

Effective Sacrament Preparation for First Reconciliation

Recall a memory of your own First Reconciliation. If you or your spouse is not Catholic, either of you might recall what you have seen or experienced surrounding this sacrament.

It is likely that in the years since your first celebration of Reconciliation, you have developed a much better understanding of this and the other sacraments, and of how to live the Catholic faith every day.

Remember that this is only your child's First Reconciliation; however, going forward, it will be up to you as parents to be sure that your child continues to celebrate Reconciliation regularly. This is made much easier if the Sacrament of Reconciliation becomes part of a family routine. In many parishes, confessions are heard on Saturday afternoons. Most parishes have a special celebration of the Rite of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent each year. The bishops of the United States recommend that most people celebrate this sacrament at least once a month.

Your weekly participation in Sunday Mass, regular celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and faithfulness to gospel values and Christian morality will have a bigger impact on your children than any pastor's homily or catechist's classroom lesson. Children learn through action, experience, and good example, and they learn best when the action, experience, or good example is repeated.

Make family meals a priority. This is a time when all family members should be totally loved and accepted. Only then can children understand and accept that this is the way God loves them. In your envelope, you will find a handout titled "First Reconciliation Meal Prayer" (Document #: TX005782). Follow the instructions on this handout to help your child create a First Reconciliation meal prayer card. Use the card to pray together at meals in the days leading up to First Reconciliation.

Make blessing your children each day a simple but special moment of grace. Start (or continue) to bless your children by simply tracing the Sign of the Cross on their forehead with your thumb. You might give this blessing each morning and evening, and whenever your children leave the home and return. This blessing is a special sign of your support and of God's presence in your children's lives.

