

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS IN
PREPARING THEIR CHILD FOR RECONCILIATION

Your child's first confession has a special significance in his/her life. The preparation for the Sacrament and the interest of parents will affect a lifelong attitude towards this sacramental encounter with Christ's forgiving love. Your child needs special help for the first reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

1. See to it that your child approaches Reconciliation without fear, but with love and confidence. Confession out of assurance of God's forgiving love rather than out of fear of God's anger.
2. Give your child the opportunity to experience the forgiveness of Christ in your forgiveness of others.
3. Point out to your child the opportunities to forgive brothers/sisters/playmates.
4. Instill in your child a right concept of sin as a failure to love God and/or a failure to love other people. Breaking the commandments is a sign that he/she does not love God or neighbor or that he/she does not love them enough.
5. Be continuously aware that your child is affected by all you do and all you say - by your reaction to his/her faults at playtime, in school, and at home.
6. Guide your child so that he/she will distinguish between what is evil and sinful and what is merely a breach of good manners. He must learn from your reaction that there is a considerable difference between an accident and a deliberate act of meanness.
7. Make your child aware of the presence of the priest in the confessional. He is there as a friend and as a representative of Christ and the Church.
8. Give special attention to the social aspects of sin and repentance. The good or evil done affects family, friends, and the world in which we live.
9. Help your child with the examination of conscience according to the directions given to him by the teacher. This does not mean that the child is to recite any sins to you. The telling of sins should be to God through the priest in the Reconciliation room. **Think if there was a time I chose to do wrong or hurt someone on purpose.**
10. Develop the practice of the family occasionally approaching the Sacrament together. Your responsibility lies in bringing them to the Sacrament every month or at least every other month. Include a treat as a follow up.
11. Do not give your child the impression that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the only

means of purifying one's heart from venial sins. The forgiveness of God is always and in all places available whenever we pray for forgiveness and in the reception of Holy Communion.

12. Do not frighten your child with the unreasonable fear of having committed serious sins. Your children are usually not capable of complete refusal to love God. The term *mortal sin* is not introduced at this stage of the child's training.
13. Do not scold in a manner harmful to the formation of a healthy conscience. Never, under any circumstances, correct by saying, "God will punish you for that." Never attribute a physical misfortune of the child to: "See, God punished you for being bad." Such statements are not only poor psychology, but represent an untrue image of the God of Love.
14. Do not create moral confusion in your child by telling him/her the right action or attitude and then have them witness the opposite in your lives. Be the example of the virtues you wish him/her to practice.

SOME PRACTICAL NOTES ON RECONCILIATION

1. Do not leave the frequency of receiving the graces of this Sacrament in the hands of your child.
2. At least for several months, help your child to figure out how long it has been since the last confession.
3. See that your child knows the steps for receiving the Sacrament. Review them before leaving the house. Follow the form given.(also on web-site)
4. Review the Act of Contrition. It should be a nightly prayer before bedtime.
5. Remind your child that he/she should spend a few minutes in Church before entering the Reconciliation room. (Examining conscience; prayers of thanks for forgiveness)