

Frequently Asked Questions: Reconciliation

1. How can I, as a parent, best help my child prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The first celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is one more step in your child's relationship with God. You can nurture that relationship at its roots through ordinary family life. By saying grace before meals, saying night prayers, praying before car trips, and initiating simple conversations about God's love for us, you can help lay the groundwork for this sacrament. In family conversations, admit to sometimes being less than your best self. Apologize when your anger or impatience gets the better of you. You might say, "I'm going to mention this in confession and ask God to help me with it."

2. How will this program help me prepare my child for the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Special care has been taken to provide activity booklets for your child to bring home. Ask to see them, and then talk about them with your child. Sometimes the activities will be done during the session, and sometimes they will be left for completion at home. Work with your child on these short activities and talk about them. The family page, the last page of the booklet, also has ideas on ways to extend the lesson into your home life. You may enjoy reading the Scripture story together and watching the suggested YouTube videos with the entire family.

3. How do I know my child is ready to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Although this sacrament is suggested for first celebration at the age of seven (called "the age of reason," when a child is expected to know the difference between right and wrong), this is flexible. However, in the Roman Catholic Church, First Reconciliation must be celebrated before First Communion. Your child is ready to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation when he or she knows the difference between right and wrong and has learned to take responsibility for his or her actions to the degree possible for a seven-year-old. Children of this age do not always understand the consequences of their wrong choices, but they should understand when they are choosing to do something wrong. They should be capable of some understanding of the harm they have caused and should be capable of saying: "I did that. I'm sorry."

4. How can I help my child continue to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the future?

In preparing children to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, good example is the best teacher. The bishops of the United States recommend that every Catholic celebrate this sacrament once a month. If possible, make the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation a family effort. Most parishes provide the opportunity for celebrating this sacrament on Saturday afternoons. However, a priest is open to making an appointment for another time.



Also look for opportunities to celebrate this sacrament in special parish communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent.

