

The Sacrament of Pardon and Peace Answer Key

1. How does the presence of sin in our lives affect us? Isn't Baptism enough to overcome sin?

Sin affects our lives because when we sin, we are not acting in genuine love for God, our neighbor, or ourselves. When we sin, we are acting selfishly for our own pleasure, or we may have failed to act because we were afraid of what someone else would think. Sometimes we are more aware of the effects of other people's sins on us than of our own sins because sin blinds us to our own faults. Even if we have been baptized, we have a tendency to sin. We need God's grace continuously to overcome it.

2. Why is it important to respond to the subtle or sometimes not-so-subtle invitations to do things that you know are wrong but that "everybody" does anyway?

We must resist peer pressure in order to be accountable for our own actions. We must establish our principles and beliefs as distinct from those around us in order to live as faith-filled adults.

3. Why do actions taken by a group often *seem* less sinful than choices you would make on your own?

We sometimes experience a type of blindness that convinces us that things that are done by many people, even though they are wrong, are somehow justified. This attitude is pervasive in popular culture and can readily be seen on TV, in movies, and on many websites.

4. Can you name some of the things that "everybody" supposedly does?

Some examples are cyberbullying, gossiping, plagiarizing, and so on. Lies on social media are still lies, and telling the truth about someone when the intent is to damage their reputation is also a sin—the sin of detraction.

5. Does a group have a conscience?

No, only individuals have a conscience. Doing something that is wrong because a group is doing it only compounds the harm that is done. There is no such thing as "everybody" in the sense of a "collective sinner."

6. Is there such a thing as "social sin"?

Social sin does exist. However, the phrase "social sin" is used to describe the collective sins in which many people participate and their effect. For example, the widespread use of swearing in everyday language is a social sin. Consumerism is a social sin.

7. What is the theological name and definition of the sins we commit practically every day that are harmful and that weaken but do not rupture our relationship with God and one another?

Venial sins are less serious offenses against the will of God that diminish one's personal character and weaken but do not rupture one's relationship with God.



8. What might the result be if you commit the venial sin of gossiping regularly about one of your friends?

The danger of less serious sins repeated over and over is that they do, as a matter of fact, weaken our character. We are more vulnerable to committing a more serious sin. Even the cumulative effect of venial sins may become a serious situation.

9. What is the theological name and definition for a sin that is so contrary to God's Law that it actually separates us from God?

Mortal sins are actions so contrary to the will of God that they result in a complete separation from God and his grace.

10. Besides the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance and Reconciliation, are there any other forms of forgiveness that come through the Church?

Yes, the Church offers indulgences, which are the means by which the Church takes away the punishment that a person would receive in Purgatory. Indulgences may be given as part of a special devotion, and at times they are granted by the Pope.

11. Why is the Church's teaching on mortal sin important?

The Church's teaching on mortal sin is important because to claim that we have free will, we must be able to admit the possibility that one could turn away from God.

12. What is the ultimate purpose of doing good and avoiding evil? Is it to avoid Hell, or is it to grow in union with God and others?

The purpose of doing good and avoiding evil is to grow in union with God and others and to avoid eternal separation from God.

13. This brings us full circle to where we began: Do we need the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation? Isn't our Baptism enough?

We have been given the gift of free will, but we are affected by Original sin, which means that we have a tendency toward sin. Therefore, we need the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation throughout our lives to reconcile us to God and the Church.

