



SESSION 7: FAULT

TOPIC: Our Goodness and the Fall

GOAL

The goal of this session is to help the teens understand God's original plan for creation and how the Fall of Man distorted God's plan for humanity. It also addresses how God's master plan comes to fruition despite our faults and failures.

KEY CONCEPTS

God created us for complete and total unity with Him. This is our original purpose.

When man and woman chose knowledge over God's will, sin entered the world and took root. Sin has continued to poison, distort, and tempt human hearts over the centuries.

We were created by God and, as a result, the desire for God is written on our hearts. God continually seeks to draw us closer to Him.

KEY TERMS

Original Sin: The sin by which the first human beings disobeyed the commandment of God, choosing to follow their own will rather than God's will. Describes the fallen state of human nature which affects every person born into the world, and from which Christ, the "New Adam," came to redeem us.

Redemption: Christ paid the price of His own sacrificial death on the cross to ransom us, to set us free from the slavery of sin, thus achieving our redemption.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:27

Romans 5:12

CATECHISM

27

356

375

ABOUT THIS SESSION

The Gather is a Bible trivia game, designed to help the teens begin to experience what it feels like to have their fate be out of their hands. The Proclaim examines our original state, the Fall, and consequences of original sin, as well as the beauty of our redemption and redeemer. The Break is small group discussion that encourages the teens to unpack their feelings of helplessness and thoughts on Christ's sacrifice, specifically how it affects our eternity. The Send provides examples of saints who have fallen but have also been restored by God and done amazing things in Church history. The session concludes with an examination of conscience.

ENVIRONMENT

Place a table and eight chairs at the front of the main meeting space. Place four buzzers on the table. This setup will be used for the Gather activity.

AS YOU GET STARTED

For an extended Send, consider offering the Sacrament of Reconciliation in addition to having the teens reflect using the *Examination of Conscience* handout.

GATHER

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space. Welcome them to the session and begin in prayer.

Cath-alon (15 min) – instead of this, we will have longer “send” period to allow for Confession/Reconciliation

Gather the teens in the main meeting space and instruct them to remain with their small groups. Have each small group come up with a team name and nominate one person to be the Cath-lete; he or she will be responsible for signaling that the group knows the answer to the question. Using the *Bible Trivia* handout, ask the teens a series of questions. The small group of the first Cath-lete who raises their hand is allowed to answer. If they answer correctly, they score one point. If they answer incorrectly, they lose a point. The group with the most points at the end of the game wins.

PROCLAIM

“Fault” Teaching (15 min)

We All Sin

Romans 5:12 says, “death spread to all men because all men sinned.”

Every. Single. Person. No one is free from sin; no one is better than another. We all stumble and fall, but we all must get back up and continue to seek righteousness, over and over and over again. The one constant in life seems to be our human ability to mess things up and make bad decisions. But in reality, the constant is our need for God’s grace and mercy because we are all fallen and caught in a cycle of sin.

How Did We Get Here?

Over the past few sessions, we have worked through various parts of the Book of Genesis, so we should be familiar with one of the most significant lines: “God created man in His own image... male and female He created them.” Humanity is the only creation formed in God’s image. Humans are set apart from all of God’s other creations. Humans were set apart from all of God’s other creations. God created humanity in a state of original holiness in order that man could be in a relationship with God and share in His divine life.

CCC 356, 375; Genesis 1:27

Humanity was created to be in union with God. We all have innate yearnings and desires that are rooted in how and why we were created. The Catechism eloquently states: “The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to Himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for.”

CCC 27

The first sin was disobedience to God. When faced with a choice, humanity chose themselves over God. Sin is a rejection of God and God’s plan for our lives. When sin entered the world and humanity rejected God, our divine union was shattered. Suffering and pain entered the world and sin took root. We cut ourselves off from God’s grace and the original holiness with which we were created was shattered. The repercussions reverberate throughout history.

CCC 386

Where Are We Now?

Humans now spend their lives combating temptation and resisting the urge to selfishly choose other things over God. Just as our ancestors hid from God in shame, we, too, try to hide from God, keeping our darkest secrets locked away.

Sometimes, it seems as though there are no consequences for our sins: white lies to your parents, cheating on a test, or other small things that are easy to get away with. However, each time we fall short of God's plan for our lives, it becomes a little harder to get back on track. It is similar to working out. If you are vigilant and have a good routine of staying in shape, all of your workouts are easier and you can attain better results. However, if you skip a week, it is much harder to attain the same results. You will have to endure more sweat, more work, and more suffering.

Play the video "Choices" to help illustrate this concept.

Even beyond the earthly consequences, our actions also have an eternal impact. Everything we do, big or small, leaves a mark on our eternal soul. The weight of sin is enormous and should never be cast aside.

Our Hope

Luckily, that is not where the story ends. Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. Within the darkness and despair of original sin, the beauty and grace of redemption is born. Jesus, the New Adam, when faced with the same decision to choose Himself over God, chose God. The sacrificial lamb was slain for our sins, which means that we are no longer separated from God, but will be joined with Him again in holiness when we die. "As one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men."

Romans 5:18

Baptism, as a mechanism to remove the stain of original sin, turns us back toward God by imparting the life of Christ's grace. Through the sacraments, we are able to participate in the grace that Christ won for us on the cross. Confirmation is a completion of the grace that was given to us at baptism. The gifts of the Holy Spirit given at confirmation give us the strength to turn away from sin and combat temptation.

CCC 405

We cannot redeem ourselves — the weight of our sin is too great — but Christ bridged the chasm between humanity and God that opened at the Fall. Redemption is not as easy as simply knowing about it — we have to take hold of it, grasp it, and own it. The Book of Matthew says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." It requires something of us, an action. The path is laid out for us — Christ has paved the way for us — but we have to accept it.

Matthew 7:21

BREAK

Small Group Discussion (15 min)

Divide the teens into their small groups. Begin in prayer and then use the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

- How did it feel watching someone else compete for your prize, knowing they were responsible for your fate? How did it feel when they won? How did it feel when they lost?
- Think about Christ's sacrifice. What do you think about what He did on the cross for us? Do you think about this sacrifice often or seldom? Why?
- What comes to mind when you imagine eternity? What do you think about heaven and hell?
- In general, do you have a shallow perspective or an eternal perspective on life? Why? What has shaped your perspective?
- Where is your focus? Is it on earthly treasures or heavenly glory? Why?

Restored (15 min)

Throughout history, God continued to restore the fallen. Assign each small group a saint who started out as a broken sinner and went on to do great work for Christ and the Church. Some examples include St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Ignatius of Loyola. Have the teens collect information about the saint's life. Consider having each teen or pairs of teens research a different aspect of the saint's life and then share their findings with the rest of the group. If needed, use the following questions to facilitate a discussion about the saint:

- What is this saint known for?
- What is something interesting about this saint?
- What is one thing you can apply from their life to the choices you make in your life?

SEND

Examination of Conscience (15 min)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space. Create a prayerful environment by dimming the lights and playing instrumental music in the background. Lead the teens through an examination of conscience, using the following to introduce the reflection:

As we have talked about during this session, we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Thankfully, that is not the end of our story. Throughout Church history, God has taken fallen, broken sinners and restored them so they can do extraordinary things. The one similarity in all of their stories is repentance: the moment they recognized they needed God's grace in their lives and reached out for it. We, too, are fallen, broken sinners. Now it is our turn to recognize our need for God's grace in our lives, to take a moment to acknowledge our faults and offer them to God. Within the Church, we have a beautiful opportunity to lay down our burdens in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In order to prepare for this sacrament, we reflect on our actions in light of the Ten Commandments in an exercise known as an examination of conscience. As you read through the examination, prayerfully reflect on the ways in which you have turned from the Lord and toward sin.

Give each teen a pen and a copy of the *Examination of Conscience* handout. After they have finished their reflection, invite the teens to pray the following Act of Contrition as a large group:

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 to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior, Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

Handout: Bible Trivia

Read each question aloud. The first teen to tap their buzzer is given the chance to answer. Award one point for correct answers. If the answer is incorrect, the next teen to buzz in has a chance to answer. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

- On what day did God create the land animals? *The sixth day*
- What was the name of the man who was killed by his own brother? *Abel*
- What were the names of the three men in the Book of Daniel who were thrown into a furnace but were not harmed? *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*
- Name four of the 12 tribes of Israel. *Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Joseph, Benjamin*
- What was the name of Mary's cousin, the mother of John the Baptist? *Elizabeth*
- How many commandments did Moses bring down from the mountain? *Ten*
- What was the name of the mountain where Moses received the Ten Commandments? *Mount Sinai*
- What sea did God part when the Egyptians were chasing the Israelites? *The Red Sea*
- What is the name of the second book of the Bible? *Exodus*
- Name two of the plagues of Egypt. *Water into blood, frogs, lice/gnats, flies, livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, death of firstborn*
- Who wore the coat of many colors? *Joseph*
- How many times did Peter deny Jesus? *Three*
- What was Abraham's former name prior to his covenant with God? *Abram*
- What was the sign of God's covenant with Noah? *A rainbow*
- What is the name of the place where Jesus was crucified? *Golgotha*
- What are the three gifts the wise men brought when Jesus was born? *Gold, frankincense, myrrh*
- Who told the disciples that Jesus was risen from the dead? *Mary Magdalene*
- Who do we celebrate during the Feast of the Immaculate Conception? *Mary*
- What did David slay Goliath with? *A rock*
- What animal is mentioned most frequently in both the New and Old Testaments? *Sheep*

Handout: Examination of Conscience

Slowly and prayerfully use the following to examine your conscience.

1. You shall have no other gods before me.

What have I placed before God? Have I missed Mass on Sunday for a reason that is within my control? Do I daydream during Mass instead of participating? Am I too busy to pray because of commitments to extracurricular activities? Am I more concerned with relationships with my friends or significant other than with my relationship with God? Do I value anything above God? Do I worship technology, Apple products, clothing brands, celebrities, social media personalities, etc.? Have I participated in the occult: ouija boards, fortune tellers, channeling, astrology, horoscopes, reiki, magic, etc.?

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

Do I use words to put down God or the Church? Do I swear using the Lord's name?

3. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Have I missed Mass on Sunday because of sports or another activity? Do I rest on Sunday? Do I spend time with my family? Do I set aside time for prayer?

4. Honor your father and mother.

Have I ever spoken unkindly about or to my parents? Have I yelled at them? Have I willfully disobeyed them or lied to them? Have I been disobedient to those in authority? Teachers? Coaches? Law enforcement? Core Members?

5. You shall not murder.

Have I killed someone's reputation through lies and slander? Have I manipulated situations or people to hurt another? Have I held grudges and resentments? Have I refused to forgive others? Have I cultivated hatred? Have I mocked or made fun of another? Have I supported abortions? Have I advocated for euthanasia or the death penalty? Have I sped or texted while driving? Have I gotten drunk or taken drugs?

6. You shall not commit adultery.

Have I looked lustfully at others? Have I lustfully kissed or touched someone? Have I watched pornography? Have I engaged in sexual activity outside of marriage?

7. You shall not steal.

Have I stolen media off of the internet? Have I downloaded music, movies, or TV shows illegally? Have I shoplifted? Have I wasted something that belonged to another?

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Have I gossiped, told lies, or embellished stories at the expense of another?

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

Have I consented to impure glances and thoughts? Have I encouraged them by stares, curiosity, or impure conversations? Did I neglect to control my imagination or desire for other people?

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Am I jealous of what other people have? How many hours a day do I spend on social media? Do I find I myself jealous or sad that others are doing more than I, have more than I, or look cooler than I perceive myself to be?