

Inquiry Session: Forgiveness

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA

Inquiry Session

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Prepare

Set the space and provide a focal point with a candle and a Bible, marking the Scripture citations noted in the participant materials. Provide name tags, and have some refreshments available. If the group is larger than five or six people, guide the participants to share in smaller groups.

Gather

1. Greet the participants as they arrive, and take time for introductions as the session begins. Survey the group to see how everyone is doing. Ask whether anyone has any questions, then invite them to share, in small groups, any experiences of prayer, worship, or God they have had since the last session.
2. Share an experience of forgiveness from your own life. Then provide time for quiet reflection on **Reflect on Your Experience** before asking those present to share their response to the questions with another person.
3. Collect some feedback from the group, and discuss with everyone what they have heard their group share about forgiveness and sin.

Expand

1. Read and discuss **Hear the Good News About Forgiveness**. Include the following points in your conversation:
 - Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, came to reconcile us with God the Father.
 - Forgiveness of sins brings reconciliation not only with God but also with the Church.
 - God does not hold our sins against us. This is one of the messages in the parable of the Prodigal Son in Scripture.

2. Read aloud each Scripture passage in **Read the Word of God**, following with a moment of silent reflection. Then discuss each passage using these or similar questions:

What message did you hear in the passage?

What does the passage reveal about Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God? About God the Father? About sin? About forgiveness?

3. Discuss the words of the second part of the Our Father when we pray, “. . . forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Ask the participants what we are praying for with these words.

Reflect and Share

1. Invite the group to read **Respond Through Action** and **Witness to the Gospel**. Explore the importance of acknowledging sin—that which divides us from God and from one another—as the first step toward forgiveness. Have the participants share examples of ways they have experienced forgiveness.
2. Conclude with a discussion about any additional insights the participants may have gained from this session as well as questions that may still remain about sin, forgiveness, and so on.

Pray

Ask the participants to take a few moments of silence, thinking about the questions posed in the **Respond Through Action** section, namely, *What keeps us from acknowledging and recognizing our sins? Why is “owning up” to our sins so difficult? How can we become better at identifying our sins?* After a few moments, pray a simple Act of Contrition, asking for God’s forgiveness.