

3rd-6th

Spirit & Truth

*Teaching Kids
the Heart of Worship*



Teacher's Guide

Lesson #L2:

Confession

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Lesson #L2

Confession

Lesson Topic:

Confessing our sins.

Key Themes:

Sin keeps us away from God.

Confession brings us closer to God.

Key Verses:

1 John 1:8-10

Luke 18:9-14

Lesson Goals:

After completing this lesson, students will be able:

- † To describe how the act of confessing our sins leads to a closer relationship with God and helps us worship better by performing a skit and participating in role-playing activities.
- † To identify what sin is by learning to apply two basic rules to actions that may or may not be considered a sin.

Lesson At-A-Glance

Activities

Supplies

Music and Transition

20 min. † Music Leader Guide

Opening

Ashamed

Allow students to privately see how sin dirties our hearts

5 min. † Copies of Activity Sheet #L2.A
† Pencils with erasers.

Acting Up

Skit

Students explore the first part of the Order of Confession and Forgiveness.

10 min. † Copies of Skit #L2

Putting It Together

This Is a Test...

Help students identify sins.

10 min. † Three pictures (from magazines, Internet, etc.) showing: A tree/plant, a fish, a human (someone the students will know).
† Activity Sheet #L2.B, cut along the dotted lines and folded in half.

Bible Connection

1 John 1:8-10

Confess and don't call God a liar!

10 min. † Bibles



Lesson At-A-Glance

Additional Activities

Confession

Students cleanse the sins from their hearts through confession.

20 min.

- † Students' copies of Activity Sheet #L2.A from the Ashamed activity above.
- † Pencils with erasers.
- † A paper shredder (optional).

Missing Something

Don't miss out on the joy of God's love!

10 min.

- † Pudding or applesauce (something you need to eat with a spoon)
- † Bowls (unless the food is in individual snack cups)
- † Spoons

Plugged/Unplugged

Dance for joy when you're "plugged in" to God!

5 min.

- † A radio or cassette player that plugs into the wall (unfortunately, CDs and MP3s won't work for this activity)

Closing Activities

5 min.

Total Time: 60 minutes

Background for Teachers

As adults, we sometime use words, especially “churchy” words, with kids and don’t explain what they mean. And, sometimes (we might be embarrassed to admit) we do not even fully understand what they mean. So, in these lessons, the “churchy” words will be defined for those who are not ready to explain them to kids, or to let you know what aspect of the words are intended in the following lesson.

A sin or not a sin?

Sin is the word we use to name the thoughts, words, and actions that go against the way God wants us to live. Kids understand this as the bad choices and mistakes we make. Two rules are given to help students determine whether an action is a sin or not. First, if what you are doing is hurtful to someone (even yourself), it is a sin. A sin necessarily harms someone, even if it just their relationship with God.

Second, if what you are doing is not loving God with your whole self or your neighbor as yourself, then it is a sin. This is, of course, a restatement of the Greatest Commandments, and the most accurate rule for sin there is. Unfortunately, it is more difficult for kids (and, frankly, adults) to think through the implications of their actions in this way (say, “is doing my homework loving God and my neighbor, or not?”)

Confession

The basic meaning of the word “confess” is “to tell.” Therefore, confessing sins is simply telling God about the choices and mistakes that we feel bad about. Children are familiar with the act of “saying sorry,” so that is one useful way to explain confession to your students.

One tricky aspect of confession is the explanation of what it “does.” Are we forgiven when we confess (and therefore, what we do not confess is not forgiven), or are we forgive everything, even without confessing? The Lutheran response is that we are forgiven of all of our sins, past, present, and future, confessed and unconfessed, when we are connected to Jesus in faith (more on that later). So, confessing our sins is not a part of being forgiven. However, confessing sins is important for two reasons. First, when we are ashamed or bothered by guilt, confession gives us the opportunity to get it out in the air and receive the declaration of forgiveness. Second, taking the time to recognize our sins and confess them to God allows us to remember the great love and generous forgiveness that we have in Christ. That gives us even more to thank God for!

In the skit...

The worship service has officially started in this skit. Our six students begin trying to figure out the meaning behind the first portion of the Order of Confession and Forgiveness.

In the Bible...

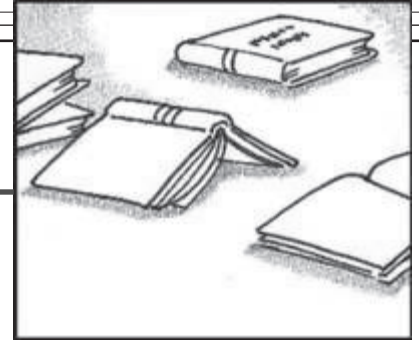
1 John gives a no-nonsense approach to sinning: If you say you don’t, you’re lying. But, the text also gives the promise in the same way: If you confess your sins, then God gets rid of them.

In practice...

Take time this week to confess your own bad choices and mistakes to God and remind yourself that God never stops loving and forgiving you.



Lesson Plan



Music (15 minutes)

See Music Leader Guide for more information.

Transition to Classrooms (5 minutes)

Greeting and Opening Activity (5 minutes)

Gather the students and focus them by using the Apostolic Greeting (using a cue card as necessary):

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and
the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.*

Ashamed

Allow students to privately see how sin dirties our hearts!

You will need:

- † Copies of Activity Sheet #L2.A
- † Pencils with erasers

During class:

1. Ask: **Have you ever done something that you are ashamed of, that makes you feel bad when you think about it? Did that thing make you want to stay away from someone, like your friend or your parents?** *[This does not need to be a major sin. If students draw a blank, then ask if they have ever done anything that they would not want to tell their parents, pastor, or teacher.]*
2. Say: **On your paper, lightly write inside the heart at least one thing that you have done that makes you feel bad. Feel free to just write one letter or even draw a line to keep it private, just make some sort of mark to represent the thing you are ashamed of. When you are done fold it up and put it in your pocket.**



Note:

- The students will get this paper out again for the “Confession” activity at the end of the lesson.

Acting Up: Skit #L2 (10 minutes)

Before class, set up chairs so there are “pews” and a table for an altar/pulpit area. Hand out highlighted copies of the script. Encourage the students to have a good time with the skit and pay attention to what is said.

After the skit is performed, congratulate the actors for a job well done (even having everyone applaud).

Discussion Questions

The following questions give you some suggestions on how to help your students reflect on the skit, so do not feel that you have to stick with each one verbatim.

Did you see an example of confession in this skit? Who had to ask for forgiveness?

Annie, because she called Joe an idiot.

What did you learn about confession in this skit?

Confession is telling God about the bad choices we’ve made.

What does it mean to “confess our sins”?

To tell God about the bad things we have done.

What did Rachel learn about confession when she asked the question, “So, does that mean that God knows everything that I do, even what I’m thinking and don’t tell anyone?” How did the other students in the skit help her answer this question?

God does know everything, but Jesus still died for her (and your) sins, so he must really love us!

In your own words, how would you describe “sin”?

Answers will vary. A bad choice or action, something that takes you away from God, etc.

Who is able to clean our hearts from sin? *God, specifically the Holy Spirit.*

What does confession have to do with worshipping God?

Confession cleans us up so that we can love God with our whole hearts, and it gives us something to be thankful for.

Note:

If your students follow the skit’s lead, they might ask you about “worthily magnify your holy name.” In short, we are praying that we would do a good (worthy) job spreading (magnifying) the good news of the things God has done (your holy name).



Putting It Together (10 minutes)

This Is a Test...

Help students identify sins.

You will need:

- † Three pictures (from magazines, Internet, etc.) showing:
 - † A tree/plant.
 - † A fish.
 - † A human (someone the students will know).
- † Activity Sheet #L2.B, cut along the dotted lines and folded in half.

During class:

1. Tell the following joke: **What's the difference between an alligator and a mailbox?** Answer: If you don't know, don't try to mail anything!
2. Say: **It's important to be able to identify things, tell when something is or is not a mailbox, for example. And you can make some easy rules to help you figure it out.**
3. Ask: **So, what are some rules for identifying a mammal?** [*Characteristics: animal, moves by itself, usually has hair or fur, breathes air with lungs, is warm-blooded, and the mother nurses her babies. Give them hints to make sure they get a couple of the characteristics (especially the hair/fur), but do not spend too much time on this.*]
4. Show the pictures of the tree, fish, and human one at a time.
5. For each picture, ask: **Is this a mammal? Why?** Keep the exercise lighthearted and moving quickly.
6. Say: **It is also important to identify whether something you do is a sin or not. God gives a lot of rules in the Bible to help people identify sins, but here are two really basic ones.**
 1. **If you are hurting anyone (including yourself) in any way, then it is a sin.**
 2. **If you are not loving God with your whole self and loving other people when you are doing it, then it is a sin.**

How to play:

1. Give a folded action slip from Activity Sheet #L2.B to each student.
2. Have them take turns acting out (try if first without talking, but allow talking if necessary) the action listed on their paper.
3. The rest of the students are to answer A) what the action is, B) whether it is a sin or not, and C) why it is (or isn't) a sin.
4. Be sure to keep track of time. If the lesson is running long, then you can cut it short and use the rest at a different time.



Bible Connection (10 minutes)

Have students take out their Bibles and help them find the letter 1 John. Explain to them that after Jesus died and rose again, God sent people out to tell others about Jesus and start churches. After the churches were started, the disciples of Jesus (now called apostles) wrote letters to teach the new churches more about Jesus and to deal with new problems that came up. Since this is only three verses, have one or two students read it and then either have others read it again, or read the following interpretation to them.

Bible Lesson

1 John 1:8-10

Interpretation

If you or I tell people that we are perfect, that we never mess up, then we're lying. But, God promises that if we tell him when we mess up, he will totally get rid of our sins, clean us up! Jesus died because we sin, so if we say we don't sin, then it's like calling Jesus a liar. Can we be friends with him if we do that?

Discussion Questions

What happens when we confess our sins to God?

God forgives us, he gets rid of our sins.

Is being honest with God (and others) important? How could it hurt your relationship with God if you chose not to be honest with God?

Yes, you cannot be friends with someone that you lie to. If we're not honest with God, then we will feel distant from him.

When you are forgiven by God, how does your life improve?

I don't feel guilty, I know how much God loves me.

Can asking God for forgiveness help us stop making bad choices?

Not completely, but focusing on God's love will help us act more like he wants us to act.

Bonus Question: What does the skit teach us about how confession relates to worship?

If necessary, have the students look back over their scripts. Confession cleans us up and allows us to love God with our whole hearts.



Additional Activities

Confession (5 minutes)

Students cleanse the sins from their hearts through confession.

You will need:

- † Students' copy of Activity Sheet #L2.A from the Ashamed activity above
- † Pencils with erasers
- † A paper shredder (optional).

During class:

1. Have the students get out their papers from the "Ashamed" activity at the beginning of class.
2. Ask them to write down (again using any kind of symbol or code that they want) lightly in pencil any other sin, mistake, or bad choice that they have thought of during class.
3. Tell them to take a minute or two to silently pray to God and tell him about the things they wrote down and apologizing for them.
4. As they confess each one, they should erase the sin from their heart.
5. Say: **Just like you erased the pencil marks from your paper heart, God has cleaned you up and gotten rid of all of your sins!**

Note:

- Instead of having the students erase their sins, you could have them also tear the "sinful" hearts into little pieces or put them through a shredder. You could then spread them on a table in the shape of a cross.
- Then, you can ask: **Could you put each heart and sin back together?** *[No, or it would be very difficult.]*
- Say: **When we confess, God takes away sin's power to hurt our hearts anymore through Jesus' death on the cross.**

Missing Something (10 minutes)

Don't miss out on the joy of God's love!

You will need:

- † Pudding or applesauce (something you need to eat with a spoon).
- † Bowls (unless the food is in individual snack cups).
- † Spoons.

During class:

1. Place a bowl or snack cup in front of each student (but, don't give them a spoon).
2. Say: **God said that you were his when you were baptized and he always loves you, no matter what you do. But, you cannot feel and enjoy that love if**



have sins that keep you away from God. When you confess your sins, God totally gets rid of them so you can enjoy God's love for you.

3. Ask: **Are you missing something that you need to enjoy this snack?** [Yes, a spoon.]
4. Have each student say something like "I confess that I need a spoon."
5. Respond with something like "Jesus loves you, here is a spoon" before giving them the spoon.
6. Enjoy the snack!

Plugged/Unplugged

Dance for joy when you're "plugged in" to God!

You will need:

- † A radio or cassette player that plugs into the wall (unfortunately, CDs and MP3s won't work for this activity)

Before class:

7. Tune the radio or set up the cassette player for some fun dance music.

During class:

1. Explain to the students that when we sin it is like being unplugged from God (demonstrate by unplugging the radio), the source of all life. But, when we confess to God, then God plugs us back into himself (plug the radio back in).
2. Have the students play "Freeze Dance" by dancing when the music is on and freezing when you unplug it.
3. When you unplug the radio, say, "Sin" or "Freeze!" and when you plug it back in, say, "God forgives you!"
4. When the game is done, ask: **Was it more fun when the music was plugged in or unplugged?**
[Plugged in]
5. **Is it better to be plugged into God, or unplugged from him?** [Plugged in]

Closing Activities (5 minutes)

Prayer

You may pray this for the kids or you can pause after each sentence for them to repeat.

God,

Thank you for listening when we confess our mistakes and bad choices to you.

Thank you for always loving us and forgiving us. Help us to make good choices and live like you want us to live. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.



Lord's Prayer

Use the cue cards as necessary.

Blessing

Teacher: May the Lord bless you and keep you, may he make his face shine upon you, and give you peace.

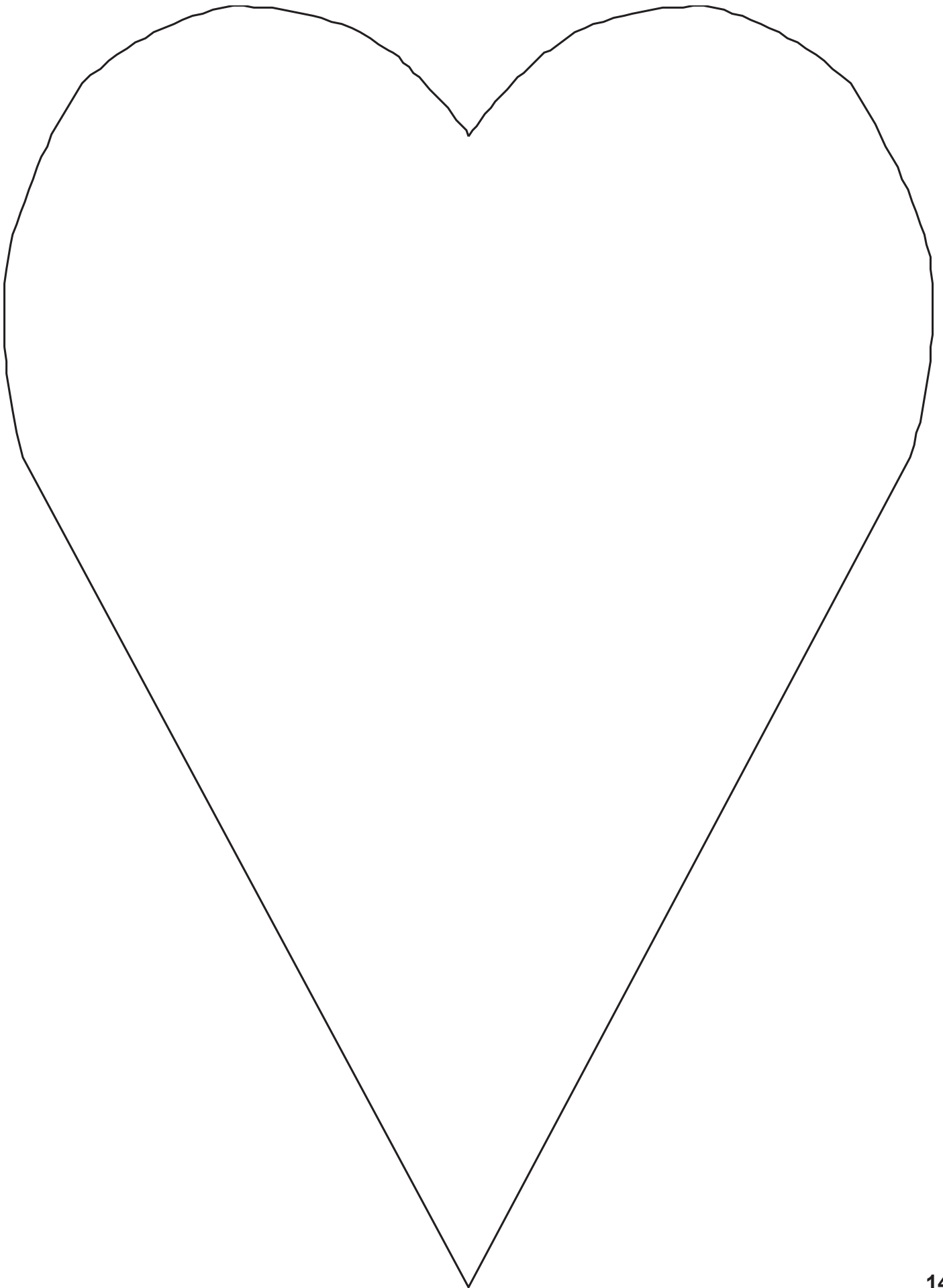
Students: Amen

Dismissal

Teacher: Go in peace, serve the Lord!

Students: Thanks be to God!

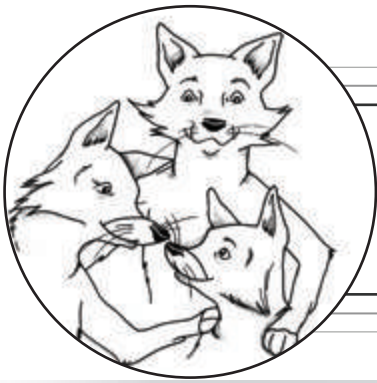




This is a test...

Instructions: Cut along the dotted lines and give a folded paper to each student. Have them take turns acting out (try if first without talking, but allow talking if necessary) the action listed on their paper. The rest of the students are to guess A) what the action is, B) whether it is a sin or not, and C) why is (or isn't) it a sin.

Shoplifting something from a store.	Teasing someone at school.	Going to church.
Helping someone who has fallen down.	Lying to your parents.	Doing drugs.
Planting a garden.	Milking a cow.	Fighting with someone.
Playing video games (when you're supposed to be doing your homework).	Doing your homework.	Listening to a friend.



3rd-6th

Worship @ Home

Lesson #L2: Confessing Sins

A sin or not a sin?

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Confession

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However, confessing sins is important for two reasons. First, when we are ashamed or bothered by guilt, confession gives us the opportunity to get it out in the air and receive the declaration of forgiveness. Second, taking the time to recognize our sins and confess them to God allows us to remember the great love and generous forgiveness that we have in Christ. That gives us even more to thank God for!

Try it out @ HOME

Kids!
Impress your parents
with what you know!

Imagine

Imagine that a friend tells you that you hurt his/her feelings. How do you feel? What do you say? What do you do?

Dive

into Scripture

I John 1: 8-10

Luke 18: 9-14

Thrown away!

Take a trip to a park or schoolyard with your parents and pick up trash (just wear gloves). Talk about how God throws away our sins when we confess them!

Step Up and act!

Take time each day this week to confess your bad choices and mistakes to God and remind yourself that God never stops loving and forgiving you.

Say:

God, I'm sorry for _____, but thank you for getting rid of all my sins and loving me! Amen.