

Lesson 33 – Temporal Punishment and Indulgences

Grades 3-5

Lesson Preparation:

Read Lesson 33 in the Baltimore Catechism. You will need to have a Bible for this session. You will also want to prepare whatever prayer or indulgenced act you will do with the class at the end.

Opening Prayer:

Scripture: “In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1Peter 1:6-7

Leader: Lord, we know that suffering is a result of sin, but that You give meaning to our suffering, so that it has the power to heal our souls, and so we can offer it as a prayer for others. Help us to understand this, and to be willing to suffer well. Amen.

Together: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Opening:

This lesson is about the temporal punishment due to sin, and indulgences. These can be challenging topics. To get students thinking about them, begin by reading together Hebrews 12:4-13.

Discuss the following questions: Why do parents discipline their children? How do children benefit from discipline? Since God is our Father, how does He discipline us, and how is it for our good?

Note: there can be a challenge distinguishing what between what God ordains, and what He permits. Because of His attribute of being all-powerful, even in Scripture the distinction is not always made. But God promises that He can make all things work for the good of those who love Him. All things, from His

active will (what He does) and His permissive will (what He allows – even if He does not desire it – i.e. sin), can be used for our discipline (teaching), healing, etc.

It is also important for students to understand that sin wounds us, and even after we have been forgiven, we are in need of spiritual healing. (The punishment should be seen in this light. It is true that punishment is just in itself, but we can never make up for our sin; Jesus satisfied the demands of justice on the cross.) The spiritual healing can come through prayer, and often it comes through suffering. Suffering well can help us to let go of less important things and cling to God; it can heal us of disordered self-love. This is the principle as to why penance is important; understanding it will also be important to understanding indulgences.

Watch the Lesson 33 Video on Catholic Brain

Comprehension Questions: *Note: These questions are asked after the video, just to check student comprehension. They are not discussion questions, but be sure students understand the answers to these questions before moving on*

1) What is an indulgence?

It is a remission of temporal punishment due to sin that has already been forgiven. It is a medicine the Church prescribes to help heal us spiritually.

2) What is a partial indulgence?

It is a partial healing, remitting some of the punishment due to sin.

3) What is a plenary indulgence?

It is a complete healing, remitting all the temporal punishment due to sin.

4) What is necessary to gain a plenary indulgence?

We must perform the indulgenced act and: a) receive the sacrament of penance – within several days before or after the indulgenced act; b) receive Holy Communion; c) pray for the intentions of the pope; d) have complete detachment from sin – notice that this is a complete healing, so we can have no sin or even attachment to sin on our soul – if we are not spiritually disposed to receive the complete healing, the act is still a partial indulgence

5) For whom can we gain an indulgence?

We can obtain them for ourselves, or for the deceased in purgatory. We can not obtain them for someone else who is still living.

Discussion Questions: *Note: These questions are for student discussion. The students should consider these questions and comment on them. There are some key points included in this lesson, after each question, that you can use to help guide their discussion toward truth. It's important that the students think about and discuss these things, but that they don't leave the discussion with false impressions about what is true.*

1) Why does sin carry a temporal punishment?

Hopefully by this point in the lesson, students will recognize the justice in it, and will also understand the spiritual healing aspect of the temporal punishment.

2) How can suffering detach us from sin?

If we suffer well, it can help us look beyond our selfishness, to reach out for God, to join in solidarity with others who suffer. We can unite our sufferings to those of Jesus on the cross, and embrace them as a way to be close to Him and participate in His saving work (see Colossians 1:24).

3) How can the Church use indulgences for healing?

The Church has a treasury of spiritual healing. As the doctor of our souls, the Church supplies indulgences like medicine.

Activity:

Perform an indulgenced act. Prayer provides healing, so we can have the intention of gaining an indulgence when we pray. Many prayers are specifically listed as indulgenced. Studying and teaching about our Faith is indulgenced, so we can ask that each religion class be indulgenced and advance our spiritual healing. There are Catholic books and Web sites that have lists of indulgenced acts. Below are a few you may choose from:

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Act of Spiritual Communion

Litany of the Sacred Heart

Litany of the Precious Blood

Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Litany of the Saints

Psalm 51

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Lord, You forgive us for sin, and more than that, You heal us of our sin. We thank You for that, and we pray that we will accept that healing, through prayer, through suffering, through loving actions, and through indulgences. Amen.

Together: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.