

Learning Focus 2 - Sin and Examination of Conscience

What is sin?

People get lost when they deliberately do something wrong, hurting others, themselves or the world they live in. That is what is called 'sin'. It is anything deliberately chosen - to think, say or do.

It is also anything you choose to do or not to do that spoils or breaks the friendship with God and with other people. Sin is anything which breaks bridges of love.

Christians try to build bridges towards one another every day. They 'examine their consciences' to see how they have kept these two commandments. Our conscience is like a voice or feeling inside us. This is the Holy Spirit helping us to respond to God.

Read the Bible passage on the next page.

When Jesus was teaching, someone came up to him and asked him what he thought was the greatest commandment of all.

This is what Jesus replied:

‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’

The second most important commandment is this:

“Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment more important than these two.’



**Based on Mark 12: 30-31
(Come and See)**

If we pay attention to the Holy Spirit, it will help us to know if something is good or bad.

It is good to think every evening, before you go to bed, about how you have built bridges of love and friendship or, perhaps, broken them through sin.

We remember if we have done something that hurt someone else or if someone else has hurt us.

We can thank God for all the good and say sorry for the bad and know that God, like the good shepherd, cares about us and loves us.

We also must try to forgive those who have hurt us.

Some Key Questions to discuss with a family member

What does "examine your conscience" mean?

When is it good to think about it? What will it lead us to do?

Which is easier - to love God or to love your neighbour?
Is there a difference?

Why do you think love of God and love of our neighbour is so important?

What would be another commandment?

How would you define 'sin'?

Task

Describe the ways in which God's law of love can be broken - thinking, saying or doing anything that spoils or breaks friendship with God or with other people. It is also choosing not to do something which again results in breaking friendship with God and other people.

Write a short story/account to illustrate one of these occasions and how a bridge might be rebuilt.