

Home Preparation for First Reconciliation



To prepare your child for First Reconciliation:

- **Do the Home Preparation Book Together:** Work through the home preparation book *God's Gift: Reconciliation*. Be sure all pages are completed. Turn in the completed book to your child's catechist/teacher by the due date on the First Reconciliation Date Due Chart.
- **Explain the Different Names for the Sacrament:** The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also known as the Sacrament of Penance. During the celebration of the sacrament, we tell or confess our sins to a priest so the sacrament is also called Confession.
- **Read Bible Stories:** Have your child memorize these bible stories and learn these lessons:
 - **The Prodigal Son** Luke 15:11-32
 - **The Good Samaritan** Luke 10:29-37
 - **The Lost Sheep** Luke 15:1-7 or Matthew 18:10-14
- **Model Love and Forgiveness:** Forgive others. Each of us is important to God. Love and care for one another. Celebrate forgiveness in your family – the following are some suggestions:
 - Talk about what went wrong. Admit wrongdoing. Say you are sorry. Repair any damage.
 - Shake hands, make an agreement, write a letter of apology, say a prayer asking for forgiveness, or leave a note of forgiveness.
 - Do not go to bed angry with one another or hold a grudge.
 - Talk each day or week about how things are going.
 - Communicate openly and honestly. Avoid innuendo or fault finding to place blame on another.
 - Acknowledge each individual's strengths and limitations.
 - Prioritize supporting and restoring one another.
 - Make your home a place of reconciliation – love and forgive day by day.
 - Go to Mass together on Sundays. Notice the times we talk about forgiveness at Mass.
- **Teach the Difference between Mistakes, Accidents, and Sins:** Make sure your child knows the difference between mistakes, accidents, and sins.
- **Do a Daily Examination of Conscience:** Help your child with a daily examination of conscience. A suggested examination of conscience is included in the brochure *Sacrament of Reconciliation Guide*. Remember that your own words and actions develop a sense of right and wrong.
- **Say the Act of Contrition:** Help your child learn the Act of Contrition. Make sure that your child *understands* the words (see the back side for an explanation). Day this prayer daily.
- **Pray and Teach Prayers:** Pray daily as a family. Be sure your child knows the following prayers and the names of the prayers:
 - Some form of an Act of Contrition
 - The Sign of the Cross
 - Prayers that could be given as a penance: The Hail Mary and The Our Father

- **Explain about a Penance:** Explain that a penance is to remind one to return to the truly Christian way of life. A penance is not meant to dwell on one's failings and is not a punishment.
- **Practice and Pretend with your Child:** Pretend that you are the priest and your child is the penitent.
 - Make sure your child knows what to do and what to say when talking to the priest.
 - Have your child make up sins for practicing and explain that s/he will tell the priest his/her real sins during Reconciliation/confession.
 - Use the *Sacrament of Reconciliation Guide* to help your child know what to do before, during, and after Reconciliation.
- **Celebrate with your Child:** The Sacrament of Reconciliation provides peace and a freedom of spirit.
- **Determine Readiness for First Reconciliation:**
 - If a teacher/catechist feels that a child possibly is not ready to celebrate the sacrament:
 - The Director or Coordinator of Faith Formation will be asked for an opinion.
 - The Director or Coordinator will informally meet with the child a week or two before the scheduled Reconciliation.
 - If you have any concerns or you feel your child should wait, please contact Mary Ann Marschall, Coordinator of Elementary Faith Formation, at 763-762-7406 or maryannmarschall@saintvdp.org.

ACT OF CONTRITION – EXPLANATION

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart

God, I am very sorry for what I have done wrong.

In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you

I sin when I choose to do bad things and not do good things.

whom I should love above all things.

I should love you, God, more than anything.

I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more,

God, with your help, I promise to make up for what I have done wrong and to not do it again.

And to avoid whatever leads me to sin.

I will stay away from people and places that cause me to do bad things.

