



St Vincent
de Paul Society
England and Wales
Turning Concern into Action



Reconciliation Service for children

Leader's guide

This service reflects the journey we are all taking during this Year of Jubilee as "Pilgrims of Hope". At the SVP, we are encouraging children and young people to open the doors of their hearts to journey closer to God, ask for His forgiveness when needed, and be in a better position to be Christ-like to others, showing love and compassion. It is also an opportunity to celebrate God's love for us.

What you will need:

- [SVP PowerPoint Presentation for your Reconciliation Service](#)
- ["My Reconciliation: A Time for Hope" worksheet](#) (1 per child)
- Items for creating your prayerful space (see below)
- ["The Parable of the Doors" handout](#) to take home (1 per child)
- [Access to the Lent campaign call to action](#)

Creating a prayerful space

Create a focal point for your Reconciliation Service. Include a Bible, a candle, a cross and a decorated 'Door of Hope' to focus the children on opening the doors of our hearts during this time. If a priest is available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, ensure that a safe space is available for the sacrament, adhering to Safeguarding guidelines for your school/parish.

Welcome (Slide 1)

Leader: *Welcome to our Service of Reconciliation, a time to come closer to God, think about the times when we haven't always done the right things and ask for His forgiveness. It is an opportunity to celebrate God's love for us and that He forgives us. Let's begin with our opening prayer.*

Reader 1 (child): Opening prayer (Slide 2)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Heavenly Father,

We bring the gift of ourselves to you today, knowing that sometimes we make mistakes with our words and with our actions. Bring us closer to you to start afresh. Help us to forgive ourselves and others. Lead us on a better path to be "Pilgrims of Hope", sharing your love and kindness wherever we go. Amen.

Reader 2 (child): Word of God (Slide 3)

A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah 29: 11

I say this because I know what I have planned for you," says the Lord. "I have good plans for you. I don't plan to hurt you. I plan to give you hope and a good future."

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God

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Reflection (Leader)

Slides 4-7: Unpack the scripture with the children by reflecting on the points in these slides. You might like to ask the children to give some examples as they reflect.

Slide 8: Do you know the word for 'Time' in any other languages?

Some options to do this: get the children to raise their hands to share some examples, work in groups to write some down, invite children up who speak different languages to share that word at the front. It's a lovely moment to celebrate the diverse languages that there are in our schools and parishes.

Slide 9: Reveal some examples to the children. Did they get all of these before?

Slide 10: Explain to the children that in Greek there are two words for 'Time'. The following **slides (11-15)** will define Chronos and Kairos and offer examples.

Examination of Conscience (Slide 16)

This is the time that the children take a moment to reflect on their actions and the things they've said in preparation to say sorry to God. Give the children some time to answer these questions. If you wish, they can make some notes on their worksheet. This is to help them and won't be shared.

If the Sacrament of Reconciliation is available:

Leader: *We are now going to have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and say sorry to God for the things we've done wrong.*

Explain the process to the children:

The priest will invite you to make the sign of the cross and then ask you what you'd like to say sorry to God for. He will then talk to you about how you could follow Jesus in a better way. The priest will then give you a penance (a prayer or action to show God you're sorry), before inviting you to make your Act of Contrition (when you say that you are sorry and show God you want to try to do better.). This is written on your worksheet. It is through the priest's final words of forgiveness and peace, known as the prayer of absolution, that we are reminded that we are forgiven by God.

Sacrament of Reconciliation not available:

Leader: *Now that you've had a moment to answer those questions, spend a few minutes to open the door of your heart to and write a prayer to ask God for help in making the right choices going forward. You might ask God to help you be patient with your family or friends, or to help you look out for people who need your help. Ask the Lord how you could bring hope to others. Take this away with you to pray at home and when you are able to go and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, reflect on you notes from your Examination of Conscience and bring those to God at that time.*



A time of prayer (Slide 17)

The writing of prayers can take place after the Sacrament of Reconciliation or straight after the Examination of Conscience if the Sacrament is not available. **Slide 17** offers some sentence stems and ideas for their prayer, which can be written on their worksheet "My Reconciliation: A Time for Hope".

Doors of Hope (Slide 18)

Show the children the video of "The Parable of the Doors", which reminds them the gift that they are from God. They will have a reminder of this on their worksheet to take away with them.

Reader 3: Closing Prayer (Slide 19)

Lord, we are ready to continue our journey with you, knowing that you have forgiven us for the mistakes we've made. This is a time of hope. Help us to use our time well. May we open the doors of our hearts each day to be closer to you and to share your love with others. Amen.

SVP Lent Campaign: A Time for Hope (Slide 20)

The children now have the chance to bring hope to others by taking part in this year's Lent campaign. Access the link via our [Jubilee home page](#).

hope