

# **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

## **FIRST RECONCILIATION**

**April 8, 2021 Group 1 at 6:00 p.m.**

**April 15, 2021 Group 2 at 6:00 p.m.**

**April 22, 2021 Group 3 at 6:00 p.m.**

## **FAQ's**

### **1. What time should we be there?**

You should arrive by 5:45 p.m. Children will be seated with the other second graders. Parents will sit in the pews behind the students.

### **2. Will my child have to receive Reconciliation face-to-face with the priest?**

Yes, your child will receive their individual first confession face-to-face with the priest. If your child doesn't already know the Act of Contrition, please remind him/her that the Act of Contrition is on the table in each of the confessional areas. Please practice the Act of Contrition daily with your child as he/she has been practicing weekly in their CCD class. Students will sit 6 ft. away from the Priest and both your child and the Priest will wear a mask.

### **3. Will other family members go to Individual Confession also?**

Yes, if time allows, all families are invited to the Sacrament. However, we will encourage that all the 2<sup>nd</sup> grader children receive Reconciliation **first** which is why it is important to arrive promptly by 5:45 p.m. Reconciliation is also available for the parents and students NOT in second grade every Saturday in Verplanck at 4:00 p.m.

#### **4. Is this optional?**

No, your child is receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion and must receive the Sacrament of First Reconciliation first.

#### **5. What are the sheep for?**

In the book of John, chapter 10, in His own words, Jesus tells us in verses 14-15: "I am the good shepherd. I know my own sheep, and they know me just as my Father knows me and I know my Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep." In celebration of their relationship with Jesus the Good Shepherd, each child will color and label a lamb. If your child did not complete this in class, please check your email because we sent a picture of a lamb for you to help your child color. When your child has completed his or her reconciliation, the priest will hand your child a small stuffed lamb, a gift from the parish to your child celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Once your child has left the priest, you will greet him or her and take them to a pew to finish their penance. You may then proceed to the front of the church where the Good Shepherd Board will be on display. Please tear off the sticker on the back of the sheep and stick the sheep on the board.

Please see the following page for more information to share with your child about Absolution and Reconciliation. Your child's Catechist has been teaching your child about the whole process since January. Please take some time to review this as well with your child who is about to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation!

If you or your child have any other questions, please do not hesitate to give me a call. Lisa Quist (914) 257-2882.

## Absolution and Reconciliation

When we celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation,  
we confess our sins.

We do this because we know it is important to name the ways  
we have sinned against God, others, and ourselves.

Next we receive a penance.

We accept this penance because we know that  
“actions speak louder than words.”

This shows we are trying to change the way we live.

After we have done all of these things,  
the priest gives us absolution.

He places his hands over our head.

He prays the special prayer of absolution.

Absolution means that our sins are forgiven.

The priest extends his hands over our head.

This shows that God embraces us as his repentant child.

It is just like Jesus who places the lost sheep on his shoulders.

It means that we are now made one with God and one another.

We have been brought back to the sheepfold.

When this happens, we are more deeply filled with God.

We are a new person.

We are ready to go out and love our neighbor even more than before.

We are ready to live more like Jesus.

## **Act of Contrition**

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart,  
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,  
I have sinned against you, whom I should love  
Above all things. I firmly intend with your help, to do  
Penance, and to sin no more and to avoid whatever  
Leads me to sin. Our savior Jesus Christ suffered and  
Died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

## 10 WAYS TO...

# CELEBRATE YOUR CHILD'S FIRST RECONCILIATION

### 1. Pray 'sorry' prayers

Support your child in prayer. Pray together as a family. As well as 'thank-ing' and 'asking' prayers, include 'sorry' prayers in your time together before God.

### 2. Adorn your 'sacred site'

Place a symbol or picture at your 'sacred site' (i.e. your family prayer area). This might be a picture of a scene from a parable like the prodigal son. Open the pages of your bible to this parable (Lk 15:11-32).

### 3. Talk about it

Talk about what this day means: a celebration of God's mercy and love.

**Table topics:** Who is the most forgiving and compassionate person you know?  
*Or:* Share a time when you really needed forgiveness and someone forgave you.

### 4. Practise forgiveness

This is a graced time to work at the quality of forgiveness in your own home. Practise being more gentle, compassionate and patient with one another. Let the fruits of the Spirit reign in your home.

### 5. Remember when...

Share Reconciliation memories. What was First Reconciliation day like for Grandpa? Mum? Older sisters and brothers? Give your child a sense of our Catholic story, including the positive changes in the way we celebrate Reconciliation today.

### 6. Seize teachable moments

Look for teachable moments to impart to your child a lesson about forgiveness and reconciliation. e.g. Talk about ways to resolve a playground conflict; hold a dinner table discussion about Aboriginal reconciliation.

### 7. Celebrate with the saints

Read the story of St John Vianney who was a great confessor. People flocked to him to receive Reconciliation. Encourage your child to call upon his/her favourite saint as a good companion on this part of their faith journey.

### 8. Read stories to inspire

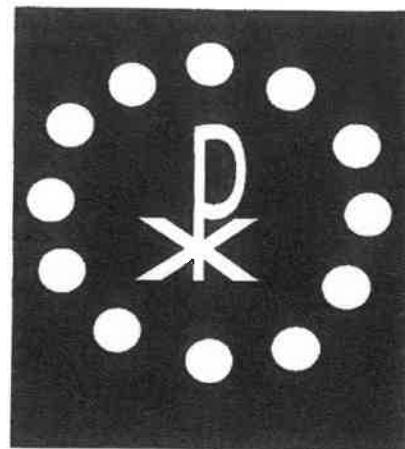
At family prayer-time, read a bible story such as the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears (Lk 7:36-48); or the parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:1-7), the lost coin (Lk 15:8-10), the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32).

### 9. Set an example

Undoubtedly a powerful parental witness you can give your child as to the value of Reconciliation is to participate in the Sacrament yourself. (If you are a non-Catholic parent, you are welcome to come forward to receive a blessing.)

### 10. Party well

Conclude the big day by gifting your child with a special treat - e.g. an icecream, a special meal. Some parishes hold a party after the Reconciliation ceremony. Whatever your style, enter into the festivities and envelop your child in a spirit of celebration.



Your child's sacramental experience begins at home. Here are some ideas for enveloping your child in an atmosphere of faith and love as First Reconciliation Day approaches.

#### Helpful hint

One of the advantages of receiving Reconciliation at a young age is that children develop the habit of asking for and receiving forgiveness. How important this will be at age 13, 16, 19 - as they start to explore the adult world and perhaps make some serious mistakes - to know that they can be forgiven. With youth suicide rates so high, it is essential that our children grow up knowing that no failure is so bad that there can be no way out; every sin can be forgiven.

Likewise, it is terribly important that children see their *parents* receiving the Sacrament. Otherwise they will associate Reconciliation with 'kids stuff' and may not turn to this source of grace when they most need it in their adult lives.



**Remember how the parable of the prodigal son ends?  
Party well!**

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# **FIRST RECONCILIATION PREPARATION "GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS" in Preparing Their Children for First Penance**

Your child's First Penance is a special event in his/her life. The preparation for receiving the Sacrament and the interest of his/her parents will affect a lifelong attitude towards this Sacramental Encounter with God's forgiving love.

The role of the parent preparing the child for reconciliation begins before a child starts school. The parent consciously and unconsciously, instills in their child a hierarchy of values, a sense of right and wrong, an understanding of the words "sorry", "apology", and "forgiveness". These are important elements in a child's preparation for the sacrament of reconciliation.

Here are a few guidelines to help you in preparing your child:

## **1. A child needs love and security.**

Forming a child's conscious begins (and continues) with a parent's love. Your affection, firmness and encouragement can teach your children that they are good. If a child grows up with the impression that their parents (or God) will stop loving them when they misbehave, their conscious development will be crippled. They learn to love and trust when they are loved.

## **2. A child needs to experience forgiveness.**

If a child is to believe in God's forgiveness and mercy, he/she must experience the forgiveness of parents. Your child needs to feel pardoned by you.

## **3. A child needs to experience the fact that God is a loving Father.**

Be careful not to present an image of God as a "law enforcer" in order to pressure the child to obey. Rather, let us teach our children that God loves us always - His love never changes regardless of what we do.

## **4. A child needs to understand the reason for Rules and Laws.**

Does your child realize that there is love behind your rules at home? Does he/she see that the commandments are rooted in love of God and of our neighbor?

## **5. A child needs a true understanding of sin.**

Sin is failing obey God on purpose. It is very important for us to help the child recognize the difference between sins (deliberate acts done on purpose) and temptations, accidents, or making mistakes. Sin is doing wrong on purpose and choosing not to love.

## **6. A child needs to learn to make choices.**

In this area of moral development, the parent can help his/her child learn how to make good choices by discussing some of the simple choices he/she makes each day. This will lead the child to see what the results might have been if different choices had been

made. It is important that the child recognize his/her responsibility for words and actions.

**7. A child needs to understand the reason for Reconciliation.**

Reconciliation is the process of making up and becoming friends again. Encourage your child to understand that we feel happier and much better about ourselves and others after we have apologized and been forgiven.

**8. A child needs to understand why we go to receive the Sacrament of Penance.**

We receive the Sacrament of Penance to confess our sins to the priest for the purpose of being forgiven and restored to friendship with God's family. The priest is a sign of Jesus' presence and is also a sign that the Church, the family of God, is happy to see us back home.

**9. Please be sure to review the Examination of Conscience several times with your children.**

Your child's readiness to receive the Sacrament of Penance manifests itself in the child's ability to relate to others; in his/her daily experience of forgiving and being forgiven; in his/her attitudes towards sharing and accepting responsibility.

**But perhaps the most important element of readiness is the child's experience of your love, which is the foundation for understanding a loving God.**



# parenting points

## The difference between 'I'm sorry' and 'forgive me?'

Saying 'sorry' is different to asking for 'forgiveness'. When we say sorry to someone, it is an 'I-centred' statement expressing sympathy, but not necessarily inferring that we take any responsibility. As such, it requires nothing from the person to whom we say it. It is always good to say 'sorry' but it is nowhere near as hard to do, or as effective, as asking for forgiveness.

Asking for forgiveness is an act of vulnerability; not only does it put us in a position of accepting responsibility for hurting the other, it is a request to be invited back into unity with the person we have hurt. Full reconciliation can only occur in a relationship when we say sorry and ask for forgiveness. This is the basis of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but applies equally to any intimate relationship such as with a spouse, a child or family and school/parish community members.



## Five Ways to Lead by Example

### ONE

#### Practice Repentance.

When you hurt or disappoint your spouse or a family member, accept responsibility, apologise and ask for forgiveness. Your willingness to admit your faults is a powerful role model.

### TWO

#### Practice Humility:

Nothing interferes more with our willingness and capacity to seek reconciliation than pride. Humility is the counter point of pride so seek it in prayer and meditation.

### THREE

#### Practice Mercy.

When others are wounded, listen compassionately and help them move towards forgiveness.



### FOUR

#### Practice Forgiveness.

Resist the temptation to hold onto grudges against others who have hurt you. Living under the burden of resentment and unforgiven wounds is like a cancer – it destroys our joy and leads us to act in ways that harm others.

### FIVE

#### Practice the Sacrament:

Go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation yourself. If it's been awhile, remember how the Father of the Prodigal Son waited for his return. Our Father in heaven awaits your return with the same urgency. Not sure what to do? Just let the priest know and he'll guide you, or you can use our guide on page 21.

## preparing YOUR CHILD FOR THEIR FIRST reconciliation

### 1. Talk about it.

In the lead up to their First Reconciliation use your family mealtime to talk about God's mercy and love. Talk about people you know who are very forgiving and compassionate. Share a time when you needed forgiveness.



### 2. Prepare yourself.

Forgive someone against whom you hold resentment. Reflect on how your resentment is making you hurt others. Make a decision to let go and forgive.



### 3. Set an example.

Go to reconciliation yourself, at your child's reconciliation if possible, or immediately before or after. If you are a non-Catholic parent, and it is offered in your parish, go forward for a blessing from the priest.

## AFTER THE

## big day...

Much like a wedding, your child's First Reconciliation is the first day of the rest of their faith journey. So how do we continue to nurture, encourage and guide our children until they can take adult responsibility?

### Do...

- ...affirm your child's worthiness. Your child needs to know their inherent goodness and their power to love and make loving choices.
- ...take him/her to the Sacrament of Reconciliation at regular intervals during the year, especially during Advent and Lent.
- ...find some child-friendly movies and books with forgiveness and reconciliation as a theme to watch and read.
- ...forge a habit of regular Reconciliation yourself. If you don't have a regular habit, your kids won't either.

### Don't...

- ... use the Sacrament as a threat or punishment! (eg. "If you do that again, I will send you to Confession!") Treat the Sacrament with respect, as a special gift to experience God's mercy and love.
- ... guilt-trip your children into going to Reconciliation. Keep inviting and creating the opportunity and let God do the rest.
- ... neglect your own spiritual growth. We cannot lead where we have not been and sometimes we can be more committed to our child's growth in holiness than we are to our own!





# Family Reconciliation Prayer

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Leader: We are a Catholic family who gather together...

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Leader: Loving God, sometimes we fail to love you and to love one another.  
Forgive us and help us to forgive others.

All: Amen.

Leader: Once Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive someone.

Peter: Is seven times enough?

Jesus: No, not seven times, but seventy times seven times.

Leader: That means always forgive.  
Let us ask God to forgive us.

*Each person reads one of the following lines:*

We are sorry for the times when we got angry with one another.

We are sorry that we didn't always help, or failed to do our chores.

We are sorry for being disobedient, back chatting, or disrespectful to one another.

We are sorry for the time we made fun of others.

We are sorry for \_\_\_\_\_

Leader: Let us bow our heads and ask God to forgive us.

*(pause for silent prayer)*

Let us also take time to forgive one another.

*(pause for silent prayer)*

Let us join hands and pray as Jesus taught us to pray.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Leader: Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God forgives our sins.  
Loving God, help us live the ways your Son Jesus taught us to live.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.