



Dear Parents,

When our children prepare to receive sacraments it offers us, as parents, a time to form the knowledge of our faith and renew our commitment to the teachings of the Church. This year we are asking all parents of children preparing in sacraments to participate in online catechesis program on FORMED. There are no additional meetings to attend, as FORMED can be accessed from your home computers.

Since its launch in 2015, our parish has subscribed to FORMED for all of our parishioners. FORMED is one of the fastest growing Catholic programs in thousands of parishes across the world. FORMED is a video on demand and digital content service for believers and seekers that features the best audio, video, ebooks and feature-length films from some of the world's most credible Catholic sources, such as the Augustine Institute, Ignatius Press, Catholic Answers and the St. Paul Center.

Click on FORMED on the olosmonroe.com parish website to register or go to olosmonroe.formed.org . Then log in with your email and password to access video-based study programs, movies, documentaries, audio talks, audiobooks and eBooks. FORMED also has an app for Apple or Android mobile devices! Go to the App Store or the Google Play store to download the FORMED App. Then beautiful Catholic content is only 1 click away, anytime and anyplace.

If your child is preparing for Reconciliation, we ask that you watch the ***Forgiven*** series before your child receives this sacrament. Please use the questions provided for discussion and reflection as you participate in this series.

If your child is preparing for First Communion, we ask that you watch the ***Presence*** series before your child receives this sacrament. Please use the questions provided for discussion and reflection as you participate in this series.

If your child is preparing for Confirmation, we ask that you watch ***Echo:Episode 16*** before your child receives this sacrament. Please use the questions provided for discussion and reflection as you participate in this series.

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QUESTIONS FOR FORGIVEN SERIES:

Session 1: Where are you?

What is your interpretation of this statement? “When we sin, God does not love us less, but we love ourselves less.”

“There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right.” — Martin Luther King Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches* In light of this quote, why is a well formed conscience essential for our happiness?

“God doesn’t just want more from us, he wants more for us!” What do you think this quote means?

Session 2: An Encounter with Mercy

According to psychologists, an identity crisis occurs when someone is unsure of their role in life and feel as if they don’t really know themselves. In other words, someone experiencing an “identity crisis” is unable to provide an answer to the question “Who are you?” What difference do you think Jesus makes to the formation of a strong identity?

Holiness and sin have an inverse relationship. As one increases, the other decreases. That being said, it was common for many of the saints to go to Confession frequently. For example, Pope St. John Paul II and St. Teresa of Calcutta are known to have gone to Confession once a week. How do we explain this apparent contradiction?

In Confession, why does the priest say “I absolve you of your sin” and not “God absolves you of your sin”?

Session 3: The Rite Explained

In the video we heard that God forgives our sin in order to clear the way for love. Grace increases in our souls similar to the way a fire increases in brightness and heat with the addition of more fuel. Since sanctifying grace is God's very life, how are we to understand an increase of God's life within us when he is already omnipresent and infinite?

God's will for our lives is to grow in self-awareness, self-possession, and self-donation. In other words, it is difficult to give ourselves away in love if we are not free to love. And, it is difficult to grow in the freedom necessary to love if we are not aware of what restrains us. How does understanding the purpose of our lives emphasize the importance of a good examination of conscience?

A presidential candidate was asked the question: "How do you define sin?" His answer was: "Being out of alignment with my values." What is problematic with this answer?

Session 4: Biblical Foundations: Sin, Mercy, and the Sacrament of Confession

Author Richard Dawkins writes in *The God Delusion*: "The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction." As an atheist, Dawkins writes this to undermine Christianity and the Bible. How can we reconcile the God of the Old Testament and the merciful love of our heavenly Father revealed to us through Jesus Christ?

God says this of David, the great king of Israel: "I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will" (Acts 13:22). And yet, David failed miserably in doing God's will when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband killed so that he could take her to be his wife. Given these circumstances, how is David a role model for us?

The great rabbi Maimonides is credited with this profound statement: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." How does this statement give insight into the reasons Jesus delegated his priesthood?

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Session 5: Answering Common Questions about Confession

Matt had been away from Confession for seven years. He had been living far from God and came to a breaking point. Not knowing where to turn, he went to the parish and got in line for Confession. He writes about his experience: "When I heard the words of absolution from the priest, it was as if heavy chains fell away from my body. I experienced a sense of freedom and joy that I had never known. That was nearly twenty years ago, and today, I am still that changed man! How does Matt's story emphasize our psychological need and spiritual need of the sacrament?"

In *The Fate of Empires and the Search for Survival*, historian Sir John Bagot Glubb (1897-1987) chronicles the decline and collapse of great empires and identifies a similar cycle in all. In the beginning, collective self-sacrifice and discipline builds the empire. Prosperity follows and leads to greater comfort, less religious practice, and moral decline. Finally, moral decline leads to selfishness, decadent living, and eventual collapse. How does this cycle demonstrate the corporate nature of sin and the need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Jesus says to the woman caught in adultery: "Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again" [John 8:11]. His words demonstrate that God loves us just as we are but too much to leave us there! Why is it not enough to say that "God loves you just as you are?"