

## ***Invictus*: Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Healing Answer Key**

**Article 37 in the student book deals with some of the following themes: the forgiveness of all sins, reconciliation with God and the Church, remission of punishment for sin, peace and serenity of conscience, and an increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle. Apply two or three of these to the words and actions of Nelson Mandela on behalf of his country, and to the Springboks rugby team he inspired.**

Answers will vary but should include the following points:

- When a committee voted to change the colors of the Springboks rugby team, Mandela rushed to the meeting. He urged them against this choice. He explained that if they took away the one thing the White South Africans supported and had pride in, they would lose their support.
- He agreed that this thoughtfulness and freedom had not been afforded to Black South Africans. However, forgiveness of sins was the only way to move forward. The people had to make compromises to achieve peace.
- Mandela talked of his time in prison, and of the poem he read to inspire him when he felt that he could not go on. The theme of strength to continue to fight the good fight is evident throughout Mandela's life and experience not only in prison but once he became president.
- Mandela was known for bringing complex issues down to simple terms. He focused on the support of the rugby team as a way to publicly forgive the wrongs done during apartheid, and to give the country a shared team to unify them.

**How well did Mandela's choice of making the Springboks rugby team an important part of healing his nation work? What does this tell you about the meaning and importance of healing?**

Answers will vary but should include the following points:

- Mandela's advisors couldn't seem to understand why he continued to focus on the rugby team. They viewed it as a political calculation. He said it was a "human calculation." He was counting on what the people valued. If he could draw people together based on something they could have national pride in, he was certain he would be able to bring about healing.
- Mandela encouraged Francois to lead by example. In order to build their nation, they needed to exceed all expectations. Building a nation cannot be done through force or coercion. It must be accomplished through healing and forgiveness, which will bring unity.
- Mandela's choice to focus on the rugby team as a unifying force for the country tells us that after a time of segregation and racism, finding a tool for healing is crucial. Indeed, anything that divides us into factions rather than uniting us as human beings can only be overcome by love, forgiveness, and healing. Francois was impressed with Mandela from their first meeting, but he truly came to understand how forgiveness and healing were embodied by Mandela after the team visited the prison where Mandela was housed for over three decades. From such an isolating, harsh place, Mandela came out a man ready to offer forgiveness and healing. This openness and persistence to accomplish healing and unification were of critical importance for bringing South Africa together. Throughout history, there are many other instances where the importance of healing for moving forward in a unified manner can be seen again and again.



**Nelson Mandela often challenged people to overcome their individual injuries and sufferings so that a greater healing of the South African nation could take place. How might the Sacraments of Healing (Penance and Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick) assist us in forming stronger communities and even a stronger society?**

Answers will vary but should include the following points:

- The Sacraments of Healing can offer us both spiritual and physical healing. When we experience God's forgiveness and are able to forgive ourselves, we gain a sense of empathy for others. When we understand the value of forgiveness and healing, we want to offer this to others. We are compelled to reconcile with others not only for them but for ourselves. This has the effect of stronger, healthier communities and a stronger, healthier society.

