

# Turning back to God

## FOCUS

1. When we choose to do what we know is wrong we sin.
2. God wants us to turn back to him after we sin.
3. God always loves and forgives us. We are always a part of God's family.
4. Grace is God's power and presence which enables us to do the right thing.
5. The Church celebrates the forgiving presence of God through the Sacrament of Penance.

*During these lessons your child may have:*

- *read and discussed the scripture passages about Zacchaeus and John the Baptist;*
- *identified that sin affects them and their relationship with God and others;*
- *discussed scenarios which depict the damaging effects of sin;*
- *learnt about the First Rite of reconciliation.*

### Luke 19: 1-10

Zacchaeus lived in Jericho. His job was to collect money for taxes. He took more money than he needed and he was very rich. People did not like Zacchaeus.

One day Jesus was going through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. But he was a short man and he couldn't see over the crowd, so he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree. When Jesus got to the sycamore tree, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, hurry down! I want to stay with you today." Zacchaeus hurried down. He gladly welcomed Jesus and took him to his home. (People did not like Zacchaeus, but Jesus did.)

Everyone who saw this started grumbling, "This man is a sinner and Jesus is going home to eat with him!" At the end of the day Zacchaeus stood up and said to Jesus in a strong voice, "I will give half of my property to the poor." Zacchaeus was changing. He continued firmly, "And I will now pay back four times the amount to everyone I have ever cheated." Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "Today you have been saved."

### Luke 3:3-18

John the Baptist went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He said, "Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. Make rough roads smooth." When all the people asked him, "What must we do then?" he

answered, "If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same." Some tax collectors said to him, "Master, what must we do?" He said to them, "No stealing." Some soldiers asked him in their turn, "What about us? What must we do?" He said to them, "No bullying." There were also many other things he said to announce the Good News to them.

## SUGGESTED HOME ACTIVITIES

These are some suggested activities to do at home with your child.

1. Read and discuss the story of Zacchaeus with your child.
2. Discuss with your child why it is important to turn back to God when we choose to do the wrong thing.
3. Discuss with your child what difference it makes to know that God loves us so much that he will forgive the things we are sorry for.
4. If your child has never made his/her First Confession, enrol him/her into a parish program for the Sacrament of Penance.
5. Encourage your child to complete the exercise on the activity page.
6. More activities can be found at [www.ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au) Click on Home Activities.

## To Remember :

**When I turn away from God through sin I need to say "I'm sorry."**

Some of the children listed below are not following the path that God would like them to take. Write the names of these children on the signs provided.

Catherine always says "I'm sorry" if she has hurt her family or friends.

Karen gets very jealous of other children, sometimes taking things that belong to them.

Anthony, who is very big for his age, bullies other children.

Anna is very nasty to her younger sister, calling her names, and making fun of her.

Peter is very reliable at home, helping his parents whenever he can.

Simon never listens to the advice of his parents.

Monica always makes an effort to be nice to other children at school.

Sonia often prays, thanking God for all the wonderful things that he has done for her.

Robert has a very bad habit of swearing when he is angry.

Alex likes to help his grandmother with small jobs around her house.



Dear God,  
for the times that I have turned away from you, I'm sorry. For the times that I have hurt others, I'm sorry. When I do these things, I know I hurt myself. Help me always to follow you and be happy. Amen.