

WHY DO I HAVE TO PREPARE MY CHILD FOR THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION?

When you presented your child to the Church for Baptism, you were reminded that you have the responsibility of "raising them in the practice of the faith" (*Rite of Baptism* 109). This obligation and privilege extend to sacramental preparation. Think of this as an opportunity to deepen your faith and understanding as well as your child's.

What do I have to do to prepare my child?

Your parish will have certain expectations that will be explained to you when you begin the process. **Our Family Formation "First Reconciliation"** program provides you with ideas and suggestions in the *Preparing Your Child for First Reconciliation section* and throughout the *Child's Book*.

What if I do not go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

As you probably already know, what you do or do not do speaks volumes. If this is the case, now may be a good time for you to look at your attitude toward the sacrament as you go through the process with your child. Examine your reasons. Is it because you are not sure what to do and you feel embarrassed or are there other reasons? Are you willing to speak to a priest or someone about it? As a parent, you set the tone. If you participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, your child will most likely want to do so as well.

When do we have to go to confession?

Catholics must go to confession once a year. They must also go to confession before receiving Holy Communion if they have committed a mortal sin.

What does my child need to know to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

- The difference between right and wrong.
- That sin is a choice not an accident or mistake.
- That sin is a choice to turn away from God's friendship.
- God is loving and merciful.
- God will always forgive us if we ask.
- Jesus gave us the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, our sins are forgiven through the power of the Holy Spirit and the words and actions of the priest.
- In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we receive the grace to live as God's children.
- We must be willing to forgive others, just as God forgives us.

How can I tell if my child is ready for first reconciliation?

Here are some indicators that your child is ready to celebrate the sacrament.

- Does your child take responsibility for wrongdoing?
- Does he or she say "I am sorry" or ask forgiveness without being told.
- Can your children express sorrow and forgiveness in their own words?
- Does your child sincerely try to change or "do better"?

How can we as a family continue to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

- Continue the conversations and reflections you will begin in this process. Discuss choices for right and wrong and temptations toward wrong as they occur in your family life. Talk about how those temptations can be addressed? Help children see what the options for change and conversion are in their life.
- As a family, plan to participate in parish celebrations of reconciliation during Lent and Advent each year. Make these celebrations a familiar and serious commitment. Plan ahead so family members will all be able to participate.