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Unit 4 Reading Guide Answer Key

The Sacraments of Healing

Chapter 9: The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

Article 34: The Sacrament of Pardon and Peace

1. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick are called the Sacraments of Healing: one is the sacrament for the forgiveness of sins and the other is the sacrament for the strengthening of those who are seriously ill as well as for the forgiveness of sins.
2. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is one of the Seven Sacraments of the Church, the liturgical celebration of God's forgiveness of sin, through which the sinner is reconciled with both God and the Church.
3. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is the sacrament through which sins committed after Baptism can be forgiven, . . . and we are reconciled with the Church through God's mercy. Because we are members of the Body of Christ, everything we do—for good or ill—affects the rest of the Body. In the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, our sins, which have brought harm to ourselves and others, are forgiven.
4. This sacrament has many names because it is a sacrament rich in meaning. It can be called the Sacrament of Conversion. . . . This sacrament is also called the Sacrament of Confession, as the confession of sins is an integral part of the sacrament. In confessing our sins, we must name them. . . . Our confession is also an acknowledgment of God's holiness and mercy.
5. Another name for this sacrament is the Sacrament of Forgiveness, for in this sacrament, through the priest's absolution, we receive pardon for our sins and the gift of God's peace. It is called the Sacrament of Penance because the action of penance on the part of the penitent . . . is necessary for the completion of the sacrament. This sacrament is also called the Sacrament of Reconciliation, because by it, in God's love, we are reconciled to him and our brothers and sisters in Christ.
6. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is structured as a dialogue between the priest, who is the minister of the sacrament, and the penitent. It consists of four actions: three made by the penitent and then the absolution of the priest. The actions of the penitent are repentance, confession, and the intention to do what is possible to repair the harm caused by sin. This last action on the part of the penitent is often called a penance.
7. The penitent is the person who repents of wrongdoing and seeks forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.



8. Sin is any deliberate offense, in thought, word, or deed, against the will of God. Sin wounds human nature and injures human solidarity. . . . Sin is divided into two categories: mortal sin and venial sin. To commit a mortal sin is to deliberately, knowingly, and willingly choose to commit a serious violation of God's Law, and it is contrary to the final goal of a human being: happiness with God forever in Heaven. . . . Mortal sin is a choice. Three conditions make a sin a mortal sin: (1) it concerns a serious and grave matter, (2) it is committed with full knowledge that the action is sinful and in opposition to God's Law, and (3) it is committed freely and deliberately.
9. Venial sin is a less serious offense against the will of God that diminishes one's personal character and weakens but does not rupture one's relationship with God. . . . The repetition of sins, even venial ones, leads us to develop vices, which are sinful habits. Vices are often linked with the seven capital sins: pride, avarice, lust, wrath, gluttony, envy, and sloth.
10. Only God can forgive, and he has given that same power to bishops and priests. . . This ministry is given to them through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Bishops regulate this ministry in which the priests collaborate. . . . A priest must be available for this sacrament each time a Christian asks for it, as long as the requests are reasonable. As a confessor, a priest must have respect and sensitivity toward those who confess to him. He must be faithful to the Magisterium of the Church. . . . A priest may never reveal to anyone what he hears in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. This is called "the sacramental seal" or "the seal of the confessional."

Article 35: Scriptural and Historical Background

1. In Jesus' teaching on conversion and forgiveness, and in giving authority to the Apostles to forgive sins, the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation finds its roots. . . . All through his public ministry, Jesus forgave sins and taught about God's loving mercy toward sinners. When we hear in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation "I absolve you from your sins" (*Rite of Penance*, number 46), we should remember [the curing of the paralytic], for when the priest forgives our sins in this sacrament, it is truly Jesus saying to us, "Child, your sins are forgiven."
2. Christian initiation did not abolish human nature, nor what is called concupiscence, the human tendency toward sin resulting from Original Sin. The life of the early Christians was a life of ongoing conversion—this is, a continual turning toward God, even after Baptism. . . . This post-baptismal conversion is sometimes called a second conversion or an ongoing conversion.
3. You may wonder how the Bible, written so long ago, can have relevance to your life today. But accounts such as Peter's second conversion are encouraging to us. Even though we try very hard to live in a way that is pleasing to God, we will still sin. . . . But we have the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation available to us. Through this sacrament, we are strengthened and renewed—just like Peter.
4. The monks in the Eastern Churches practiced a more private form of penance. They confessed their sins privately to a spiritual father and did a private penance. Through the Irish monks, this custom gradually spread throughout the entire Church. . . . The Church's practice of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation has followed this basic form ever since.



Article 36: The Rite of Penance and Reconciliation

1. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is a single entity made up of four actions: three actions of the penitent and one action of the priest. Repentance, or contrition, is sorrow for one's sin and a hatred for sin, combined with the intention to avoid sin in the future. This is the primary act of the penitent. . . . Contrition that springs purely from our love for God is called "perfect contrition." Contrition for other good reasons is called "imperfect." Both are gifts of God.
2. In the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, we go a step further along this path, and, by confessing our sins to the priest, we confess them to God. Thus, confession is an essential part of the sacrament. It is absolutely necessary after an examination of conscience to confess all mortal sins that are remembered so that they can be forgiven, and the penitent can be reconciled with God and the Church. The Church also highly recommends the confession of venial sins.
3. Repentance, or contrition, is an attitude of sorrow for a sin committed and a resolution not to sin again. It is a response to God's gracious love and forgiveness. Reparation is the act of making amends for something one did wrong that caused physical, emotional, or material harm to another person. Absolution is an essential part of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation in which the priest pardons the sins of the person confessing, in the name of God and the Church.
4. In this absolution, Christ, the Good Shepherd, finds his lost sheep, and Christ, the Good Samaritan, binds up the wounds of the injured. . . . In this absolution, we are given the gift of pardon and peace.
5. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is a liturgical action composed of these elements when celebrated by individual penitents: preparation of the priest and penitent, welcoming the penitent, and reading of the Word of God. . . . An examination of conscience is a prayerful reflection on, and assessment of, one's words, attitudes, and actions in light of the Gospel of Jesus; more specifically, the conscious moral evaluation of one's life in preparation for reception of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
6. Most often, the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is administered to individuals in private. However, this sacrament can also take place within a communal celebration. . . . This is an outline of what you can expect in confession: go to the priest, confess your sins, receive a penance, tell God you are sorry, receive absolution, and conclude.

Article 37: Penance and Reconciliation in Our Lives

1. Let us take a look at some of the effects of God's powerful action in this sacrament, and how we can take them to heart in our everyday lives: the forgiveness of all sin, reconciliation with God, reconciliation with the Church, remission of punishment for sin, peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation, and an increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle.
2. Hell refers to the state of definitive separation from God and the saints, and so is a state of eternal punishment. Purgatory is a state of final purification or cleansing, which one may need to enter following death and before entering Heaven.
3. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, with the individual and complete confession of grave sins, followed by absolution, is the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and the Church. . . . The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation helps us to carry out our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus in love and service.



Chapter 10: The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

Article 38: The Sacrament of Healing and Strength

1. The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is God's gift for those who are suffering from serious illness or old age and those who are dying. It gives spiritual healing and strength to a person who is seriously ill, and sometimes physical recovery is granted as well. . . . In this sacrament, in our weakest moments, we encounter Christ, the Good Shepherd.
2. Anointing of the Sick is one of the Seven Sacraments, in which a gravely ill, aging, or dying person is anointed by the priest and prayed over by him and attending believers. One need not be dying to receive the sacrament.
3. Often illness can bring about a metanoia in the heart, a conversion toward God and a greater appreciation of his gifts in our lives. Thus, illness can be a turning point. But God sends healing, either physical or spiritual, because illness and death have been conquered through his Son, Jesus Christ.
4. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came among us as a healer of body and soul. For some people who asked for physical healing, he both forgave their sins and sent them away physically whole. In these instances, his healing of bodily afflictions was a sign of the deeper healing of sin.
5. Those suffering from leprosy were told to leave their homes and live in perpetual quarantine on the outskirts of town. Leprosy became a symbol of the worst of diseases and the worst of consequences: physical isolation, ostracism, and banishment. For that reason, it became a symbol of separation from God and the community—a symbol of sin. . . . Jesus' healings are signs that even the worst separation from God and isolation from the community can be overcome and healed.
6. While he was among us, Jesus did not heal every sick person. But through his individual healings, Jesus announced a message for all: that the Kingdom of God was coming and indeed was here. The gift of healing is a gift of the Holy Spirit to some members of the Church to build up the Body of Christ.

Article 39: Scriptural and Historical Roots

1. The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick was instituted by Christ, and we find the scriptural foundation for this sacrament in the Gospel of Mark and the Letter of James. This sacrament also has roots in the earliest period of the Church.
2. The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick includes an anointing with a holy oil called the Oil of the Sick. It is pressed from olives and is blessed by the bishop. The oil is a sign of healing, strengthening, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. The use of oil as a healing agent was familiar to the people of ancient times. It was a common remedy for wounds.
3. Scriptural accounts of the healing ministry of Jesus are numerous. In one scriptural account, in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus invites his Apostles to share in his healing ministry, using anointing with oil.
4. Since her beginning, the Church has celebrated sacramental anointing of those suffering from illness. Gradually, over the centuries, these anointings were used only to prepare people for death. Because of this, the sacrament became known as Extreme Unction. However, the sacrament itself, in its liturgy, always asked for healing if it would be helpful to the person's salvation.



5. Although every sacrament is a liturgical and communal celebration of the entire Church, no matter how many people are participating, the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick had previously been celebrated with only the dying person and perhaps the immediate family present. Today, it is often celebrated within the Mass.
6. The ministers of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick are bishops or priests. They use oil blessed by the bishop. If necessary, the oil can be blessed by the priest celebrating the sacraments.

Article 40: The Rite of Anointing of the Sick

1. In the Early Middle Ages, monastic guest houses became the first hospitals. Out of concern for the needs of the sick, religious orders of brothers and sisters were founded. Saint Damien of Molokai served the men and women suffering from leprosy on the island of Molokai . . . until he succumbed to the disease. . . . Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata began her society's work in India by taking in those who were literally dying in the streets and caring for them as for Christ himself.
2. The Church's greatest gift to the sick is the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. In this sacrament, the Church offers the grace of God for strength and healing. . . . It may be offered to one person individually or to a group of people. It is often preceded by the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and followed by reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.
3. The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick has three integral aspects: the prayer of faith, the laying on of hands, and the anointing with the Oil of the Sick. . . . The laying on of hands is a sign of blessing and a gesture signifying the coming of the Holy Spirit. The laying on of hands by the minister of the sacrament (a priest or bishop) is in direct imitation of Jesus, who often laid his hands on those who asked him for healing.
4. The anointing with oil is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Through God's power and grace, the sick person receives strength to face serious illness, especially the physical and spiritual deterioration that can wear down every defense.
5. The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick can be conferred within the Mass or outside the Mass. Celebrating this sacrament within the Mass emphasizes the union of those who are sick with the self-giving of Christ in the Eucharist. Because the sacrament is celebrated amid the community, it also emphasizes the prayerful concern of the local church community for the sick persons in its midst.
6. Any baptized Catholic above the age of reason (age seven) who is suffering from serious illness may receive the sacrament, as well as those about to undergo serious surgery. People suffering from alcoholism or other addictions may receive the sacrament, as well as those suffering from mental illness. The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick may be received more than once.
7. Whether celebrated within the Mass or outside it, the rite of the sacrament is essentially the same: greeting, sprinkling with holy water and instruction, the Penitential Act and the Liturgy of the Word, followed by the Liturgy of Anointing.



8. If someone is in danger of death, that person can, in addition to receiving the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist as viaticum. In the Eucharist, Christ is with the dying person who is ready to make the journey from this life to eternal life. . . . At the end of life, the Sacraments of Penance and Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick, along with the Eucharist as viaticum, are the sacraments through which we complete our journey here on Earth.

Article 41: Christ's Healing Power

1. This sacrament reminds us to reflect often on the healing power of Christ. . . . This sacrament encourages us to offer up our suffering for the good of the entire Body of Christ, the Church, and for the good of the entire world. It encourages us to bring the healing and compassion of Christ to those who suffer. It encourages us to accept pain, suffering, and death as the consequences of Original Sin—but it also encourages us to trust that we will be raised up with Jesus.

(The quotation marked *Rite of Penance* on this answer key is from the English translation of *Rite of Penance* © 1975, ICEL, section 46, in *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, volume one, prepared by the ICEL, a Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences [Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990]. Copyright © 1990 by the Order of St. Benedict, Collegeville, MN. Used with permission of the ICEL. Texts contained in this work derived whole or in part from liturgical texts copyrighted by the ICEL have been published here with the confirmation of the Committee on Divine Worship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. No other texts in this work have been formally reviewed or approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Used with permission.)

