

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

by

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What Is Needed

- this document on paper or a screen
 - between four and eight people, each will be asked to read out loud from this document
 - a space where these four people can comfortably remain for about an hour
 - enough wine for each person to have four glasses*
 - five ingredients for making simple bread
 - one and half cup of warm water
 - one tablespoon of active dry yeast
 - one tablespoon of honey
 - one and half teaspoon of salt
 - four cups flour
 - a large bowl
 - a spoon for mixing
 - a timer
 - a surface for kneading dough
 - an oiled baking sheet or something similar
 - a knife
 - an oven
- anything else that makes the space more beautiful, comfortable, or welcoming

If any part of this sacrament is harmful, inappropriate, or inaccessible to those present, please make whatever changes are necessary.

*The filling of cups marks time in the sacrament. It will be important for each person to communicate about how much they want to drink. While alcohol is used as a tool for creating community and intimacy in the sacrament, it is not essential to this work. If any person present does not drink, or would rather not be near alcohol, another beverage should be used.

Begin reading out loud here.

What Will Happen

We will be together for about two hours.

We will make bread.

We will drink wine.

We will help each other on a path to forgiveness.

This sacrament is guided by readers. We are the readers. The person reading now is the first reader. This is probably the person, or one of the people, who invited everyone to this sacrament. The reader will switch throughout the course of this sacrament. Each reader decides who the next reader will be. It is encouraged that everyone reads once before the sacrament is ended. There will be opportunities for everyone here to respond to questions and prompts. Of course, responding is entirely optional and not essential for this sacrament to take place. From this point on, all text that looks like this should be read out loud. Text that is the color red, in italics, or indented is action the reader should perform or guide others to perform without reading it.

Look at everyone who is present. Take everyone in.

We are all here together.

This sacrament is based on the Roman Catholic sacrament of Reconciliation, also known as Confession. There are significant differences in this sacrament from that older version. These differences come from the following beliefs:

- Forgiveness is a form of healing.
- Healing is a process and does not happen in an instant.
- We choose forgiveness alone, even as others help us along this path.
- Forgiveness grows from joy, abundance, and love.

It is not necessary to believe these things to participate in this sacrament. It is helpful to hold them lightly for the duration of our time together. There are four sections to this sacrament. There should be enough for each of us to have one drink per section. In order to move on to the next section, we all must finish our drinks.

Reader makes sure that everyone has a drink.

PASS TO NEXT READER.

Section One: Mixing

Whenever people come together, we make something.

As a reminder of that, we make bread.

Some of the oldest words for friend are about sharing bread.

Reader adds one and half cups warm water to the large bowl.

We start with water because everything starts with water.

This water should be about the same temperature as a body.

It is the foundation.

Reader invites someone to add one tablespoon of active dry yeast to the large bowl.

We add yeast next because bread is alive.

Yeast is one of the oldest life-forms that we know about.

It is a reminder that life comes from life.

It is a beginning.

Reader invites someone else to add one tablespoon of honey.

Honey is more than symbol of sweetness and abundance.

Undiluted, it can be used as a preservative.

In our bread it will feed the yeast.

It sustains.

Reader invites someone else to add one and half teaspoons salt.

Wars have been decided by the possession and flow of salt.

It is one of the few inorganic substances that humans have eaten in abundance for millennia.

Salt is the absence of life.

It is an ending.

Reader invites someone to stir the mix together, until everything is dissolved.

Through the foundation of water, we mix these things together.

This is a reminder that everything holds a beginning, a sustaining, and an ending.

Reader sets the mix aside. It will begin to rise during the next section.

PASS TO NEXT READER.

We root ourselves in joy and love.

We're going to play a game of questions. There are four rounds. For each round, I'll ask a different person to choose a number between one and four at random and then I'll read that question out loud. As many or as few of us who would like to answer may do so. I'll go first.

Reader picks a random number between one and four.

Reader reads the corresponding question.

One, would you rather be able to fly or be invisible?

Two, would you rather only eat sweet things or only eat savory things?

Three, would you rather move to a new city every year or never leave the city where you live?

Four, would you rather never wear clothes again or never be naked again?

Reader invites anyone who wants to answer to respond.

Reader invites someone else to pick a random number between one and four.

Reader reads the corresponding question.

One, if you could live inside any work of fiction, which would you choose?

Two, what is one meal you could eat every day for the rest of your life?

Three, if you could go on a date with any person, living or dead, who would it be?

Four, What is the schedule of your perfect day?

Reader invites anyone who wants to answer to respond.

Reader invites someone else to pick a random number between one and four.

Reader reads the corresponding question.

One, an all-powerful magician offers to solve any one of your biggest problems, if you agree to hurt someone you love, just once. What do you do?

Two, an all-knowing magician will answer any questions you have, but the more you ask the more unhappy you will become. What do you ask?

Three, an all-powerful magician offers happiness that you can buy, the more you spend, the happier you will become, instantly. What do you do?

Four, someone you don't know in another part of the world is in danger, an all-powerful magician offers to save that person's life, if you give up your happiest memory. You won't miss the memory, but it will be gone. What do you do?

Reader invites anyone who wants to answer to respond.

Reader invites someone else to pick a random number between one and four.

Reader reads the corresponding question.

One, what are your favorite things about the people you love the most?

Two, what do you think people like the most about you?

Three, what is something that you really want someone to say to you?

Four, what do you hope people know about you after you're dead?

Reader invites anyone who wants to answer to respond.

Forgiveness is a form of healing.

We will move on, when we have finished our wine.

Everyone should finish their drinks.

It's fine if this takes a while.

Enjoy each other's company.

Once everyone is done, move on to the next session.

PASS TO NEXT READER.

Section Two: Kneading

Reader makes sure that everyone has a drink.

The yeast in our bread has been at work waking up and beginning to breathe. Now it's time to give our bread content and form. As you add flour to the mix, think about what gives your life content and form. How do you fill your days?

Reader guides each person in adding the four cups of flour to the mixture in the bowl.

Reader then mixes the flour together to make dough.

When the dough is consistent, reader turns it out of the bowl onto a surface.

We are going to knead this dough. Folks may want to wash hands at this point, myself included.

Kneading bread is what creates the gluten protein structures that give bread strength and shape. The trick is to find that sweet spot when the dough is kneaded enough to be strong, but not so much that it's too dense.

Reader kneads the bread.

Reader decides when they are done and passes it to the next person to knead.

Everyone should have a chance to knead the bread.

Once this is done, reader should put the dough back in the bowl.

It needs time to rise again.

It's fine if folks want to wash their hands again.

Reader sets the oven to four hundred degrees Fahrenheit.

PASS TO NEXT READER.

Now we are going to think about some questions, to assess the form and content of our own lives in this moment.
Everyone look at your hands.
Think about all the things that your hands have done in the last month.
Would anyone like to share one thing that their hands have done?

Each person can choose to share or not.

Reader gets consent from the group to move on.

Everyone look around at each other.

Now come back to yourself.

In the last month, what have you thought about the most?

Would anyone like to share one thing that they have thought about the most?

Each person can choose to share or not.

Reader gets consent from the group to move on.

Everyone close your eyes.

Who do you need to forgive?

Pause.

Hold that person in your heart. Open your eyes.

Would anyone like to say the name of this person?

Each person can choose to share or not.

Reader gets consent from the group to move on.

Everyone take a deep breath. Everyone close your eyes.

What are the things that you need forgiveness for having done or not done?

Pause.

Pick one of those things to hold in your heart. Open your eyes.

Would anyone like to share?

Each person can choose to share or not.

Reader gets consent from the group to move on.

Please continue to hold these things in your heart.

Who do you need to forgive?

For what do you need forgiveness?

Forgiveness is a form of healing.

Healing is a process and does not happen in an instant.

We will move on, when we have finished our wine.

Everyone should finish their drinks.

It's fine if this takes a while.

Enjoy each other's company.

Once everyone is done, move on to the next section.

PASS TO NEXT READER.

Section Three: Baking

Reader makes sure that everyone has a drink.

Does anyone want to shape this dough into a loaf?

In order to bake through, it should be long and narrow, about as thick as my wrist.

Reader helps whoever volunteers shape the loaf on the baking sheet.

If no one wants to shape the loaf, reader should do it.

It helps to have some oil already on the baking sheet.

When we bake bread, the yeast inside goes into overdrive, exhaling more and more carbon dioxide. This causes the dough to expand even more rapidly. It helps to cut slits in the top of the bread to control this expansion.

Reader cuts slits in the top of the dough using a knife.

Finally, the heat gets so great inside the dough that the yeast dies. At the same time, the gluten protein bonds that we began to form while kneading, straighten out and bond to each other. They form a firm matrix that gives bread its shape.

Reader puts the bread in the oven, and sets a timer for twenty minutes.

Move on to the next section, while the bread bakes.

When the timer goes off in the next section, this same reader should stop what is happening and check on the bread. It will be done when it has a firm, tan crust.

Keep baking the bread until it's done.

PASS TO NEXT READER.

We learn about forgiveness from our own stories.
Think about the times that you have been forgiven.
Think about the times that you have forgiven others.
Does anyone have any stories about forgiveness that they would like to share?

Each person can choose to share or not.

Reader gets consent from the group to move on.

Think about the bread in the oven.

Think about the heat of the oven.

Think about the person that you need to forgive.

Think about the thing that you need forgiveness for having done or not done.

The need for forgiveness comes from pain.

Over time, pain changes us. We build a hard shell, a crust.

Pain is one of the things that makes us who we are, it gives us our boundaries, our limits.

But, in order to heal, we have to learn to also be vulnerable.

We have to break through our hardness to the parts of ourselves that can still change.

What part of you is difficult to love?

Each person can choose to share or not.

Reader gets consent from the group to move on.

What is a thing you need to hear from someone right now?

Would anyone like to share?

You are invited to respond affirmatively to anyone who shares.

Each person can choose to share or not.

Reader gets consent from the group to move on.

You're invited now to hold hands and be present with the people next to you.

Reader leaves time for people to be present with one another.

Reader gets consent from the group to move on.

Forgiveness is a form of healing.

Healing is a process and does not happen in an instant.

We choose forgiveness alone, even as others help us along this path.

We will move on, when we have finished our wine.

Everyone should finish their drinks.

It's fine if this takes a while.

Enjoy each other's company.

Once everyone is done, move on to the next session.

PASS TO NEXT READER.

Now might be a good time to take a break.

Section Four: Breaking

Reader makes sure that everyone has a drink.

One of the deepest symbols of trust that we have is to share food together, to break bread.

We made this bread together. Let's eat it together. Everyone should break off a piece, and then we'll eat our first bite together.

Reader breaks off some bread to eat.

Reader passes the bread to another person, who does the same.

Everyone should have a piece of bread at this point.

Everyone should eat their bread throughout the next part.

PASS TO NEXT READER.

Think about the two things you were asked to hold in your heart.

One of them is someone that you need to forgive.

One of them is something that you need forgiveness for having done or not done.

Hold those things close to you now.

Think about the shape of them, the weight of them.

Pause.

What is one thing you can do to take a step towards forgiveness in these two things?

It is most helpful for this thing to be a clear, finite, and physical action that you will do in the next month.

Pause.

As a little, temporary community, let's help each other.

If you want, share what you are going to do.

Each person can choose to share or not.

Reader gets consent from the group to move on.

Forgiveness is a form of healing.

Healing is a process and does not happen in an instant.

We choose forgiveness alone, even as others help us along this path.

Forgiveness grows from joy, abundance, and love.

The sacrament is ended when we have finished this wine.

Everyone should finish their drinks.

It's fine if this takes a while.

Enjoy each other's company.

Once everyone is done, the sacrament has ended.

The person, or one of the people, who invited everyone to this sacrament may take this time to pass out copies of this document and explain what happens next.

What Happens Next

The most important thing that happens next is that everyone present take the spirit of forgiveness and healing into their lives. Be generous with yourself and with others. Use this experience to make your world better.

If you would like to do more, we invite you to host your own evening of The Sacrament of Reconciliation. You don't need our permission. We encourage this sacrament spreading as widely as possible. We only ask two things:

First, if you can, tell us about what you do. We would love to hear. You can email us descriptions at photos at:

paulwkruse@gmail.com

Second, make it possible for everyone you invite to host their own Sacrament of Reconciliation. The best way to do that is to explain this part and give each of your guests a copy of the sacrament at the end. You can find more information and a digital version of this document on this website:

www.paulwkruse.com/sor

Also, if you would like to support Kimmothy and Paul's work with money. There is a donation button on that same page.