

Crossed Keys

MEMORY VERSE: “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord” Acts 3:19 (NIV)

STUDY PLAN: To better understand the meaning of sin, repentance, forgiveness and redemption so you can live a life that binds you to the kingdom of God and assures you of forgiveness.

To earn the Crossed Keys badge, you will need to do the following:



Step 1: Learn more about an old, old word: **Sin**

My initials _____

The Hebrew word for sin is “khatah”, which means to miss the mark or miss the goal. Since we are made in the image of God, the goal is to behave like God, which includes honoring other humans. When we fail to honor others; we fail to honor God and vice versa.

The Bible may seem old fashioned, but it has a pretty good diagnosis of human nature. Human nature causes us to tend to act for our own benefit at the expense of others. This kind of behavior is sinful because it separates us from God and from who we are meant to be.

It is our human nature to do our own will, rather than the will of God. Sometimes we follow our own desires even when we know we are in conflict with what God would have us do. This behavior is called **sin**, and it distorts our relationship with God even as it causes us to lose our liberty.

St. Paul wrote that we are slaves to sin. We cannot get it out of us. That is why Jesus is such good news. He came to us as a human and died to cover our sins. We are truly forgiven of all our sins and spared from the ultimate consequences of sin: destruction and finally death.

For a concise and relevant explanation of the word sin, download and watch the free video on The Bible Project website at:

www.thebibleproject.com/videos/khata-sin/



This word cloud show some of the sins which separate us from others and separates us from God.

Use pages 848-849 and 857 in the catechism in the Book of Common Prayer and other resources to define:

Sin _____

Penitence _____

Redemption _____

Absolution _____

Reconciliation _____

When we come to terms with our own sins and their consequences, we are to be truly sorry and sincerely grieve, for those we have wronged and for ourselves, but most of all for separating ourselves from God. So it is only when we repent – when we confess our sins and declare an intention to amend our lives - that we join with God in the process of redemption.



The process of redemption is:

1. Awareness of our sin
2. Sorrow for our sin
3. Repentance
4. Intention to change
5. Confession
6. Acceptance of God's forgiveness



How does the information in “Discern” expand your understanding of the meaning of sin? Do you have a new understanding of human imperfection?

Discuss whether sin is an action or a state of being. How does it differ to say “I have done something selfish, mean or prideful” instead of saying “I am selfish, prejudiced, or prideful?”

What role does personal sin play in structures of society that counteract God's will? For instance, how does our personal brokenness play into racism, sexism and other inequalities?

Discuss how we can be beloved by God if we are also sinful. Do you emphasize one concept over the other or maintain a balanced understanding of both?

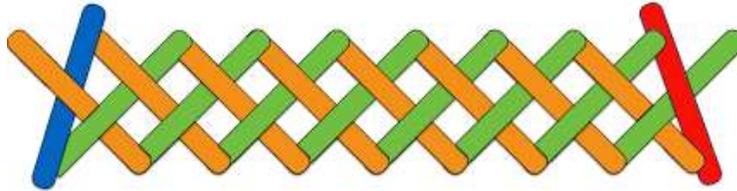
Do any or all of the following:



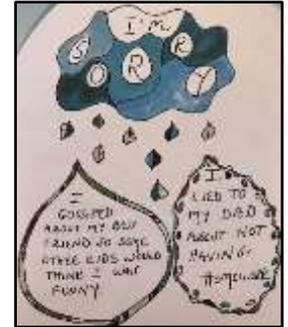
1. Read both versions of the General Confession on page 331 of the Book of Common Prayer.
2. Read the exhortation, or call to confession, on page 330.
3. Read the absolution, which only a priest or bishop can give, under the authority of Jesus Christ on page 360.
4. Take a handful of stones. On one side, write a sin (look at the word cloud on page 1 for ideas). On the other side, write "I am forgiven". Hold them and feel their weight.
5. Write ways of sin on jumbo craft sticks and create an "exploding cobra" of sin.



Exploding cobra weave



6. Using the Praying in Color technique described in the Prayer badge, pray for forgiveness thru doodling. (www.prayingincolor.com)



Step 2: Learn about Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Biblical and Today's World

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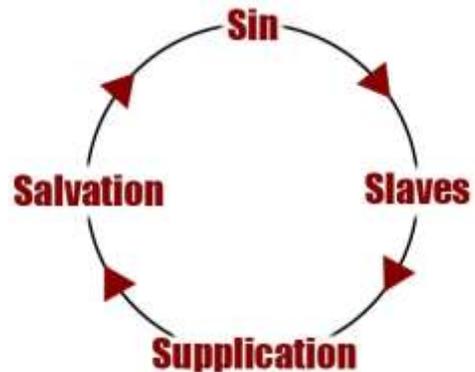


Do you ever look back on some unkind behavior on your part and wonder "what was I thinking"? Maybe it was immature behavior in middle school. Maybe it was not speaking up when you could have turned the tide of a conversation.

You may look back and simply wish you had behaved better and make a plan to avoid repeating the same action.

The true way to free yourself from that sin is to ask forgiveness and reconcile yourself to the person you hurt and to God.

In the Bible, the book of Judges is a tale of the cycle of sin. Israel repeatedly falls into sin, is enslaved, cries out for help, is delivered and then starts the cycle again. The book of Judges tells of many heroes of faith, but also includes some of the most violent and disturbing scenes in all Scripture. It is a story of our cycle of sin and God's continual response to our repentance and cry for mercy.



Asking and Giving Forgiveness

On page 1 of this lesson and in the Bible Project video on sin, it was brought up that the stories in the Bible are ignored as old fashioned. However, sin and violence continue in our world today. One modern-day story of sin and reconciliation is the story of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda – the systematic slaughter of 1,000,000 members of the minority Tutsi ethnic group in 100 days.

You can look up what happened during the genocide online. It is a shocking story. A takeaway from the genocide is a realization that this event did not happen in ancient, backwards times and it did not come as a surprise. Sin develops over time in hearts and minds. People can process what is going on and make a decision to obey or disobey God.

The amazing part of the Rwandan story is the reconciliation and forgiveness that continues in Rwanda.

Former enemies in Rwanda now live side by side and help each other. People who were once enemies no longer call themselves Hutus and Tutsis. They call themselves Rwandans. What if we made the same kind of changes in our lives? What if we no longer identified as one group or another and instead identified as friends?

Discuss

Watch this video on YouTube: “Rwanda Genocide Anniversary: A Family Reconciliation Story” (https://youtu.be/RpA2_vPZQkA). After watching this video about two men who had to “walk the walk” of forgiveness when their own children fell in love and married, discuss what you learned from them about forgiveness. (If this video is not available, find another on YouTube.)



This lesson cannot capture all that is to be learned about forgiveness and reconciliation. Nevertheless, you can continually learn from others and work to increase your understanding. You can pray for God to help you with forgiveness, which leads to reconciliation.

Do It!

Do any or all of the following:

1. Illustrate one image from the penitent’s prayer on page 450 of the BCP: *Holy God, heavenly Father, you formed me from the dust in your image and likeness, and redeemed me from sin and death by the cross of your Son Jesus Christ. Through the water of baptism you clothed me with the shining garment of his righteousness, and established me among your children in your kingdom. But I have squandered the inheritance of your saints, and have wandered far in a land that is waste.*
2. Read or listen to the Book of Judges. Write a reflection on the cycle of sin caused by human nature.
3. Write a reflection of your personal understanding of sin and forgiveness.
4. Learn about the work of Nelson Mandela, the example he is to South Africans, and his message of peace.
5. Write about someone you believe demonstrates behavior which honors others.

