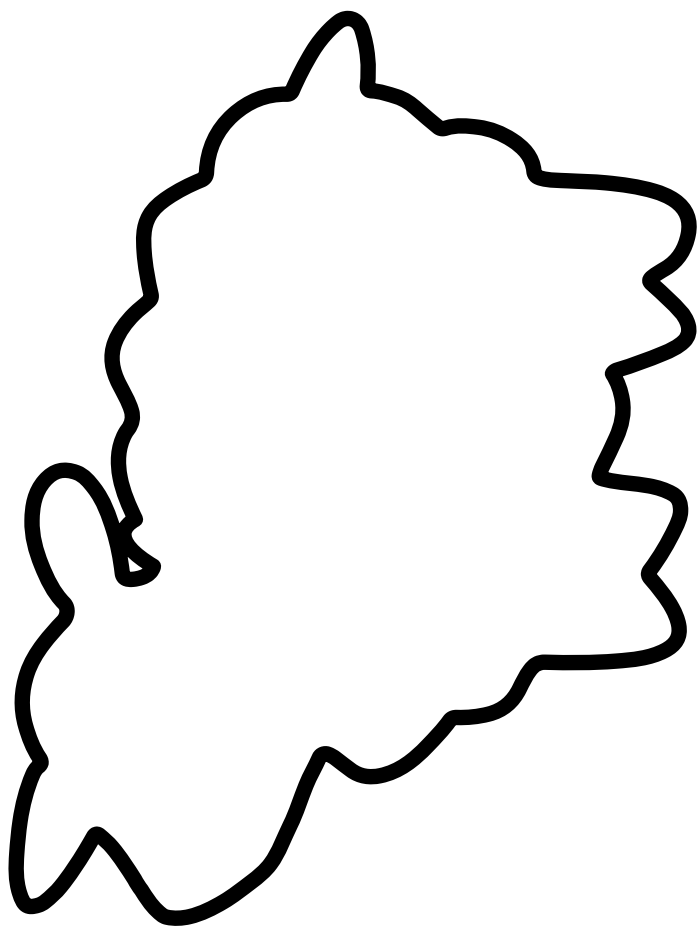
(You will need 1 sheep cut-out per child, if possible use card stock so it is more durable. The children are going to bring their sheep to the closing prayer experience with their parents. Have the children use glue and cotton balls to decorate their sheep, and then write their names on it.)

We are going to return to your parents who have also been talking about Jesus our Good Shepherd. What are a few things we learned about Jesus, our shepherd today?

Why is Reconciliation important for the sheep?

Lead your children, with their cut-out sheep back to the space their parents are in for the closing prayer.





SESSION 2

PARENTS

(To be used between Family Meeting 6 and 7. Parents and children will be separated for the first part of each session.)

Supply List:

- Printable PDFs
 - Small Group Question Sheet (1 per parent)
 - Fillable Card (1 per parent per child)
- Clay (large slab) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Candle
- A Few Pieces of Pottery (vase, bowl, mug, etc.)
- Pens (1 per parent) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Video: God's Chisel ([Preview Link](#)) (Support the Skit Guides by purchasing from their [website](#))
- Color Pencils or Markers

Set-Up:

- Group Table
 - Small Group Question Sheet (1 per parent)
 - Pens (1 per parent)
 - Fillable Cards
- Prayer Table
 - Slab of Clay
 - Candle
 - A Few Pieces of Pottery

GATHER

Welcome to our second Session for *Mend*! Thank you so much for making the time to be here! We know life is full and we value your time. We gather together to unite ourselves in Jesus and our community so we can all be inspired and supported as we work to help our children remain united to Jesus. The work is hard, but worthwhile, and we are all together in it.

Today we begin with a big chunk of unmolded clay. (*Have a big slab of clay on the prayer table.*) It is nothing really, until someone holds it in the palm of their hand. Then it begins to come to life. Our God is described as a potter, and we are his clay, and his fingerprints are all over us.

When a potter sits down to begin, he daydreams about what he will make. Maybe a cup, a bowl, a vase. He begins to work with the clay, turning the wheel, as he gently helps the clay take shape. At this point God, our potter, sees only possibility.

But we, as clay, also have a will of our own, free will. At times we refuse to cooperate with the Potter's hands or we may just sit like an unmoving lump, completely resisting the Potter. Sometimes the Potter may have to accept that the clay might not become what he first dreamed up. But we belong to a loving and dynamic Potter who is able to re-imagine the clay; never giving up, never scrapping the project, and never replacing it with new perfect clay. He continues to ask himself: "What can I still make with this beautiful, worn, clay, that is here on my wheel?"

The Potter never ever takes his hands off the clay and yet he never forces it either. He begins to see that maybe this particular clay in front of him is going to be more of a Frisbee than a vase, as he had first thought. But as it twists and turns, moves and flattens, he continues to be in awe of this beautiful piece. He watches it grow, make decisions, learn lessons, fall in love, and raise a family. There are so many layers to this project.

We are loved by a God who continues to re-imagine and recreate with us. We are his greatest project. He never sees us as completely finished or completely unmoldable. He works with us as we go in and out of each life stage and loves us into completion. Most importantly, he offers us the peace of knowing we are meant to rest in his hands forever. What could Reconciliation have to do with the image we just reflected on? How could they be connected? How does it feel to know that we are unfinished, still on the Potter's wheel, does that give you a sense of hope?

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray together.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

MEND SESSION 2 - PARENTS

God, you tell us that we are your greatest project. Allow us to feel you holding us in your hands today. We also are holding and molding our children. Help us to be inspired as parents by the way you love and forgive us. May we share with our children what we have received.

Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CHECK-IN

In *Mend* Family Meeting 4 we learned about the cross, the pouring out of grace, and the sacrament of Baptism where we were first freed from sin. In Family Meeting 5 we learned how sin is to “miss the mark” and about the guides God gave us in the 10 Commandments and Beatitudes to live good and holy lives. In Family Meeting 6 we learned about our conscience and how to examine our choices, revealing where we need God the most.

Let’s take a few minutes to share your experiences with the Family Meetings you recently completed.

How did Family Meeting 4, 5, and 6 go at-home? What went well? What was difficult? What did you and your family learn?

Today, we will do a few activities and some sharing to offer support as you move toward the final Family Meeting all about the effect of making a good Confession.

REFLECT AND SHARE

We are known. The Potter knows the clay he works with. God sees us and knows us. He sees what we are in the midst of, we cannot hide from him.

There is a story of a Samaritan woman who meets Jesus at a well in the Scriptures. This woman has had many husbands and comes to fill her water jugs at midday so she will not encounter the other women who talk behind her back and pass judgment on her. This day, as she is drawing water, she encounters a Jewish man at the well whose name is Jesus. At first she is surprised because men typically do not interact with women in public, especially Samaritan women who are from a lower social status than Jews. But Jesus does not seem to mind.

MEND SESSION 2 - PARENTS

He asks her for a drink. He begins to tell her that the water she is drawing will eventually leave her thirsty again, but that he can offer her living water. If she drinks this water she will never be thirsty again. She asks him to give her this water so she will not have to keep coming to this well. As they talk, Jesus tells her that he knows the life she is living, spending time with many different men. But somehow him knowing this does not make her feel disgraced. He does not seem to be judging her, but instead offering her another way - the opportunity to drink from his water. This water represents a call to a new life, to drink from his cup. As part of this exchange he also tells her that he is the Messiah, the promised one.

After she finishes at the well, she runs home to her village to tell others about this man she met. He had seen her in her situation, knowing full well her choices and struggles, and yet offered her hope. She said, you need to come back with me now, you need to meet the Messiah so you can hear what I heard and feel what I felt.

We can be met by Jesus in our own mistakes and sin and offered recreation. This is the promise of Reconciliation, and this is how it should feel. If you do not have that experience of the sacrament you need to find another priest to sit with. We should feel known and heard, not judged, belittled or shamed, and we should be offered recreation, living water, hope, and restoration. Our clay should experience the hands of the Potter holding and renewing us. We should leave with a new shape, we begin again.

Take a few moments to reflect and journal on the first set of prompts in front of you. When ready, share your responses with your pod or small group (or the person sitting next to you.)

As you hear that story what line or image sticks out to you? Speaks to you?
Have you had a positive experience with Reconciliation, where you want to run home and invite others into it? Have you had a negative one that has left you feeling uncomfortable?
Most likely you will pass these experiences onto your children. How do you want them to experience the sacrament?

WITNESS

We are now going to hear from a member of our community about their experience with the sacrament of Reconciliation and the Good Shepherd.

(Have someone prepared to talk about some of the ways God has molded them, chiseled them, and encouraged them into recreation. Or you can play the video: God's Chisel.)

TEACHING

Reconciliation is also known as the sacrament of Penance. Penance means to purify, to recreate, to mend. It is the process of putting back together. As we leave the sacrament the priest gives us a penance. This penance is meant to be restorative, rather than penal. Praying a prayer, fasting, reading Scripture, helping others, time in silence, are all ways for the clay to be aware of the Potter's hands again. Penance should move us toward him and away from our own weaknesses. It is the mending up of our own hearts with God's hands.

Penance also calls us to take the forgiveness and compassion we have received and share it with others. As we move closer to the Potter our hearts become more like his. This is meant to spill out of us. We see others differently, because we have been seen differently. Take a few moments to reflect and journal on the first set of prompts in front of you. When ready, share your responses with your pod or small group (or the person sitting next to you.)

As a family what are things we could do as penance, that move us closer to Christ's heart?

When our children disobey, how can we seek penance for them that is meant to restore what has been broken, rather than just be punitive or disciplinary?

Your children have been talking about reconciliation and transformation, especially what that means for us as families. They have been talking about all the different feelings God gave us and how we each are responsible for how we treat others and make them feel. Often we can hurt the people we love most, it is important to also tell these people, who are often in our family, how much we love them and apologize when we hurt them. These are the real situations that we can bring to Reconciliation.

We thought it would be nice for you to have an opportunity to present your children with an "I Love You" card when they come back in.

At your tables there is a card you can color and fill out for your child.

CLOSING PRAYER

(As the children come into the room, have them each find their parents and present them with their card. Most likely the parents will then give the children their cards, if not invite them to.)

God loves families so much. He also knows it is tough for families to get along at times and that we all make mistakes. No matter what, he never, ever, wants us to stop loving each other. Reconciliation is part of God's will to help families stay united.

Let's each hold in our hand the card that was made for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God, let me never, ever, forget how loved I am as a child and also as a parent. Help me to say sorry often when I hurt the feelings of my parents or my child. Thank you for the sacrament of Reconciliation that helps us love better. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We hope you had a meaningful time together today and we pray your conversation about Reconciliation in the next Family Meeting is fruitful. Have a great week!

REFLECT AND SHARE

As you hear that story what line or image sticks out to you? Speaks to you?

Have you had a positive experience with Reconciliation, where you want to run home and invite others into it? Have you had a negative one that has left you feeling uncomfortable?

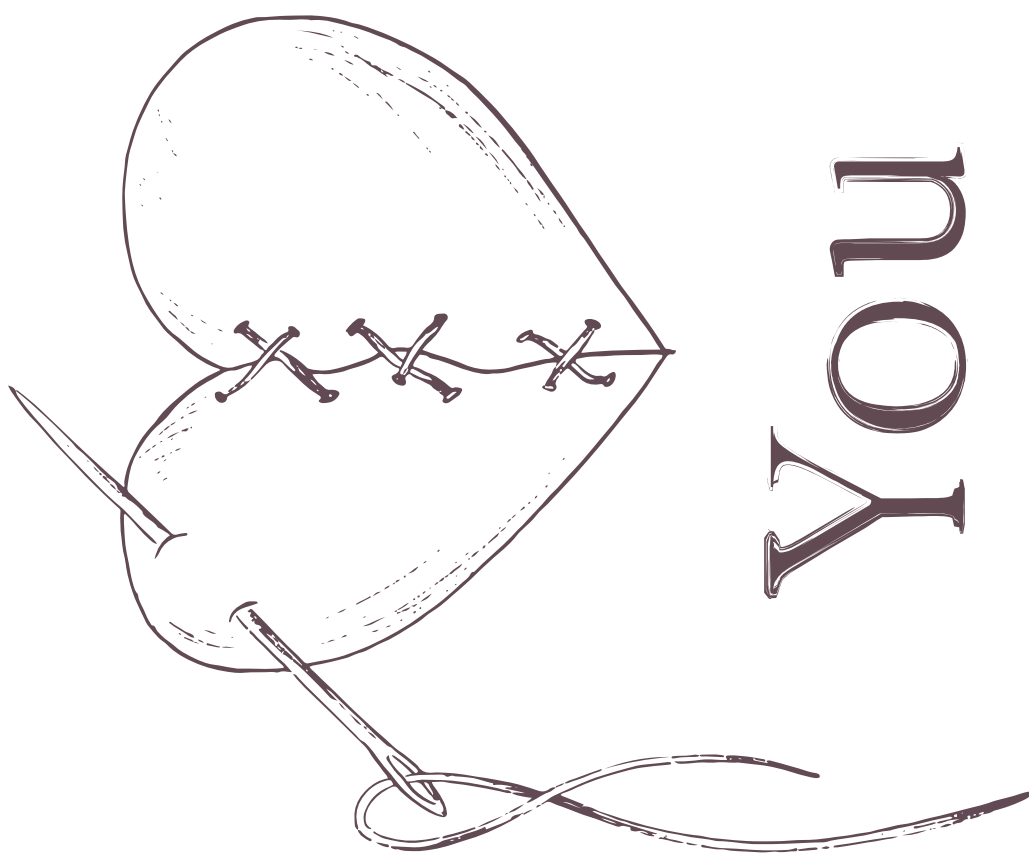
Most likely you will pass these experiences onto your children. How do you want them to experience the sacrament?

TEACHING

As a family what are things we could do as penance, that move us closer to Christ's heart?

When our children disobey, how can we seek penance for them that is meant to restore what has been broken, rather than just be punitive or disciplinary?

I LOVE



YOU



Faith and Family Life
Catholic Ministries

Dear _____,

Sometimes I forget to tell you how much I love you. There are lots of reasons I love you. My top 3 are _____

I also want you to know I am sorry for some of the things I do that frustrate you. Especially when I _____

I am so happy God picked you to be my child! I love when we _____

Don't ever forget how much I love you and how much God loves you too!

Love,

SESSION 2

CHILDREN

(To be used between Family Meeting 6 and 7. Parents and children will be separated for the first part of each session.)

Supply List:

- Printable PDFs
 - Fillable Card (1-2 per child)
- Images of People Feeling Different Ways (happy, sad, crying, laughing, etc.)
- Small Poster Board or Cardstock (1 per child)
- Magazines (go through these first for any inappropriate content)
- Scissors
- Glue ([Purchase Here](#))
- Large Glass Vase or Cup
- Bleach
- Food Coloring ([Purchase Here](#))
- Color Pencils or Markers or Crayons

Set-Up:

- Prayer Table
 - Images of People Feeling Different Ways (happy, sad, crying, laughing, etc.)

GATHER

(Gather around the prayer table. On the table include images of people feeling different ways: happy, sad, crying, laughing, etc. You can use images from the internet, magazines, your own photos, etc.)

Today we are going to talk about our feelings and actions and what they have to do with the sacrament of Reconciliation.

OPENING PRAYER

On our prayer table we have pictures of people feeling lots of different ways. In the images you can see people smiling, sad, thinking, crying, laughing, etc. Let's use these faces for our opening prayer.

MEND SESSION 2 - CHILDREN

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God, we pray today for people who are happy and are having a great day, we pray for people who are sad and may have received some bad news today, we pray for people that may be crying, and also for people who are laughing. You have made us able to feel so many different ways. Bless our time together today. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We have talked before about how God created people to be good. But since the beginning of time, starting with Adam and Eve, people have not always listened to God. I think we all want to be good; to listen to our parents, to treat others well, to be helpful, to do our homework, etc. But somehow we all have times when we do what we want instead of what God wants for us. We know how it happens, we set out to make the right decision and before we know it we talk ourselves out of the right decision and find ourselves in trouble. Very often our bad decisions have to do with not listening to people who want the best for us, and very often our bad decisions have us hurting the feelings of others.

CRAFT

(Give each child a small poster board to create with. This is going to be our “Feelings Board.” Put out magazines that have lots of pictures of people’s faces. Make sure to edit the magazines of any inappropriate images or advertisements. Have the children find faces that display different emotions. Have them cut them out and glue onto their poster board. Underneath each emotion have them write what they think that person is feeling. Afterwards have them share their feelings board with their small or large group.)

TEACHING

God made us able to feel all different types of things. To feel happy, sad, mad, afraid, ashamed, frustrated, excited, etc. We also can affect how others feel.

(Discuss the following questions with the children.)

Give me an example of something you might do or say that could make someone feel happy?

How about mad?

How about embarrassed?

How about frustrated?

MEND SESSION 2 - CHILDREN

We can choose to make others feel good or not so good. Most likely when we choose to make others feel not so good, we are doing things that we shouldn't. Things we know aren't good for us or others. We can call this choosing to sin, making choices away from the goodness God wants for us.

We can bring our sad and bad feelings about things we wish we wouldn't have done with us to Reconciliation. We can tell the priest who sits with us, and listens with Jesus's heart, about the things we have said or done that we are sorry for. If we are truly sorry, Jesus forgives us and we are encouraged to go forward to do better the next time. But what about all the people we may have hurt, what happens to them? We can never completely undo things we have said or done that have hurt others. But we can go back to others and say we are sorry. We can try our very best to not do that same thing again. Most often when we accept responsibility for our actions and apologize we will find that the person's feelings change toward us. Looks of hurt can be replaced with smiles and understanding.

We are followers of Jesus who gave us many examples of how we should treat others. He also provides a way for us to make things better through the beautiful sacrament of Reconciliation.

GAME

For a few minutes we are going to have one person come up in front of the group and act out a feeling that I whisper to them. Then the group is going to try and guess what they are feeling. Some of these feelings are harder to show than others, if you are not sure of how to act it out we will brainstorm together to get suggestions. *(At the end of each round ask the children if they have ever felt that way. Let them give examples. Take turns having different children come forward to be the actor. Play a few rounds as time allows. Feelings to act out- excited, hurt, afraid, happy, sad, alone, mad, sorry, etc.)*

ACTIVITY

Very often the people we hurt the most are the people we love the most, our parents. For a few moments we are going to make "I Love You" cards for our parents. In this card you can tell them how you feel about them, and also anything you may be sorry for. As they read them I guarantee their faces will brighten up and they will feel very happy. Another important thing we need to do more often is tell the people who love and treat us well how much we love and appreciate them! *(Put out the fillable cards along with crayons, markers, etc.)*

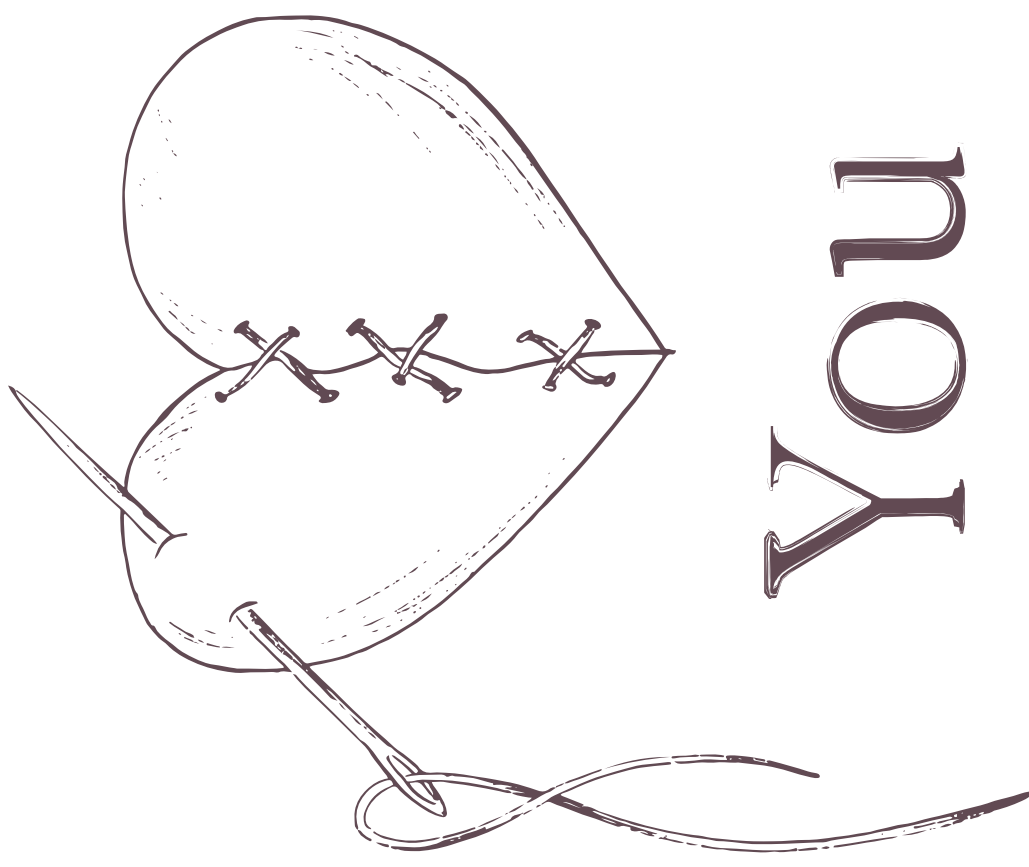
ACTIVITY

We have been talking about things we do that we are sorry for and bringing them to Jesus in Reconciliation. Right now we are going to participate in a mini science experiment to see what Reconciliation does to our sins.

(Have a large clear glass or vase of water, some food coloring, and bleach. Have the children tell you some of the things they do that hurt the feelings of others and that they are sorry for. As they say them out loud, add a few drops of food coloring to the water. Then tell the children you are going to show them what Reconciliation does. Add some bleach to the glass and watch it clear up. Jesus is the bleach. He takes away the sins of the world. Make sure to try this experiment once yourself before using it with the children.)

We are going to return to see your parents. As you find them, present them with the card you made. Watch the expression on their face, it will tell you what they are feeling.

I LOVE



YOU



Faith and Family Life
Catholic Ministries

Dear _____,

Sometimes I forget to tell you how much I love you. There are lots of reasons I love you. My top 3 are _____

I also want you to know I am sorry for some of the things I do that frustrate you. Especially when I _____

I am so happy God picked you to be my parent! I love when we _____

Don't ever forget how much I love you and how much God loves you too!

Love,

THE HEART OF THE FATHER

THEME

The activities, conversations, and prayer experiences will all be aimed at helping the families know and understand the heart of the Father. He is the God who loves abundantly and forgives extravagantly; the God they will be reconciled with through the sacrament of Reconciliation.

GOAL

The goal of the *Mend* Mini-Retreat is for parents and children to spend time together, surrounded by other families, experiencing God's love. Since the parents have been doing most of the faith formation with their children at-home, this is a chance for them to come and be led together in experiences with their child. Everything should be prepared with care so the families can just show up and be present.

Studies show that parents want their children to have positive experiences at-church. This retreat should be a positive experience at-church for both parents and children. They should leave feeling their time was well spent, and that they shared engaging faith experiences with their children.

It is our hope that the parents present feel surrounded by "The Heart of the Father" and are drawn closer to him. As Reconciliation approaches for their child, we pray the parents' hearts become more open to God's love and healing for themselves.

SUPPLY LISTS

Please find any necessary supply lists at the beginning of each Session.

SET-UP

Prepare the space for the day to look inviting. Have all tables and chairs set-up ahead of time and all supplies out where needed. Have a microphone or sound system ready to go. It is nice to have kid friendly Christian music playing as people arrive, it adds a sense of gathering.

This retreat is written in modules. You can use all the modules from start to finish, or add two or three to something you have already planned. We realize everyone has different time allotments for their retreat, so again use the modules as your time allows.

SNACK

It is nice to provide a snack time or possibly a small meal. This provides a time for building community as well. Also have drinks on-hand.

SAMPLE AGENDA

The times below are estimates, based on a 3 hour time frame. Think about the size of your group and make adjustments. If your group is large, think about breaking into 2 smaller groups and switching back and forth for a few of the activities.

Welcome + Opening prayer + Shoe exchange - 15 minutes

Modern Day Prodigal Son Skit + Sharing - 20 minutes

Potato Pass, Reflection + Prayer Service - 30 minutes

Name of God Prayer Stations - 30 minutes

Snack Break - 20 minutes

Sharing the Heart of the Father Cards/Care Packages - 30 minutes

Reconciliation Rehearsal + Role Play - 25 minutes

Wrap up + Closing Prayer Experience - 10 minutes

INTRODUCTION

(Have the retreat theme “The Heart of the Father” printed or written out on a poster board or piece of butcher paper large enough for everyone to see sitting on or near a prayer table. Have other items on the table that reflect God’s heart and his love. Some ideas: a vase of flowers - the way he surrounds us with his beauty, his creation, a crucifix - the greatest sign of his deep love for us, a picture of the Holy Family - Jesus, too, grew up in a family who he loved so much. Include any other items you have that speak of God’s love. Create a large paper heart, either drawn on poster board or piece of butcher paper. Place the heart, the printable PDF sign with instructions, and some colored markers on a table nearby your check-in table. The sign reads: “Today we will be talking about God’s heart and the ways he loves us. Please use a marker to write your name inside God’s heart.” As families check-in, direct them to the table to begin the retreat.)

GATHER

(Gather the families in your meeting space. Bring forward the heart everyone just signed and go through each of the items on your table, explaining how they speak of God’s love. Conclude with the signed heart and remind the families that God’s heart beats for us, we are his greatest love!)

PRAYER

Let us begin with a prayer.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God, we give you each one of us today. May we grow closer to you through the activities and the conversations planned. Thank you for this shared time together as parent and child. Wrap your arms around us tight. In your most loving name we pray, Amen.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ACTIVITY

Today is a special time to spend with your parents. A date with just you and them. God has chosen you to be together in the same family. In your family there are adults and children. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to “switch roles?” For the child to be the parent and for the adult to be the child?

For a moment, parents and children, take off one of your shoes and switch with each other. Put the other’s shoe on as best you can. Talk about what it would be like, and some things you would each do, if you were in the other person’s role.

(You can then open up to the large group for some feedback. Ask children what they would do if they were the parent. Then, have adults share some of the things they shared about being the child. Have them switch back their shoes.)

I think God got it right, he knew just where he wanted us in our families. Now, parents tell your child two reasons you are so glad that they are your child. Then children do the same for your parents.

A MODERN DAY PRODIGAL SON PARABLE

(Before the retreat begins, find a father and son to act out the modern day parable below. Make sure you go through it with them at least once so that they will be comfortable in knowing what to do. As you are reading the parable they will be acting out what you are reading at that time.)

Right now we are going to look at the story of a family, a father and son. Jesus used this story when he was on earth to teach the people. We have taken Jesus’ same message and are telling the story as if it were to happen in our time right now.

A father and son have a great relationship, they love to play catch (*act out throwing and catching*), go fishing (*act out casting and reeling in*), they love to spend time together (*high five each other*). Sometimes, late at night when the son is asleep (*boy lays down*), the father comes in and just stands there thinking how much he loves his son (*father watches him sleep*).

MEND MINI-RETREAT

A lot of years pass and the boy and the dad grow older (*both standing up together now*) and the boy gets taller (*jumps up to be taller*). One day the son comes to the dad and tells him he wants to go to college far away (*son points far away*) and he needs his dad's money to help him. The dad gives him all his money he has worked so hard for (*dad counting out money*). The father is counting on his son to work hard and do his best. The son leaves for college (*walks a little bit off to the side*). In college the son studies hard and writes lots of papers (*reading books and writing*) but as time passes the son gets tired of school. He starts playing video games (*act out playing video games*) instead of going to class. He also spends a lot of money on McDonald's, In-N-Out, Taco Bell, and Chick-fil-A (*use restaurants by you as boy acts out eating*) and pretty soon he is out of money. Soon after this he gets a call (*answer his phone*) from his college telling him he has been kicked out. The son feels terrible. He knows he has disobeyed his father and let him down. He is so worried and doesn't know what to do (*looks dejected walking in circles or sitting on the ground*). He has nowhere to live anymore and no money for food.

He realizes his only choice is to go back home - he has nowhere else. He calls an Uber with his last bit of money (*acts like he is riding in a car while walking closer to the middle of the stage*). The Uber driver drives him back to his neighborhood and lets him off at the end of his street. He stands there wondering how he will face his father as he looks in the direction of his house (*looks down street, towards where the father is*). How will he tell his dad what happened? What will his dad say?

At the same time, his father is getting ready for work, packing up his computer and putting on his jacket (*act that out - the father should be a distance from the boy*). As the father is walking out the door he happens to look down the street, and he sees his son in the distance (*have them both stop and look at each other*). The dad drops his computer and begins to run towards his son (*make sure they keep looking intently at each other*). He picks his son up! He is so happy that he is home! He can't stop hugging him (*father and son share a long hug*)!

(*After all the hugging.*) The father realizes his son must be tired from his long journey home (*son rubbing his eyes and yawning*) he tells him to go lie down in his old bed (*boy lays down and closes his eyes*). As he sleeps his father comes in and stands there thinking how much he loves his son.

TEACHING

In this story, who is the father supposed to be? God. Who is the son? All of us. What is the message here?

MEND MINI-RETREAT

Jesus told this story to show them the power of God's love. God knows we will sometimes go away from him and do things that aren't good and right. He wants us to know that he always wants us home with him. He is a Father who loves his children. This story speaks to the heart of Reconciliation. We sin, we feel ashamed, we ask for forgiveness, and we come back home to God the Father. He is always waiting for each one of us with open arms.

Our theme today is: "The Heart of the Father." Jesus's whole life, everything he said and did tells us about God the Father. Jesus even tells us, if you have seen me, you have seen the Father (John 14:9). Through the story of the Prodigal Son, Jesus shows us that the Father's heart is understanding and merciful. He knows things are going to happen to us and that we're not always going to make the best choices and decisions, like the son in that story. The Father's heart is also constant. He doesn't forget about us when we stray, just like the father who was so thrilled to see the son come home.

We are going to participate in some more activities to find out about "The Heart of the Father."

POTATO PASS

Supply List:

- Large bags of potatoes to pass around (the bags will be opened and each person will need a potato, or you can have each family work on 1 potato together)
- Slip of Paper (to be taped around individual potato)
- Rolls of tape ([Purchase Here](#))
- Poster board and Markers (to write sins down) ([Purchase Here](#) and [Here](#))
- Pens ([Purchase Here](#))

(If you need families to get moving a bit you could also put them on teams and do a relay carrying the potato bags before you begin the teaching.)

In this activity we are going to use potatoes as an image of something that is heavy. If one potato is a little heavy - a whole bag is really heavy.

(Have a child come up to try and lift the bag up from the ground.)

There is a weight to sin. When we do something we know we shouldn't, it remains with us in our head and on our heart. We walk around with that extra weight.

MEND MINI-RETREAT

(Give one large group or many small groups a large sack of potatoes each. Have them pass it around their circle. When it comes their turn to hold it, tell them to be mindful of how heavy it is. Talk with families about some of the ways we sin as adults and children - get answers from the group. Write them down on one poster board or chalkboard as a large group or have each small group work together to write them on their own poster board.)

Jesus used an image to help us understand the freedom and letting go that he offers us through forgiveness. It has to do with something called a yoke. *(It could be helpful to show an image here.)* A yoke is what you put around the shoulders of an oxen that connects it to a cart or plow. Jesus used this image when talking to the people because this is something they used often to move heavy objects. The yoke was heavy and burdensome like a bag of potatoes. Jesus tells us that his yoke is light and easy, it isn't heavy. His message of forgiveness allows us to let go of the weight we are carrying in ourselves. He wants us to be free. It is up to us if we keep walking with the potatoes or if we give it to him. If we give it to him we need to really try our best to not take it back again, to try and not do things that aren't good for us.

Take a potato from the bags *(either one per person or one per family)*. Take a moment with your child and write some of the things that weigh you down. Things you would each want to give to Jesus, your sins and your worries, on the slip of paper. Then tape your piece of paper around your potato. We do not want to write on the potatoes so they can be used again for cooking. This exercise is an example of how we search ourselves and examine our consciences and our actions before Reconciliation.

PRAYER SERVICE

Supply List:

- Table or Tables covered with Tablecloth
- Large Basket/Baskets (for potatoes)
- A Crucifix
- A Candle
- Felt Hearts (1 per person) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Soft Music

(At the front of the group set out a large basket for families to bring their potatoes forward or tables covered with tablecloths for them to put them on. These tables are separate from your beginning prayer table. On another small table have a candle lit, a crucifix, and felt hearts laid out. Turn the lights down in the room if possible and play very soft music.)

MEND MINI-RETREAT

Take a moment to look at your potato, at the weight of sin in your life. Everyone has different things that they struggle with. We all struggle to follow Jesus' example so we should never judge the things written on someone else's potato.

In a moment I am going to invite you to bring your weight forward and lay it in the basket (or down on the table) and then take a small felt heart from the table. This is what happens in Reconciliation, we give Jesus the weight of our sin and he takes it and gives us his complete love, the heart of the Father. We are using a small felt heart to represent his love. This is what the sacrament of Reconciliation is: the chance for Jesus to forgive us, take our weight, and send us out to love better. Try and remain quiet as everyone comes forward knowing that Jesus' Spirit is with us in this room.

From this potato experience and reflection we learn that the Father's heart is forgiving. He is able to take the weight of our sin from us, and set us free to begin again. The Father's heart also doesn't shame us for our sin. He knows we all struggle with different things. He just wants to help us let go of those things and embrace his love for us.

This is exactly why he sent his Son, Jesus. Jesus' death on the cross made up for our sins. Through his death we receive grace, the free gift of his love. The heaviness of sin is replaced by freedom and new life!

NAMES OF GOD PRAYER STATIONS

These prayer stations can be set up around your Church, hall, or even outside weather permitting. Each station needs a table covered with a tablecloth. Depending on the size of your group and space available, you could put two different stations on the same six foot table. If your group is larger it will work better to have one prayer station on each table. This also helps to make it more private and sacred for the families. At each table you may also consider lighting a candle, putting a small vase with flowers, etc. It is also nice to play soft music and lower the lights if possible. You are trying to create a sacred space.

These stations are self-led. Included are printable PDF sheets that explain what to do, provide a short reflection, and have a prayer to be prayed by the parent and child together. Print the printable PDF and place it on each table. If possible, it is nice to frame the instruction/prayer sheet using inexpensive frames. If you are using one table per station, you may consider two instruction/prayer sheets, one at each end of the table. This can help accommodate more families at one time if needed.

MEND MINI-RETREAT

If you have a large group joining you for the retreat you may also consider splitting them in half for a part of the retreat experience. One half could be doing the potato experience, the other half the prayer stations, and then switch them.

Each parent and child should visit all the stations. It is best to have them begin at different stations like a shotgun golf tournament, this way everyone is not waiting in a long line to go through. Remind them to be sure to visit each station.

You may want to leave a sample at each of the stations. For example: at the Good Shepherd station, make the first sheep on the poster board with the cotton ball and sharpie. This will be a helpful visual for the first few families at each station.

INTRODUCTION

Next we are going to learn some more things about the heart of the Father. To do this we are going to reflect on different names for God. Today we have been referring to him as Father. But he has many names that tell us different things about who he is and what type of heart he has.

(Go over the instructions and ask them to treat the space as sacred.)

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Supply List:

- Printable PDF
- Large Poster Board (1 or 2 depending on group size) ([Purchase Here](#))
 - At the top write: "We are loved by a Good Shepherd"
- Cotton Ball (1 for each person so parents can participate as well) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Thin Sharpie Markers (5 or more depending on your group size) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Glue ([Purchase Here](#))

THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

Supply List:

- Printable PDF
- Poster or Butcher Paper (a long roll to cover the entire table, this may need to be replenished depending on size of group) ([Purchase Here](#) or [Here](#))
 - At the top write: “God is the Beginning and the End”
- Markers or Crayons ([Purchase Here](#))

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Supply List:

- Printable PDF
- Battery Powered Tea Lights or Votive Candles (1 per family and a lighter if needed) ([Purchase Here](#))

THE VINE

Supply List:

- Printable PDF
- Paper Leaves in a Basket (1 per participant) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Thin Sharpie Markers (5 or more depending on your group size) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Poster or Butcher Paper ([Purchase Here](#) or [Here](#))
 - At the top write: “God is the Beginning and the End.” Draw a vine for them to add leaves across the paper.
- Glue ([Purchase Here](#))

SAVIOR

Supply List:

- Printable PDF
- Large Poster Board Crosses (1 or 2 depending on group size) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Thin Colored Markers ([Purchase Here](#))
- A Crucifix or Image of a Crucifix (place in center of table)

PRINCE OF PEACE

Supply List:

- Printable PDF
- Large Poster Board (1 or 2 depending on group size) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Paint (rainbow colors) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Plates (for paint) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Q-tips (1 per person) ([Purchase Here](#))
- Trashcan (to throw away Q-tips)

FRIEND

Supply List:

- Printable PDF
- Large Poster Board or Butcher Paper Heart (1 or 2 depending on group size): ([Purchase Here](#) or [Here](#))
- Thin Colored Markers ([Purchase Here](#))

THE POTTER

Supply List:

- Printable PDF
- Poster or Butcher Paper ([Purchase Here](#) or [Here](#))
 - At the top write: “God makes beautiful things”
- Thin Colored Markers ([Purchase Here](#))
- Clay or Playdough (large mound) ([Purchase Here](#))

CONSOLER

Supply List:

- Printable PDF

MEND MINI-RETREAT

(At the end of the station time you can gather the group to discuss together or have parents talk with children individually through the following questions:

Which station did you like the most?

What is the way you tend to see God? As a friend, on the cross as your Savior, as a potter molding you?

What is something new you learned about God from this experience?)

SHARING THE HEART OF THE FATHER

Supply List:

- Printable PDF (fillable card) or Blank Cards
- Pens or Markers ([Purchase Here](#))
- Optional Decorations
- Hygiene Kit Supplies (optional, you may provide the items or ask the families to bring items with them)
 - Socks
 - Bottles of Water
 - Snacks
 - Toothbrush/Toothpaste
 - Shampoo/Conditioner
 - Soap

We are going to participate in one last activity. The most important thing we know about the Father's heart is that it is filled with love that he gives to each of us. He also wants us to share his love with others. The Father has a huge heart that he wants everyone to experience! Right now we are going to share some of God's love with others. We are going to be making encouraging cards (and/or care packages) for people who need some love, care, and support. Jesus' heart was always open to people who were having a tough time.

The Homeless
First Responders
Prison Inmates - Juveniles
Seniors
People Who Are Sick
People Who Have Lost Someone

MEND MINI-RETREAT

(Print out the fillable cards or purchase blank cards. Let everyone decorate and write a few. You can also pair this with small care packages. When writing cards you may ask them to begin: "Dear friend" or "Hello." You should end with a general signature from the parish community.)

RECONCILIATION TALK

If possible, see if your parish priest can come and talk to the group about Reconciliation and what that looks like for the children receiving the sacrament for the first time. This also provides a few moments to go over any particulars for the upcoming Reconciliation service. Take this opportunity to show the parents and children your confessionals.

REHEARSAL/ROLE PLAY

(For this activity you can have the families bring the "Guide for Reconciliation" card with them from the box. It has the image of the Good Shepherd on the front. A version of the guide is below for those going their first time. Do a few role plays in front of the group with some of the children. If a priest can lead this it would be great. Be sure to remind the children not to say their actual sins in the role play.)

Begin with the Sign of the Cross, saying:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The priest may share some words of encouragement or a passage from the Scriptures.
You then say:

Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned. This is my first confession.

You then confess your sins. Be sure to confess all the sins you are aware of since your last confession by the type of sin and some indication of their frequency. The priest will then usually give you some advice and assign you a penance. He will then ask you to make an Act of Contrition. You can use your own words or say one from tradition like:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

MEND MINI-RETREAT

After this, the priest will pray the prayer of absolution over you. You will make the Sign of the Cross as he absolves you and respond saying:

Amen.

The priest will then dismiss you by saying these or similar words: "Go in peace."

You should respond by saying:

Thanks be to God.

Be sure to complete your penance.

CLOSING PRAYER

Supply List:

- Printable PDF
 - Discussion Question 1/2 Sheet (1 per family)
- Large Heart with Names (on the prayer table)
- Extra Felt Hearts

Reconciliation is a wonderful chance for us to experience the heart of the Father. A heart that we know is understanding, merciful, constant, forgiving, loving, and never ending. Today we had a chance to talk about and use some different examples to learn more about God's heart.

We are going to hear from a few different families about our examples today.

(Have a different family prepared to share about each prompt below or families can discuss these prompts for a few minutes together:

What is something you took away from the Prodigal Son story?

What did the potatoes mean and how was it a message about Reconciliation?

Which name for God did you like the best and why?

Why did we make cards (and/or care packages)?

What did you learn about Reconciliation to help you prepare to receive the sacrament?)

As we close today I want you to find your felt heart from earlier today. If you don't have it we will pass out some extras.

MEND MINI-RETREAT

Through Reconciliation we experience the heart of the Father - God's love - which is incredible. One other thing happens, we give God our heart. We give him our love and trust as we accept his forgiveness.

On the table up front is the large heart we began with today - God's heart - that has each of our names on it. As we end today, please come quietly and place your felt heart in God's heart. *(Have them come up parent and child together in a line. For the ending prayer have families gather around the prayer table.)*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God, thank you for our time with you today. May we never forget how much you love us. As we prepare for Reconciliation, may we follow you more closely. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let's end by offering each other the peace of the Father. Take a moment and give people around you a sign of peace.

Thank you for being with us today. Let's take everything we learned and practice it and share it with others. We can be a reflection of the Father's heart.

THE
HEART
OF THE
FATHER



THE HEART OF THE FATHER

Today we will be talking about God's heart and the ways he loves us. Please use a marker to write your name inside God's heart.



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

At the time Jesus was on earth sheep were very important animals. Their wool provided blankets and warm clothes for families. Shepherds were the people who took special care of the sheep. Jesus said “I am the Good Shepherd” (John 10:11), and we are the sheep he cares for.

Take a cotton ball and glue it to the background. Add some little legs and then write your name underneath.

PRAYER

God, watch over me closely, and lead me to you. Amen.



THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

God said “I am the Alpha and the Omega” (Revelation 22:13). Alpha means “the beginning” and Omega means “the end.” Our God has existed before the beginning of time and will exist forever. He is always with us and never leaves us.

Draw something you are thankful God created in “the beginning” of time and write where you want to end up at the end of your earthly life.

PRAYER

God, thank you for being with me always. Amen.



LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Jesus said “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). Think about what a dark room looks like. Then picture turning on a light, or lighting a candle, and everything changes. You begin to see clearly. Jesus helps show us the way. He is our example for how to live.

Have your family turn on one tea light.

PRAYER

*God, help me to follow your example, and be my light.
Amen.*



THE VINE

Jesus said “I am the vine” (John 15:5). A vine is a long branch that leaves connect to. When the leaves are connected they receive nourishment from the vine. If the leaves fall off they wither and die. Jesus tells us he is our vine. He wants us to stay connected to him.

Take a leaf and write one way you connect to God on it. Glue your leaf to the vine.

PRAYER

God, help me to reconnect to you through the sacrament of Reconciliation. Amen.



SAVIOR

God sent his Son, Jesus, to die on the Cross as the savior of the world (1 John 4:14). He took all our sins upon himself on the Cross. In return he gave us the gift of his forever love, eternal life.

Have each member of your family write their name on the cross. Know you are loved!

PRAYER

*God, thank you for taking my sins with you on the Cross.
Amen.*



PRINCE OF PEACE

God is called the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:5). Our whole world is in need of God's healing peace right now.

Take a moment to use Q-tips and paint to make a small rainbow. In the scriptures it tells us that God sent a rainbow to Noah after the flood. This gave him great hope and peace.

PRAYER

God, we pray for all those in the world who need your peace and hope right now. Amen.



FRIEND

Jesus was called “a friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Matthew 11:19). Jesus came to earth to know and understand people. He wants a friendship with each one of us.

In the heart write one quality that makes Jesus a good friend. Write down the name of a friend who could use your prayers.

PRAYER

God, thank you for being my friend, and for the friends who are a special part of my life. Amen.



THE POTTER

God is compared to a potter, and we are his clay (Jeremiah 18:6). Potters mold clay into beautiful works of art. What is one beautiful thing God has made in you?

Write your name and a quality you like in yourself. Then push your thumbprint in the mound of clay.

PRAYER

God, thank you for the special way you made me. Amen.



CONSOLER

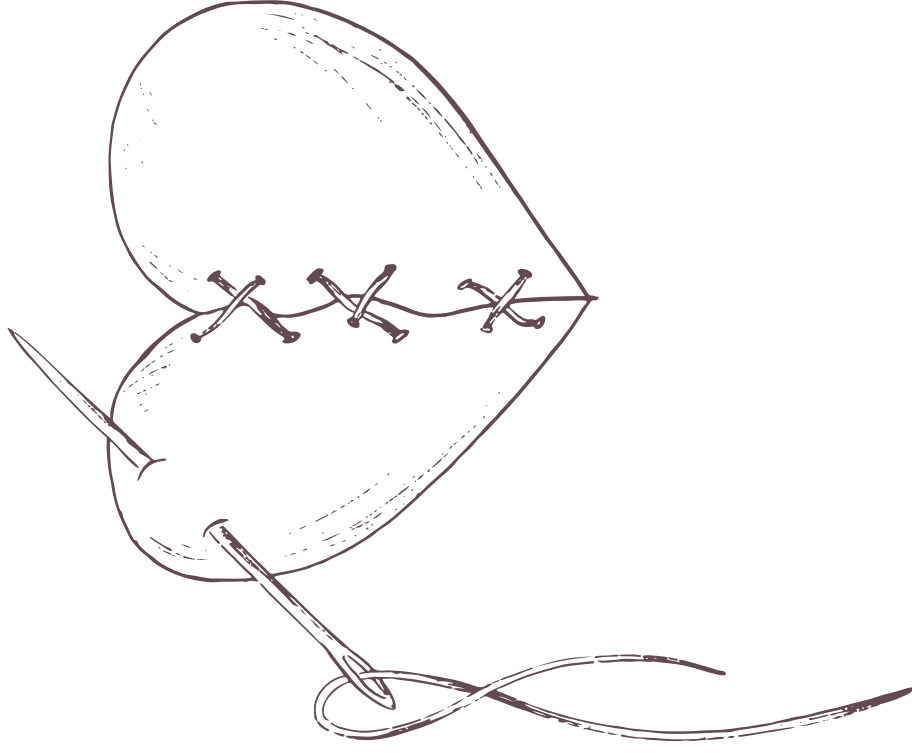
Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Advocate or Paraclete, which can also be translated as Consoler (John 14:16). He comes by our side and comforts us when we are feeling disappointed or burdened by the weight of our sin.

Comfort one another with a sign of peace and a hug.

PRAYER

*God, thank you for always being there
ready to forgive me. Amen.*





Faith and Family Life
Catholic Ministries

Dear Friend,

I am writing this note because _____

I hope you know _____

In my life someone that encourages me
is _____

That person likes to tell me _____

I hope these words help you too.

Please know you were thought of, and
prayed for, today.

Sincerely,

A member of _____

Catholic Church Community

MEND MINI-RETREAT

What is something you took away from the Prodigal Son story?

What did the potatoes mean and how was it a message about Reconciliation?

Which name for God did you like the best and why?

Why did we make cards (and/or care packages)?

What did you learn about Reconciliation to help you prepare to receive the sacrament?

MEND MINI-RETREAT

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