

Mortal Sin

A mortal sin completely severs our relationship with God and the church. There are three ways to tell if a sin is mortal:

- The sin must be seriously wrong such as loving something or someone more than God or committing murder or committing adultery.
- We must know that the sin is seriously wrong.
- We must make a free choice to commit the sin that we know is serious and we know is wrong.

Mortal sin must be confessed in the sacrament of reconciliation. The process of reconciliation will reunite us with God and the church. Jesus loves to forgive us. The church encourages us to use the sacrament of reconciliation at least once per year, whether we commit mortal sin or not.

Be Hopeful

No matter what kind of sin we commit, we must always be hopeful because God is waiting to bring us back, to give us another chance and to create new possibilities for us.

A Vision of Perfection

Learning Objective: To explain that the healing ministry of Jesus is a sign of the kingdom of God and is celebrated in the two sacraments of healing

Activity: Read Revelation 21:1–4 and Matthew 9:2–8 and visualize the perfect day with your child.

In Revelation 21:1–4 we hear about a futuristic vision when God will dwell fully with us, and verse four assures us that all suffering will be eliminated. This vision, mentioned in several places in the Bible, is known as the kingdom

or reign of God. It is God's intention to wipe out all of our pain, but we must say yes to God's invitation in order to make the kingdom come alive in our lives.

In Matthew 9:2–8 Jesus showed us that the kingdom is rooted in forgiveness and healing. Notice that Jesus connects forgiveness with healing in this story. This man did not just receive a physical healing. He was healed spiritually and socially. Spiritually he was forgiven and set free from sin. His physical healing allowed him to participate fully in society again.

This healing, as well as other healings in the Gospels, gives us a hint about God's vision for perfection. The perfect day for God is a day when there is compassion, mercy, forgiveness, healing, joy and inclusion for all people. Why aren't all people healed? The answer is simple: The kingdom is not yet fully present. Perhaps God is patiently waiting for us to cooperate with the plan for salvation that has already been given to us in Christ. Rather than force it on us as if we were slaves or robots, God, like a good parent, wants us to choose the divine plan out of love and freedom. In the meantime, we will have to live in an imperfect world tainted by sickness and suffering. But even in the midst of sickness and suffering, which are not part of God's plan, we can learn many things about what it takes to say yes to God's kingdom—things such as patience, trust, adjusting priorities and perseverance to name a few.

My Perfect Day Activity

On my perfect day I would wake up at _____ A.M. to the sound of _____ . Before breakfast I would _____ . For breakfast I would eat _____ . These are the people who would join me for breakfast: _____ .

Between breakfast and lunch, I would _____ .

For lunch I would eat _____ . Between lunch and dinner I would _____ .

For dinner I would eat _____ . After dinner I would spend my evening with _____ doing _____ . I would end my perfect day by _____ . I would go to bed

at _____ P.M. or A.M.

The Perfect Day: Review and Understanding

1. Was there any pain or suffering described in your perfect day? Why not? (Parent or teacher: Explain to your child that in God's vision for perfection, there is no pain or suffering either.)
2. What are the similarities between your vision for a perfect day and God's vision as they are represented in Revelation and Matthew?
3. Try to make the perfect day happen (if it is within means). (Parent or teacher: At the end of the day discuss how *nice* the day was, but not *perfect*. None of our experiences is perfect, and that's okay. Imperfection is, in fact, a constant reminder to us that we have not yet been given the full experience of God's joy. We're still hungry, we're still searching, we're still praying and we're still hoping for God's promise of perfection in the future. It's good to be restless and a little dissatisfied, even with the best days of our lives, because our unrest and our unease remind us that we still need to pursue God, who is the only one capable of filling our hearts with complete satisfaction.)

The Church Celebrates Forgiveness and Healing

In the two sacraments of healing, penance and reconciliation and anointing of the sick, the church says yes to God's invitation to the kingdom by carrying on Jesus' ministry of forgiving and healing. Each Christian is called to take that ministry of forgiveness and healing into our world every day and to offer it constantly to those we love and to those we'd rather not see. This is the ministry of building the perfect day.