

Things to Do as your Child Prepares for First Reconciliation

- Speaking to them about God's mercy. We were dead in our sin, but Jesus died on the Cross so that we could receive forgiveness and be brought back to life! Some Scripture passages to read together could be the Lost Sheep or the Prodigal Son.
- Help them understand the need to be sorry for our sin in order to receive forgiveness.
- Go through the Examination of Conscience to help make sure they understand each Commandment and what is and is not a sin.
- Go through the steps of what to do in their First Reconciliation. You can even do some "practice Confessions" to run through the steps, but without the actual confession of sins.
- Help them memorize the Act of Contrition. This is a great prayer to add to bedtime prayers after pausing for a brief moment to think in silence of any sins we want to ask forgiveness for from throughout the day.

The Importance of Parents and Guardians Receiving Reconciliation

- Venial sin weakens our relationship with God. Mortal sin (including missing Mass on Sunday and all grave offenses to God and neighbor) if done with knowledge and consent, severs our friendship with God and we reject His gift of eternal life in heaven.
- Jesus, Our Good Shepherd, waits for us in the confessional through the priest, always ready to bring us back into friendship with Himself, open the way to heaven for us, and strengthen us for our life and vocation.
- You cannot live your vocation to love and lead your children without the saving and strengthening effects of Confession! Additionally, your children will not understand the value of the Sacrament if they don't see their parents going regularly. (Recommended: At least once a month or immediately whenever we are in mortal sin.)

A Walk Through the First Reconciliation Liturgy

- Arrive and sit as a family in one of the pews in the center transept.
- Rise and sing the opening song.
- Together, we will listen to a Scripture reading and homily, then pray an examination of conscience and act of contrition.
- Ushers will guide your family to a Confession line. Parents are encouraged to go to Confession with their children.
- Return to your pew to pray your penance.
- Go up with your child to light his or her candle and place it along the edge of the altar.
- Back in your pew, quietly pray together the renewal of Baptismal promises and a few minutes of silent prayer in thanksgiving for Jesus' merciful love and forgiveness.
- When you are done with your prayers of thanksgiving, you and your family may go. Your child may take his or her candle, blow it out and take it with to remember this special day.

Examination of Conscience for Children

1. I am the Lord your God; have no other gods before me.

Have I not prayed to God everyday?

Have I put friends, sports or what I want to do before God and what He wants me to do?

2. You shall not take the Name of the Lord in vain.

Have I used God's name in vain (carelessly or in anger)?

Have I used bad words?

3. Keep holy the Sabbath.

Have I missed Mass on a Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation?

Have I misbehaved at Mass or during prayer?

4. Honor your father and your mother.

Have I disobeyed my parents or others with authority over me (coaches, teachers, babysitters)?

Have I been disrespectful to my parents or other adults?

5. You shall not kill.

Have I argued or fought with others?

Have I gossiped, made fun of or bullied others?

Have I lost my temper or yelled at someone?

Have I not forgiven those who wronged me?

6. You shall not commit adultery.

Have I watched or viewed anything that is inappropriate?

Have I spoken or acted impurely by myself or with others?

7. You shall not steal.

Have I taken something that wasn't mine?

Have I not shared what I have with others?

8. You shall not bear false witness.

Have I lied? Have I cheated at school or in games?

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Have I been jealous? Have I bragged?

How to Go to Reconciliation

1. Make the sign of the Cross and say, "**In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**"

2. Say "**Bless me Father, for I have sinned. This is my first Reconciliation.**"

3. Say, "**These are my sins,**" then list all your sins that you can remember. You can use your Examination of Conscience as a guide. To finish, say, "**For these sins and all my sins, I am truly sorry.**"

4. The priest may give you some advice. Then he will give you a penance to do when you go back to your pew (usually a few prayers.)

6. The priest will give you absolution, which is Jesus' forgiveness of your sins. Your sins have been washed away by Jesus' mercy!

7. Say, "**Thank you, Father**" and exit the confessional.

8. Return to your seat and say your penance prayers. Then remain in prayer thanking God for His love, mercy, and forgiveness.

Act of Contrition

Practice and Memorize!

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do my penance, to sin no more and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.