

## Some Dos and Don'ts for Parents: Reconciliation

**Do be aware that you teach more by who you are and what you do than by what you say.** Basic attitudes of faith and love will grow in your child gradually if your child witnesses you trying to live a life of faith yourself. Be aware of how your actions support what you want to teach your child about faith.

**Do pray together as a family each day.** Choose the most appropriate time according to your family circumstances. Allow each member of the family to mention something happy that has happened that day or share a particular challenge she or he is dealing with. Everything can be brought to God in prayer.

**Do worship together as a family every Sunday.** Participate in Sunday Mass together and sit up front where your child can see what is happening. Family participation in the weekly Eucharist will help your child understand the faith tradition that inspires the Catholic Church community.

**Do take every opportunity to be forgiving about your child's poor choices.** Be sure to encourage her or him to be forgiving toward others as well, and to seek ways to improve relationships within the family and among friends.

**Do talk with your child about your own experience of First Reconciliation.** Tell your son or daughter about your own First Reconciliation or, if you are not Catholic, what you understand about the sacrament; ask any older children in the family to do the same.

**Do ask your child to share her or his hopes and fears about First Reconciliation.** Keep an open line of communication about your child's experiences as he or she continues the sacrament preparation process. Encourage your child to share excitement as well as any concerns or fears. This will be important as you journey with your child through the preparation process.

**Do reflect on how your family might live as an active part of the parish community.** Try introducing some simple commitments to the Church community, such as offering an elderly person a ride to Mass on a regular basis or providing a meal to a family in crisis.

**Do take time to relax and enjoy one another as a family.** Setting a regular time works best. Try to make at least one family meal a week a special event. This provides an opportunity to talk and share about what's happening in your lives, and it reinforces your commitment to one another as a family.

**Don't pick the busiest, most hectic time of day to complete or review the weekly activity booklets.** Choose a time when you and your child can focus on the lesson without distractions.

**Don't feel that your child must receive First Reconciliation just because she or he is a certain age or in a certain grade.** If you have concerns about your child's readiness, your



pastor or director of religious education can help you assess whether your child is ready to begin preparation for First Reconciliation.

