

Sacraments of Healing

Core Activity

The Process of Healing

1. Divide the class into five small groups and assign one of the following words to each group:

- conversion
- confession
- forgiveness
- penance
- reconciliation

It might be helpful to give each group a large piece of paper and have a recorder write the group's word in the middle of the paper. Ask the groups to quickly write down words they associate with their assigned words. If they have their words on large sheets of paper, encourage the students to write on the sheets of paper and surround the words. After the groups have recorded the connections they have made, have them share the information with the class. Affirm their insights when relevant.

2. Conduct a presentation on the effects of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and the different names for the Sacrament, using key phrases from step 1 of this activity and from page 228 of *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition (CFH)*.

3. Share the following information with the students in your own words:
- "Jesus and the Church are concerned about healing all kinds of illness: spiritual, mental, and physical. This is why we have two Sacraments called the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is concerned primarily with spiritual healing, while the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is concerned with physical, mental, and spiritual healing" (*CFH*, pp. 225–226).
 - In this activity we will use the example of a knee injury to help us understand how our soul can be injured by sin and how the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation can heal it.

4. The following words describe events that follow a knee from injury to recovery, listed in proper order. Write these events on the board, on newsprint, or on an overhead, in jumbled order. Once you have posted the words, challenge the class to see which group can put them in the correct order the fastest. Instruct the groups to raise their hands as soon as they finish the task. Keep track of the order in which the groups finish.

- a healthy knee
- a pulled ligament

- a torn ligament
- recognition that medical care is needed
- a doctor visit
- surgery
- physical therapy

After all the groups have finished, ask a representative from the fastest group to write the events in proper order on the board. If the order is correct, affirm that that group has won the competition. If it is incorrect, call a representative from the second-fastest group to record its order, and so on, until you have the correct order on the board.

5. Conduct a presentation on the material from the section “Receiving Penance and Reconciliation,” on pages 229–231 of the *CFH*, and show how the following spiritual events correspond to physical injury:

- a healthy soul
- a soul weakened by sin
- more serious sin
- contrition
- repentance
- confession
- reparation and penance

6. Wrap up the conversation by inviting the students to draw parallels between physical and spiritual health. Ask these kinds of questions:

- What are the characteristics of a healthy body? a healthy soul?
- What kinds of injury can be sustained by the body? by the soul? Where do those injuries come from?
- How can people make choices about their own physical and spiritual health? How can they contribute to their own healing in both areas?
- In what ways does surgery resemble the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation? In what ways does the Sacrament far exceed the power of human medicine?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

Core Activity Extension

Jesus and Forgiveness

1. This activity can be assigned as homework or as class work. Begin by sharing information from the introductory paragraphs on pages 225–226 of the *CFH*. Emphasize the prominence of forgiveness in Jesus’ person and message.

2. Distribute the handout “Jesus and Forgiveness” (Document #: TX003195) and Bibles. Divide the class into three groups, number the groups, and point out their



assigned passages on the handout. Tell the groups to all read the passage listed under “Forgiveness and Salvation,” and to then read their assigned passages from Matthew, Mark and John, or Luke. Instruct the students to address the corresponding questions either in writing or in a group or class discussion.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

Additional Activities

Healing and Empathy

1. Help your students to brainstorm what they know about the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. Record what they know on the board.

2. Ask your students, alone or in pairs, to put themselves in the place of someone who has a major illness or condition. Have them use the following questions to describe the experience and list their answers on a piece of paper:

- How might my illness or condition shape the way I see myself and describe myself to other people?
- Would my illness or condition affect my relationships with my parents? my relationships with my peers? my relationships with strangers? If so, how?
- How might my illness or condition affect the way I relate to God? Might it change what I believe about who God is in my life? If so, how?

3. After they have reflected on their answers to the questions in step 2, have your students read the section “The Effects of Anointing of the Sick,” on pages 233–234 of the *CFH*. Ask them to find and record the five effects of the Sacrament that are listed in that section.

4. Invite the students to share the effects of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick that they uncovered in the reading. Record the effects on the board, beside what they knew about the Sacrament at the beginning of this activity. Conduct a presentation on the material from the sections “The Effects of Anointing of the Sick” and “Receiving the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick,” on pages 233–235 of the *CFH*.

5. Following your presentation ask the students to respond to the following questions alone or with their partners:

- When someone who is sick or dying is touched, anointed, and prayed over, in what ways does that make him or her feel less alienated, powerless, and alone?
- In what ways does the sick or dying person’s experience connect with Jesus’ suffering and dying? Give as many examples as you can.

- Why is Jesus' Resurrection a source of hope for someone who is sick or dying?

6. Conclude by asking the students to bring to mind areas of their lives in which they need healing. It could be physical, emotional, spiritual, or mental healing. Allow a moment of silence and then lead the class in a prayer for healing.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

Turn Away from Sin and Be Faithful to the Gospel

Distribute Bibles to the students and tell them to read the readings for Ash Wednesday (Joel 2:12–18, Matt. 6:1–18, 2 Cor. 5:20—6:2) silently. Ask them to write a reflection on the following questions:

- How is God conveyed in these three Scripture readings?
- What does God ask of us?
- In the Gospel Jesus refers to a reward. Looking at all three readings, what do you see as the ultimate reward of our repentance?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

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