

# Sacrament of Reconciliation

## A Guide to Confession for Children



Reconciliation (officially called the Sacrament of Penance, and also known as Confession) is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ in his love and mercy to offer us forgiveness for the times we have sinned and turned away from God.

### PREPARING FOR CONFESSION

The forgiveness of sins involves four parts – Contrition, Confession, Penance and Absolution.

To do a good confession, it is important that we prepare our hearts to receive the mercy of God.

We do this through the first step: Contrition. Contrition is being really sorry for our sins and wanting to do good. To remember what our sins are, we do what is called an examination of conscience.

### 1. Contrition

A sincere sorrow for having offended God, and a firm resolve not to repeat our sin.

### 2. Confession

Confronting our sins in a profound way to God by speaking them aloud to the priest.

### 3. Penance

An important part of our healing is the penance the priest gives us in reparation for our sins

### 4. Absolution

The priest speaks the words by which we are reconciled to God and are absolved from our sins.

### Examination of Conscience

To examine our conscience, we ask ourselves:

- What are the good things I should do and did I do them well?
- Did I do anything that I knew was wrong? Or

Below are some questions you could think about –

- Did I remember to pray regularly?
- Did I go to Mass regularly and did I pay attention?
- Have I been kind and considerate?
- Did I listen to my parents?
- Did I take care of my body and health by exercising, getting enough sleep and eating health foods?
- Did I treat people with respect? E.g. my teachers and classmates, grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, friends and neighbours.
- Have I spent too much with the screen instead of spending time with my family and friends?
- Have I damaged or taken anything that was not mine?
- Have I lied, gossiped or said something that was not nice about another person?
- Have I been jealous of someone else?
- Have I been impatient, angry or mean?
- Have I been boastful, lazy, greedy or selfish?

## RITE OF RECONCILIATION – WHAT TO DO

After examining your conscience go into the confessional.

**Priest:** Gives a blessing or greeting.

**You:** Make the Sign of the Cross and say:

*“Bless me father, for I have sinned. This is my first confession”*

Or, if this is not your first confession say:

*“Bless me father, for I have sinned. My last confession was \_\_\_ <weeks, months, years> ago”*

**You:** Say all the sins you remember (from your examination of conscience) to the priest.

Remember if you are unsure what to do at any time, just ask the priest, he will guide you.

**Priest:** Listens to your sins and then assigns a penance and offers advice.

**You:** Listen to the penance and advice

**You:** Say an Act of Contrition, expressing your sorrow for your sins.

*“O my God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.*

*In choosing to do wrong and in failing to do good, I have sinned against you, who I should love above all things. I firmly intend with your help to do penance and will not sin again.*

**AMEN”.**

**Priest:** Acting in the person of Christ, absolves you from your sins.

*“...May God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”*

**You:** You may make the sign of the cross with the priest. If he closes by saying “Go in peace!”, answer:

*“Thanks be to God”.*

**You:** Leave and give thanks to God for forgiving you again. If you recall another sin, rest assured that it has been forgiven and you can confess it in your next Confession.

**You:** Do your assigned Penance.

**Penance** is a small act of love you do to say you are sorry for your sins. The priest may have assigned you some prayers or readings.



As Catholics, it is an incredible blessing that we have the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a gift that you can participate in for the rest of your life.

Plan to return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation often to experience God’s loving forgiveness and mercy.



**Holy Family Parish**

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