I Disobey the Rules Sometimes

Help your child admit that he or she sometime does the wrong thing. For some children, this will be a difficult thing to admit.

Help your child by giving examples from your own life that the child might recognize: getting angry and impatient, shouting at your child or spouse, not helping a poor person, etc. (However, consider first what is appropriate to tell a child. Don’t burden him or her with adult problems.)

Explain that even though we sin, God still loves us. Assure your child that you still love him or her, too, even when they do bad things. Say it is possible for you and God to love them but not approve of what they did wrong.

You will need:
• a Bible
• a slip of paper and pen or pencil for each person
• a candle and match/lighter
• a small basket or bowl

Even when we disobey the rules, God still loves us!

We do commit sins sometimes
Sin hurts us and others
Sin also hurts our relationship to God
Reconciliation heals that for us
1. Explain how sins (including the ones you used as examples from your own life) hurt the people around us. They also hurt our relationship with God.

2. Explain that contrition means being sorry and also being willing to change and do better.
How does the Church help us celebrate God's forgiveness?

- At Mass, in the opening words when we say we're sorry we learn about contrition.
- Through the sacrament of reconciliation God forgives us and the Church celebrates that with us.
Pray this with your child, helping him or her follow along. If a leader is guiding the process, follow their lead. Otherwise, speak the leader parts below.

Be sure your child understands the words in this prayer celebration. For example, that the terms sacrament of reconciliation, confession, and penance refer to the same thing.

If you have a candle available, light it now. Have the slips of paper and basket/bowl available.

Growing up Catholic means we start celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Everyone begins by making the Sign of the Cross.

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

Leader: Jesus, thank you for bringing us all together here today. We love you and want to learn to love you more through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

All: We love you Jesus. Thank you for loving us.

Leader: You have given us courage and strength, Jesus. You have given us the Holy Spirit to be with us.

All: We open our hearts to you today.
    Please listen to the reading: Matthew 18:21-22.

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Use the talking points on the top of the next page to reflect on the reading with your child, pausing to let your child respond to questions and sharing your own answers.

With your child:
As you form your child in the process of Growing up Catholic, there are certain customs and traditions which are important. Here is the Catholic custom of reverence.

When we enter the parish church, we do so with an air of reverence for everything and everyone present there. “Reverence” means we honor something by our actions and thoughts – so in the church, we remain quiet. If speaking, we talk quietly. We don’t run or shout. We allow others to have quiet time for prayer. It is reverent for us to bless ourselves with holy water when entering and leaving the church. We bow or genuflect to the altar or tabernacle.
Leader: Let us pray together.

Please pause after each line:

All: Oh Jesus,
    Thank you for forgiving us every time we sin
    Please give us the love in our hearts to forgive our friends and family when they hurt us or make us angry.

Amen.
Help your child understand grace.

Have your child tell a story about each of these pictures.
For example: in the family supper it is good to pray first and share the food so everyone has enough, but it is wrong to fight.

Explain the idea of conscience to your child. Remind them that the Examination of Conscience which they did during the past week with you was one way for them to pause and look over their lives and see how they have made good choices and bad choices.
What Is a Sin?

A sin is choosing to do something we know is wrong or intentionally not doing something we know is right.

Sin hurts our relationship with each other and our relationship with God.

Free will – God gives us the freedom to make choices between good and bad things. No one can force us to do what is right: not our parents, and not even God. But God also gives us grace. Grace is the power of the Holy Spirit within us, helping us choose love and good.

Look at these three pictures. Tell a story about how these people could choose to be good and loving – or choose to be bad and mean.

What is Our Conscience?

Our conscience is God’s voice within us, helping us know right from wrong. Sometimes we have to listen very closely to our hearts to hear that voice.

Growing up Catholic means we learn to pay attention to our conscience and follow it. The Church helps us by teaching us God’s rules of love.

In the pictures above, tell how each child’s conscience helped them make a decision for good and to be loving.
Time for a Bible story! Ask your child to read this story aloud.

The popular name for this Scripture story is "The Prodigal Son." Ask what part of the story was the most interesting.

Ask your child to re-tell it in his or her own words and understand the flow of the story.

Explain that this is the same process the Church has for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

- We commit sins.
- We are sorry.
- We ask for forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- God takes us back. God never stops loving us, even when we sin.
When we commit sins, we can return to God and say we’re sorry. Like the son in this story, we find that God is always waiting for us to come back. God never stops loving us, no matter what we’ve done.

The Son Who Asked for Forgiveness

(Based on Luke 15:11-24)

Jesus told a story.

There was dad who had two sons.

One of them came to him and asked for his share of his dad’s money.

So the father agreed and gave him half of everything.

Then this son took it all and left.
He wasted the money and did bad things.

He became very poor and pretty soon he was starving, so he went to work on a pig farm but even the pigs had more food then he did!

So he thought to himself,
“I’m going home. I’ll say to my dad, ‘I’m sorry for my sins.
I realize I don’t deserve your love but at least let me work for you.’”

So he got on the road and went home.
But his father was hoping he would come back and had been watching for him every day!

When his dad saw the son, he ran out to the road and hugged him, because he was so glad to see him.

Then the son said what he planned. “I’m sorry for my sins,” he said.
But his father had already forgiven him and threw a big party to welcome him home!
Time for a break! Help your child enjoy connecting the dots and coloring this image of the Bible story.

From Pope Francis

In Lent 2014, Pope Francis presided at a reconciliation service and was expected to start hearing confessions along with 61 priests. But he surprised his master of ceremonies (and many others) by first going to one of the priests at an open confessional to confess himself.

Just beforehand he preached about the call to conversion: “It is the call to change one’s life. Conversion is not a matter of a moment or a year, is a commitment that lasts a lifetime. Who among us can be assumed not to be a sinner? No one.”
Connect the dots
**Play this game** with your child. Place a marker (a coin or button or other item) on the “start” box. Use the “dice sheet” below by closing your eyes and putting your finger blindly on one of the squares. Each player moves the number of spaces chosen in this manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>GO BACK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>GO BACK</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>GO BACK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Play This Game

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>Love God with all your heart</th>
<th>Go ahead 2 spaces</th>
<th>Miss 1 turn You won't forgive</th>
<th>Miss one turn You won't forgive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Become aware of sin</td>
<td>Obey your parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel sorry for what you did wrong</td>
<td>Go back 2 spaces You didn’t pray today</td>
<td></td>
<td>Go back 2 spaces You told a fib (a lie)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go ahead 2 spaces Be honest!</td>
<td>Miss one turn You were mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>Go ahead 2 spaces You shared your toys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take the shortcut pass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>END</td>
<td>You were sorry for your sins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to Mass on Sundays</td>
<td>You love others</td>
<td>Go back 2 spaces</td>
<td>Take the shortcut pass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make an Act of Contrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Take an extra turn You were good today</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take an extra turn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listen to your conscience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free pass for helping the poor!</td>
<td>Go ahead 2 spaces</td>
<td>Always tell the truth</td>
<td>Take an extra turn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love God above all things!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Closing prayer

Dear Jesus,
we know you are with us here.
You are present in this room.
We love you
and want to love you more.
Help us be more loving this week.
Thank you for giving us faith.
Increase our faith every day.

Now let us pray together:

Glory Be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end, Amen.
In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son,

Penance. Explain to your child that after confessing sins, discussing them with the priest, and listening to his advice, the priest will then give a penance to perform.

Explain that penance means “making up for what we did wrong.”

When we are truly sorry for our sins, we promise not to do them again.

Read with your child and discuss this section about penances.
The Penance

What is a “penance” and why does the priest give us one?

- A “penance” is a task given to us by the priest after we confess our sins
- It helps us turn our hearts back to God
- It helps us turn away from sin

Your penance might be an action, a prayer, or some other way to help you change your life and avoid sin in the future.

It might be something like:

- helping someone who is homeless or poor
- praying particular prayers
- giving up something we like
- giving money for people who are hungry

You should perform your penance as soon after your confession as possible.
In the Act of Contrition, we promise to try our best to love more and sin less, especially the sins we have committed in the recent past. This week, practice making promises. Use the chart below to help you.

This week, help your child understand what it means to make a promise to do better. Help him or her choose ways to change based on this chart, writing in the responses.

Find the online page for this session at GrowingUpCatholic.com/r4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sins we might have committed in the past</th>
<th>What will you promise to do in the future?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I fought with my brothers or sisters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not talk to God in prayer today</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I told a lie about someone else</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I played instead of doing my homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I complained when my mom or dad asked me to do my chores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I stole a book from someone in school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>