VISUALIZING FORGIVENESS

This activity uses a backpack to help us visualize what the Sacrament of Reconciliation does for us.

1. What is Sin?
   a. an action that weakens our relationship with God and with one another
   b. Sin vs. Accident - was it a mistake? did we do it on purpose?

2. Mortal Sins - most serious
   a. deadly to our relationship with God
   b. Ask for Examples (murder, adultery, theft, defrauding another)
   c. AND the person must understand how serious it is and do it by choice
   d. (few children are capable of committing this type of sin)
   e. Can be forgiven through the Sacrament of Reconciliation

3. Venial Sins - less serious
   a. weaken the work of God in our lives
   b. harm us because they keep us from being the people God made us to be
   c. Ask for Examples (fidding, not keeping our word, taking something without asking, all of these things depend on the severity and intent. It is not necessarily black and white.)
   d. Can be forgiven through Mass and Eucharist, but we’re encouraged to go to Reconciliation; see CC 1422-1498

4. PLEASE TAKE YOUR MARKER AND WRITE A SIN ON YOUR ROCK. If you have a small rock, write a small sin. (venial) If you have a big rock, you can make it a whopper! (mortal)

5. Can I have a volunteer to wear the backpack?

6. NOW, I WANT EVERYONE TO PUT THEIR SINS INTO THE BACKPACK, THEY ARE NOW THE SINS OF ___________.

7. Ask the Backpack Wearer: How do you feel?
   a. Are your sins weighing you down?
   b. How would it feel to walk around with that on all day?
   c. Thinking about all of the sins you are carrying around with you, what would make you feel better?

8. Ask the rest of the group: What would the analogy be for taking out those rocks? FORGIVENESS!

   Start taking out the rocks one by one as you say the following:

9. The priest takes away the sins you are carrying around, he absolves them, he FORGIVES THEM in the name of Jesus. He does this during the sacrament of Reconciliation. So you can think of the sacrament as lightening your load. Clearing out the burdens you carry around with you.

10. Something more to consider: Just as God’s Forgiveness lightens our loads, forgiving one another also can lighten our loads.