

See Sin

GENESIS 2:15–24; 3:1–13;
2 SAMUEL 11–12

GOAL

Adults identify human sin and brokenness in the Bible and in human life and name instances of brokenness in their lives and in the world.

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



Visit our YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/c/GrowingFaithResources, for discussion starter videos.

PRAYER

Merciful and gracious God, open my eyes that I may see where I stray from your path. Guide me to you as I name my sin and brokenness. Let me rely on your wisdom in leading those who seek to know you. Amen.

THIS SESSION

To *confess*, we acknowledge ourselves as beloved creations of God, loved and forgiven and in unbreakable relationship with God. At the same time, we see where there is sin and brokenness in the world, in our relationship with ourselves, with one another, and with God. We name and claim (confess) sin and brokenness. This recognition and statement of our participation in sin is the first step toward moving along God’s path of forgiveness and grace-filled living.

THE BIBLE STORY

We draw upon two Old Testament texts to help illustrate both denial and acknowledgment of sin. Genesis 3 immediately follows the early creation stories, as we meet up with the first man and first woman in the garden of Eden. God has provided human beings with all good things needed to live full and fruitful lives. They are given one limitation: not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Encouraged by a serpent, the humans eat from the forbidden tree, thus breaking their relationship with God. This is presented in the Bible as humanity’s first sin. The man and the woman know what they have done, but they try to hide from their sin and place blame on each other and the snake. This leaves broken relationships all around them. We, and they, see the effects of their sin.

In 2 Samuel 11–12, the story of David’s encounter with Bathsheba is described, along with David’s manipulation of his faithful warrior, Uriah, as David attempts to cover up his violation of Uriah’s wife. David is unable to see the ways his actions make for broken relationship with himself, Bathsheba, Uriah, and God until Nathan tells him a parable that clearly parallels David’s greed and misuse of power.

Both Bible stories illustrate the importance of seeing and acknowledging one’s participation in sin as a first step on a path of healing, repair, and restoration.

SESSION PREPARATION

- “Opening Litany”/“Open My Eyes” (p. 5): Make copies of Resource Page 1.
- Depending on the options you choose:
- “Communal Naming . . .” (p. 6): Read the introduction to “A Brief Statement of Faith” (see p. 6). Make copies of the statement.
- “The Twelve Steps” (p. 6): Make copies of Resource Page 2.
- “Examen of Conscience” (p. 6): Practice the examen (*Adult Reflection Guide*, p. 14) to be able to lead participants’ reflections and discussion.

GETTING STARTED

OPENING LITANY

Welcome participants and invite introductions. Distribute copies of Resource Page 1 and lead the opening litany.

OPEN MY EYES

Sing together or read aloud as a group the first verse of “Open My Eyes, That I May See” from Resource Page 1. Discuss:

- ➔ What is it to *see* God’s will?
- ➔ What are you waiting for God to show you?
- ➔ What do you *see* as God’s will for you?

INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

ROLE-PLAY SCENARIOS

Have participants read one or both scenarios on page 7 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Invite two or three volunteers to role-play the scenes and show how each scene might be played out. Ask:

- ➔ What is seen in the relationship among these people?
- ➔ What brokenness is seen?
- ➔ What might be named or acknowledged to move the situation forward?

FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

GENESIS 2:15–24; 3:1–13

Invite three volunteers to read aloud Genesis 2:15–24; 3:1–7, 8–13.

Discuss:

- ➔ What is the first man’s role and place in the garden in relation to other life there? What changes as the woman is introduced into the story in chapter 2?
- ➔ What was the purpose of God’s command in Genesis 2:16?
- ➔ What effect did the serpent’s words in Genesis 3 have on the man’s and woman’s relationship with God? On their relationship with each other?
- ➔ What did the main characters *see* about themselves, their choices, and their behaviors?
- ➔ How do the character(s) name their sin(s)?
- ➔ How does recognizing and naming sin move the characters on the path toward restored relationship?

2 SAMUEL 11–12

Have participants read the summary of Nathan confronting David on page 10 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Read aloud Nathan’s *gotcha* story, 2 Samuel 12:1–6. Ask:

- ➔ Why do you think David’s “anger was kindled greatly” toward the rich man?
- ➔ Why was it easy for David to recognize the rich man’s injustice toward the poor man, but not his own actions of injustice?
- ➔ Read David’s response to Nathan in verses 13–14. What happens after David *sees* his sin? What happens in David’s relationship with God?

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- Copies of Resource Page 1
 - This and all sessions require that the leader and participants have their copies of the *Adult Reflection Guide* with them.
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- Copies of Resource Page 1

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- Bibles

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- Bibles

- ➔ What next steps could David take once he recognizes his sin?
- ➔ How does seeing his sin allow David's relationship with God and with others begin to move forward?

FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or both options.

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- Copies of Resource Page 2

THE TWELVE STEPS

Refer to “Seeing Sin Caused by Addiction” on page 12 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Distribute copies of Resource Page 2 and call participants’ attention to the first four steps. Discuss:

- ➔ How do these steps encourage a person to name their brokenness and face it?
- ➔ How might following these steps (naming and facing brokenness) move one toward a practice of confession, repentance, and reparation?
- ➔ Twelve-step programs help individuals who struggle with a wide array of addictions to recognize their relationship with their higher power and name their brokenness on a path toward healing and restoration. How can these steps help us see and name our sin and brokenness?

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- Copies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) “A Brief Statement of Faith” (bit.ly/FMBriefStatement)

COMMUNAL NAMING OF SIN AND BROKENNESS

Many Christian worship services include opportunities to see and name individual and communal sin. Similarly, Christian denominations make communal statements naming sins of the church, community, and world. One example of a denominational statement can be found in “A Brief Statement of Faith” by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Distribute copies of the statement and invite participants to read the third section (“We trust in God”). Focus on the named brokenness. Discuss:

- ➔ This is one denomination’s statement about human brokenness; in what ways could these words be claimed by a broad spectrum of Christians? Does your church or denomination have a formal statement similar to this one?
- ➔ How might naming specific sins be a means to *see* other sins in our lives and in the world?
- ➔ What additional examples of brokenness would you add to those listed in this statement?
- ➔ How does seeing and naming sins allow us to begin making amends and changes?

PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

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EXAMEN OF CONSCIENCE

Reflect together on the examen of conscience on page 14 of the *Adult Reflection Guide*. If participants tried this at home, discuss:

- ➔ If you tried the practice at home, what was your experience?
- ➔ How were your eyes opened to the successes and shortcomings of the week?
- ➔ How does a daily reflection and intentional awareness of God’s presence help you see yourself through God’s eyes?

You may also lead the participants in an examen experience during the session. Follow the steps outlined in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Have participants record their reflections and insights in their *Guide*. Conclude the examen with a prayer:

Holy God, you walk with us minute by minute, day by day. Your Spirit accompanies us in the joy, frustration, challenge, delight, and sorrow of living. We fall short of your good will for us. As we examine our conscience and see our sin, let us trust in your grace and love. Let us release the day to you. Let us walk in your guidance. Let us rest in your restoration and forgiveness. Amen.

Encourage participants to continue this practice during the coming week.

NAME SIN

Refer to the *Confess Worksheet* on page 17 in the *Adult Reflection Guide*. Tell participants that they may use this tool throughout the unit to assist them in working through the various aspects of *Confess*. In each session, participants will fill in different columns on the worksheet. Try to keep discussion focused on “Name Sin/See Sin” in this session.

Invite participants to name broad or structural sins they see in the world. These can be sins of omission or sinful actions that are exhibited in the community, nation, or world. In your discussion, identify one sin of focus for this session. Respond to these questions in seeing communal and structural brokenness around you:

- ➔ What pains or hurts do you see as result of this sin?
- ➔ In what ways are these separate from God’s desire for people and relationships?
- ➔ How do these pains or hurts touch you?
- ➔ What do you want to say to God about these pains and hurts?

Write a group prayer naming what you see and confess to God. Invite God to join you and guide you in facing these challenges.

FOLLOWING JESUS CLOSING

Encourage participants to continue to reflect on the confessional aspect of seeing and naming sin as they walk through the week ahead.

Use Resource Page 1 and say together the psalmist’s words from Psalm 51:10–12 as a closing prayer:

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain me with a willing spirit. Amen.
—Psalm 51:10–12

Keep copies of Resource Page 1 for the next session.

Paper and pens

Copies of Resource Page 1

Opening Litany

Leader: God's way has been set before us, a way of justice, peace, and love.

People: God's Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to the path to follow.

Leader: We stumble and stray away from the path. We get stuck in the mud.

People: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

CLOSING PRAYER

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain me with a willing spirit. Amen.

—Psalm 51:10–12

“OPEN MY EYES, THAT I MAY SEE,” (GLORY TO GOD, #451), CLARA H. SCOTT

1. Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!
2. Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear.
And while the wave notes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!
3. Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere.
Open my heart, and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

NEW!

4. Open my hands, and let me share.
Give me the strength to offer care.
Help me to find the ways to repair
hurts I have caused the world to bear.
Silently now, on bended knee,
ready I wait your will to see.
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous¹

AA's 12-Step approach follows a set of guidelines designed as steps toward recovery; members can revisit these steps at any time. The 12 steps are:

1	We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2	Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3	Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God <i>as we understood Him</i> .
4	Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5	Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6	Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7	Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8	Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9	Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10	Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11	Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, <i>as we understood Him</i> , praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12	Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

1. Nicolle Monaco, "The 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)," updated October 16, 2020, <https://www.alcohol.org/alcoholics-anonymous/>.