Forgiveness vs. Reconciliation

Teen Handout

Flame I Lesson Week 14
February 28, 2016

Forgiveness is NOT…
- forgetting
- condoning or excusing
- the denial of our real feelings
- trust is automatically restored
- ________________________________________________

Forgiveness is NOT… _______________________________________________________

Forgiveness is NOT…
- giving up my right to hurt you, for hurting me
- wiping the slate clean, to pardon, to cancel a debt
- giving oneself or another a second chance
- an act of love, mercy, and grace (refer back to your class on mercy)
- a conscious, deliberate decision to release negative feelings toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness.
- letting go of deeply held negative feelings toward someone or group who has caused you pain

- ________________________________________________
- ________________________________________________

Forgiveness is NOT… _______________________________________________________________________

Lies in its ability to
- Improve the quality of our relationships
- Restores trust; mend broken relationships
- Free us from negative feelings
- Bring us peace of mind
- Reduce stress
- Strengthen our relationships with God and others

“Without forgiveness life is governed by... an endless cycle of resentment and retaliation.”

Roberto Assagioli
Think of a time when forgiving another or being forgiven by another allowed you to move on, find peace of mind, put away negative feelings…

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**Reconciling helps us**

- to be restored to friendship or harmony
- to make things right
- come to agreement
- understand and resolve conflict
- maintain trusting relationships
- promote collaboration
- solve problems effectively
- avoid future conflict and the rupture or destruction of relationships
- bring hope
- establish peace

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"The practice of peace and reconciliation is one of the most vital and artistic of human actions."

Thich Nhat hanh

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**Identify situations in need of reconciliation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That families often face</td>
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<td>That friends often face</td>
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<td>School communities face</td>
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<td>In our country today</td>
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<td>In our world today</td>
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 Forgiveness and Reconciliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORGIVENESS</th>
<th>RECONCILIATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is an ongoing work of mercy</td>
<td>Is an ongoing work of mercy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requires change</td>
<td>Requires change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberates</td>
<td>Restores</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is an intrapersonal process</td>
<td>Is an interpersonal process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comes before reconciliation</td>
<td>Comes after forgiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forgiveness is something we can do for ourselves</td>
<td>Reconciliation is something we do for self and others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Takes time and personal effort</td>
<td>Takes more time and increased personal effort</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Share your opinion with your group

Is there anything you would consider unforgivable?
Do you agree with the differences between forgiveness and reconciliation listed above? Why or why not?
Do you see or have you experienced additional differences you would add (if yes write them in the chart above)?

Do you agree that forgiveness and reconciliation are important life skills not necessarily connected to a faith tradition? Why or why not?
Does thinking about forgiveness and reconciliation as life skills change the way you think about them? Does it impact the way you see the sacrament?
Do you think forgiveness is enough or do you think one needs to move on to reconciliation? Why or why not? Are there any situations you have faced or can you imagine a situation where reconciliation was not possible? How does that make you feel?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

 Forgiving another does not oblige us to reconcile. We forgive and reconcile with others as Christians because Jesus asked us to in order share with others the mercy of God.

“We are not the sum of our weakness and failures: We are the sum of the Father’s love for us…”
- Blessed Pope John Paul II
Questions for Reflection

- Is the sacrament of Reconciliation an important part of your Catholic life? Why or Why not?
- Are you worried or nervous about receiving the sacrament? What makes you worried or nervous?
- Why should we receive the sacrament instead of just saying sorry to God on our own?
Act of Contrition
My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good I have sinned against you, whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more and avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

Faith in Action!

How can I prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
1. Reflect on the Examination of Conscience exercise. Revisit it sometime this week.
2. Pray for those needing forgiveness. Think of someone who has hurt you, who you really need to work at forgiving. Think about what you can do to help you let go of any resentment, anger, or hostility toward that person you may have.

3. _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________

4. _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________

5. _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________  

The Parable of the Prodigal Son (or the Forgiving Father)
Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.
“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

I learned Statements—complete one or two of the sentences below:

1) I learned.....
2) I relearned.....
3) I discovered.....
4) I wonder if......
5) I was surprised...
AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIOUS FOR TEENS

MY RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS GOD

How do I pray?
- Out of fear
- Out of need
- Out of desire for personal gain
- Out of my personal relationship and respect for God
- I don’t pray

How do I attend Mass?
- Out of habit
- Bitterly because I feel I have to
- Out of fear
- Open to the experience, when it fits my schedule
- Regularly, with respect for the Eucharist
- As a part of the community
- I don’t attend Mass

How do I use God’s name?
- To swear
- To express anger
- Out of respect and love

How do I treat all of God’s creation?
- I respect other people equally regardless of race, religion, or economic status
- I see all life as sacred even the unborn
- I am wasteful with the earth’s resources
- My relationship with God is separate from everything else and has no impact on how I see or treat the world around me

MY RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS OTHER PEOPLE

How do I treat my family?
- Help when they are in need, even when it is not convenient for me
- Tease and push around my siblings
- Tell my parents where I am going and whom I am hanging out with
- Believe that family comes first
- Fight with or ignore members of my family and make no effort to try to make peace with them
- Forgive them when I feel they’ve hurt me

How do I treat my teachers?
- I am rude
- I don’t do my homework
- I am disruptive in class
- I do all my work and show respect
- I am bored and don’t pay attention

How do I treat people that I don’t know?
- Cheat or lie to get what I need
- Honor and follow through on all the promises and commitments I have made
- Kind and courteous
- I don’t care because I’ll never see them again
- Share what I have with others

How do I treat my friends?
- With love and respect
- Use them to gain popularity or gifts
- Make fun of them behind their backs
- Accept and understand their differences
Forgive them when they hurt me
Compliment and encourage them

MY RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS MYSELF

How do I see myself?
- Created in the image and likeness of God
- I focus only on what I don’t like about myself

How do I treat myself?
- Misuse drugs, tobacco or alcohol
- Disrespect my sexuality
- Cause physical damage to my body
- I take care of my physical, emotional and spiritual well-being

How seriously do I take my education?
- Blow off my studies
- Complete my assignments
- Participate in class and school activities

How do I make choices?
- Because everyone is doing it
- It’s the easiest way out of the situation
- I want to be popular
- My relationship with God tells me it’s the right thing to do

SUMMARY REFLECTION
Now that you have reflected on your relationship toward God, toward other people, and toward yourself
Take some time to answer these questions in your Teen Handout

- For what do I seek forgiveness?
- How do I want God to transform me?
- What will I confess and ask God's forgiveness and grace to change?