

Interpersonal Confession: OAR

Grace Learning Lab

One of the most important ways we experience the joy of God's grace and forgiveness is through each other, as we own our sin with each other and God (James 5:16; Psalm 32:5), assure each other of God's grace (1 John 1:9), and respond with worship, gratitude, and repentance, turning from that sin and seeking to make things right (2 Corinthians 7:9-10). Our acronym for this practice is "OAR":

Own

One person owns their sin with another individual or small group, sharing a recent time when they needed God's forgiveness for a sin or failure. The kind of sins we might confess are wide-ranging, but here are a few examples:

- "I spoke harshly to a family member or coworker this week."
- "I held on to a grudge for days, refusing to forgive."
- "I fell into an old habit I know is dishonoring to God."
- "I sensed God was leading me to _____, and I refused to do it."
- "I gave the impression in my workplace that I was working when I wasn't."

Most importantly, what you share should be something you felt the Holy Spirit convict you of recently.

An appointed "listener" from the group (if there is more than one) invites the one confessing to think through and share the impact of that sin on themselves, others, and their relationship with God. Then, when they're ready, that person prays out loud, confessing that sin to God and asking for His forgiveness and help.

Note: Listeners, resist the temptation to diminish, excuse, or justify what the person did. Let them own it, then invite them to confess it to God.

Assurance of Grace

After the one who confessed a sin prays, have the listener share a biblical "assurance of God's grace" through a Scripture. Two examples are:

1. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **1 John 1:9**
2. "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us." **Psalm 103:11-12**

See a list of more verses on pages 4 and 5.

End with something like, "(Name), through faith in Jesus, you are forgiven! Clean! **He doesn't hold that sin against you anymore!**"

Respond

Have the one who confessed consider how Jesus is calling them to respond. This could include:

1. Gratitude and worship for God's grace!
2. Repentance. How do I turn from this sin?
3. Make amends. Do I need to ask anyone's forgiveness, or restore damage done?

Have the listener(s) say, "How can I/we help you with this?"