



The Joy of Forgiveness

A quiz about Penance and Reconciliation

DAVID O'BRIEN

This quiz can help you, your students, and your students' families review what you know about our Catholic faith. Check your answers against the answer key on page 3.

1 Before going to confession, Catholics do an examination of _____ to identify their sins and examine how they have hurt God and others.

- a) hair and teeth b) homework
c) clothes d) conscience

2 A _____ sin breaks one's relationship with God completely.

- a) mortal b) venial c) hidden
d) church

3 "For the wages of _____ is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

- a) not studying for tests b) bullying
c) sin d) not being nice to your family

4 During the first part of Mass, we strike our chests and pray: "Through my _____, through my _____, through my most grievous _____."

- a) thought b) fault c) brother
d) mistake

5 A _____ sin is not mortal (cutting one off from God), but it still damages one's soul.

- a) vanilla b) Venus
c) vegetable d) venial

6 If you commit a sin, but you didn't know it was wrong or you didn't mean to do it, it is still a sin and you are fully guilty.

True | False

7 Because of the power of Christ's love in the Eucharist, _____ sins are forgiven when you are truly sorry and pray for God's mercy during Mass.

- a) baby b) super mean c) revenge
d) venial

8 The priest is _____ allowed to reveal the sins he hears in confession.

- a) always b) sometimes c) never
d) reluctantly

9 The positive _____ effects of confession include increased spiritual strength for the Christian battle.

- a) spiritual b) physical c) athletic
d) musical

10 _____ is an outward action that shows a change of heart away from sin and toward God.

- a) Silence b) Penance c) Giving presents
d) Vengeance

11 Even if you commit the same sin after confessing it, you can confess it again the next time you go.

True | False

12 The earliest Christians believed that _____



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was the normal way to have their sins forgiven.

- a) Baptism b) death c) martyrdom
d) First Communion

13 Priests stand in the place of _____ and offer his forgiveness to the penitent during confession.

- a) the president b) the pastor
c) the pope d) Jesus

14 During the first centuries of the Church, three sins were considered virtually unforgivable: adultery, abandoning or renouncing the faith (apostasy), and _____.

- a) piercing your toenail b) lying
c) sleeping during Mass d) murder

15 Jesus instituted the sacrament of reconciliation by giving the Apostles the authority to forgive sins or hold people bound to their sins. True | False

16 Common forms of penance include extra prayer, pilgrimages, fasting, charitable works, and _____.

- a) self-denial b) no water for a week
c) going to confession d) writing "sinner" on your forehead

17 When the priest forgives sins in confession, it is called _____.

- a) the great washing b) absolution
c) the moment of truth d) exhilaration

18 The _____ is the parable Jesus told about a sinful son and a forgiving father (see Luke 15:11-32).

- a) Prodigal Son b) Good Samaritan
c) Lost Sheep d) Workers in the Vineyard

19 The _____ wants us to avoid confession and become crippled by our guilt and sinfulness.

- a) principal b) bishop c) devil
d) government

20 If you turn your back on God for years but ask for God's forgiveness right before you die, God will forgive you.

True | False

Kids' quiz

I'm Sorry, God!

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This quiz can help your students review their knowledge about our Catholic faith. Check answers with the answer key on page 3.

1 Jesus included forgiveness and reconciliation in the _____ prayer that he taught his disciples.

- a) Hail Mary b) Our Father c) Act of Contrition
d) Jesus

2 _____ is a season of prayer, penance, fasting, and helping the poor.

- a) Lent b) Easter c) Christmas
d) Summer

3 The sacrament that invites us to confess our sins to a priest is _____.

- a) Matrimony b) Baptism
c) Penance d) Confirmation

4 If you tell God you are sorry in your heart, it is the same as going to confession.

True | False

5 _____ is the color that represents penance at Mass.

- a) Green b) Red c) White d) Purple

6 The purpose and effect of confession is reconciliation and a renewed friendship with _____.

- a) the saints b) God c) Santa Claus
d) the apostles

7 The prayer we say at the end of confession is called the _____.

- a) Act of Contrition b) Our Father
c) Hail Mary d) Memorare

8 The Church teaches that children must receive the

sacrament of _____ before receiving their First Communion.

- a) Holy Orders b) Penance and Reconciliation
c) Almsgiving d) Anointing of the Sick

9 When you commit a mortal sin, you must go to confession before receiving Holy Communion again.

True | False

10 The special prayers or actions that the priest instructs a person to do to make up for their sins at the end of their confession is called their _____.

- a) penance b) punishment
c) penalty d) homework



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ANSWERS TO Catholic I.Q.

1. d) God speaks to us through our consciences, helping us avoid evil and sinful behavior. After we sin, our consciences make us feel bad and give us the desire to fix things.

2. a) Like a mortal wound on the battlefield that kills the soldier, a mortal sin kills our soul's ability to be close to God until we get rid of that sin through confession.

3. c) St. Paul warned the Romans that if they kept habitually sinning, it will result in an awful life and eventually completely separate them from God.

4. b) Recognizing that we sin is the first step to realizing how much we need God's forgiveness.

5. d) Venial sins compromise your integrity and create habits of vice, not virtue, eventually leading to mortal sins (see CCC, 1863).

6. False. "Mortal sin requires *full knowledge* and *complete consent*. It presupposes knowledge of the sinful character of the act, of its opposition to God's law" (CCC, 1859).

7. d) "As bodily nourishment restores lost strength, so the Eucharist strengthens our charity, which tends to be weakened in daily life; and this living charity *wipes away venial sins*" (CCC, 1394).

8. c) "The *secret of the sacrament of reconciliation* is sacred, and cannot be violated. . . . It is a crime for a confessor in any way to betray a penitent for any reason" (CCC, 2490).

9. a) Confession gives us grace to avoid our previous sins and instead to choose what is good, right, holy, and beautiful.

10. b) Penance helps make real our conversion to Christ. Just as "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26), so also repentance without penance is dead.

11. True. Jesus said we should forgive others seven times 70 times because he knew that the Father will always forgive

us, even if we struggle with the same sins all our lives.

12. a) Baptism forgives all sins and is necessary for salvation (see CCC, 980). In the early centuries of the Church, sins committed after Baptism required a public confession, sometimes harsh public penances, and they could only be forgiven by the Apostles or their successors, the bishops.

13. d) Because of his ordination, the priest acts in *persona Christi*, or in the person of Christ, with all Christ's power and authority to forgive sins in confession (see CCC, 1548).

14. d) All three of these sins violated the sacred trust of the community. For the first Christians who could be arrested, tortured, and killed for their faith, being able to trust everyone within the Church was a nonnegotiable.

15. True. When Jesus appeared to the Apostles after the Resurrection, he said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" (John 20:23).

16. a) Voluntary self-denial breaks our addictions to earthly comfort, reminds us of our weakness, and turns a sacrifice into a prayer of remorse and contrition.

17. b) The priest absolves our sins, which means that we are released from guilt and punishment because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

18. a) God is like the forgiving father who is more focused on his son's repentance and his coming home and being part of the family than he is on his son's sins.

19. c) By his cross, Jesus has already paid the price for our sins, so we are forgiven and free no matter how bad we have messed up. Satan wants us to feel unforgivable and trapped in our sins.

20. True. No one knows for certain how God judges us, but Jesus forgave anyone who repented, even the thief on the cross. Jesus said: "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Kids' Quiz

1. b) "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

2. a) Lent invites us to repent of our sins, forgive those who have hurt us, and repair any broken relationships with our friends or family.

3. c) We tell our sins to a priest in confession because he stands in the place of Christ, who is the one who forgives our sins and washes our souls clean.

4. False. God always forgives us when we repent, but going to confession assures us of God's forgiveness and his help to avoid sinning the same way again in the future. (For more benefits of the sacrament, see CCC, 1496.)

5. d) The priests wear purple and the altar cloth is purple during the seasons of penance in the Church such as Lent.

6. b) Sin comes between us and God, damaging our relationship with him. A good confession restores our intimate friendship with God (see CCC, 1468).

7. a) The Act of Contrition allows us to speak words of regret for our sins and to ask God to help us not to sin again.

8. b) Baptism cleanses one of all previous sins. However, if one was baptized as a baby, he or she has probably sinned since then and therefore is expected to go to confession to prepare to receive Christ at their First Communion (see CCC, 1457).

9. True. "Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution" (CCC, 1457).

10. a) Doing penance allows us to do something concrete to express how sorry we are for our sins. Penance also shows that we don't want to sin again in the same way.