

*Confession is an act of honesty and courage – an act of entrusting ourselves, beyond sin, to the mercy of a loving and forgiving God.
– Pope St. John Paul II*



FIRST RECONCILIATION RESOURCE BOOK 2020-2021

Mary, Seat of Wisdom

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Confession isn't a place where I acknowledge sin has beat me, but that I'm letting Jesus win. When we go to Confession we are not telling God something He doesn't already know and we're not showing Him something He doesn't already see. We are giving Him something He doesn't already have: Your broken heart.

-- Father Mike Schmitz

**The Lord Never tires of forgiving.
It is we who tire of asking for forgiveness.**

– Pope Francis

It is our honor to partner with you to prepare your children for their First Reconciliation. We are using the curriculum from Dynamic Catholic called Blessed. There has never been anything like Blessed in the Catholic world for children. This program includes world-class animation, workbooks that are works of art, and most importantly, incredible content that meets the children where they are and leads them, step-by-step, to the love and forgiveness that is offered by the Lord in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

We will spend the next several weeks helping you prepare your child to receive this beautiful gift. If your child attends the day school here at MSW, your child will work on the workbook and reading in class. Your child's teacher may assign some assignments or journaling as homework.

If your child is enrolled in MSW's Tuesday Nights Together (TNT) program, we will be assigning you a catechist who will touch base with you to make sure you are able to follow along with the Blessed curriculum at home.

Regardless if you are enrolled in the MSW's day school or TNT program, you will be asked to watch the videos with your child at home. The link to stream all of the videos is:

<https://dynamiccatholic.com/blessed/program-view/>

If your child was baptized as a Catholic, is in at least second grade, and has already completed a minimum of one full year of faith formation at MSW or another parish, we will help you assess their readiness to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

If your child is not baptized, was baptized in another faith, or has not already completed at least one full year of faith formation, please contact Dolly Pointner, Director of Faith Formation and Evangelization at 847.825.8763.

Young children who have reached the age of reason (7 years old) can be culpable of sin and are aware of the importance of forgiveness in their relationships. Their experiences of forgiving, and being forgiven, work to build the foundation for understanding God's mercy. The curriculum we use helps the children to learn to trust in God who loves them and invites them to be reconciled through his Son, Jesus Christ. A child who is ready to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation:

- ⊕ Shows knowledge of Jesus and the Gospel message of forgiveness;
- ⊕ Recognizes when he or she has done wrong;
- ⊕ Shows sorrow for sin, a desire for forgiveness, and willingness to do better in the future. (Nat'l Directory for Catechesis 36.B.2, p. 135)

In addition to covering the curriculum over the next several weeks, we have prepared a retreat to help your child prepare for this special occasion the involves carving a pumpkin.

If your child attends the day school here at MSW, their retreat will be during the school day sometime the week before Halloween.

If your child is enrolled in our TNT program, a parent will need to come with the child to the retreat which will be on Saturday, October 24, 2020. We are hoping that the weather will cooperate and we will be able to have everyone together, outside for this retreat from **1:30 – 4:30 pm**. **If the we will not be able to be outside due to weather we may need to break into two groups and that will affect the timing.** Thank you for your patience and holding this date while we work through these details.

We will ask you to do an individual preparedness discussion with your child and confirm their readiness with us. At the back of this book are the questions and answers we have found to demonstrate readiness.

Assuming your child is ready, he/she will receive their **First Reconciliation during the first part of November**. Please watch for a communication to come home that provides these details.

In failing to confess, Lord, I would only
hide You from myself, not myself from You.
-- Saint Augustine

SUGGESTIONS TO DO AT HOME

Talk about the Sacrament of Reconciliation Together – It is important for your child to understand why we go to confession. Spend time talking with your child about this great healing Sacrament.

Read Scripture with your Child - read about when Jesus instituted the Sacrament and gave his apostles the authority to forgive sins in His Name in the Gospel of John 20: 19 – 23. You can also read scripture with your child that illustrates the great love of Jesus – for example, The Healing of a Paralytic in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 2, verses 1 – 12, or in chapter 15 in the Gospel of Luke, The Parable of the Lost Sheep in the Gospel of Luke, verses 1-7, or the Parable of the Prodigal Son, verses 11-32, or the forgiveness of Zacchaeus, in Luke, chapter 19, verses 1-10.

Explain to your Child that going to Confession is not about Getting into Trouble- it's about asking God for forgiveness and receiving God's Grace to do better. Listen to your child's questions and encourage them to learn more by asking more questions.

Help your Child understand how to do an Examination of Conscience - each night before they go to bed. We will help you with this at the retreat;)

Practice, Practice, Practice! Like with any sport, musical instrument, or other skill – continuous practice is essential. The same is true for preparation for all the Sacraments. Please take time to role play with your children. We will show you how at the retreat. Practice their prayers with them too. The most common prayers given for penance will be in the back of this resource book. Please pray the Act of Contrition with them each night as we approach their First Reconciliation. Praying it daily is the easiest way to memorize it!

Go to Confession as a Family- It is so important for your children to see that this is something you value. As parents, you are the first educators for your children when it comes to your Faith. Showing your child that you can take the time to go to confession makes a deeper and longer-lasting impression than all the hours you might spend talking or reading about it with them. I've known families that have made it a family tradition to go to confession regularly and follow it with going out for pizza or ice cream afterwards.

Most Importantly, Pray with and for Your Child- Through prayer, we join in an intimate conversation with God. When we ask Him to open our hearts, when we show Him our weakness, when we ask for His mercy, He always responds with infinite forgiveness. Ask God to prepare your child for this great Sacrament.

Children Remember your Actions as Much if not More Than your Words

When you tell your children you love them and always will, no matter how much you may dislike what they did...

Then you help your child understand God's unconditional love for them.

When you help your children understand the impact of what they have done and learn to say they are sorry, and tell them you are sorry...

Then you teach your children contrition or sorrow for their sins.

When you teach children to acknowledge doing wrong and to take responsibility for their action...And you admit your wrongs...

Then you teach your children how to confess sinfulness.

When you help your children forgive someone and tell your children you forgive them...

Then you teach your children about absolution.

When you help your children see alternate ways of behaving or getting along with someone...

Then you help your children find new ways of being peaceful.

When you show patience and walk with your children as they learn and practice new ways of relating with others. And admit that you are working on past forgiveness and reconciliation in your own relationships...

Then you help your children appreciate the process of reconciliation.

"...we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39)

FIRST RECONCILIATION PREPAREDNESS DISCUSSIONS



Who wants to be your best friend?
(God/Jesus)

What is sin and who sins?
(Anything that weakens our friendship or separates us from God. Everyone.)

What hurts your friendship with God/Jesus?
(Sin)

Are all sins equal? What makes a sin more serious?
(No. The more a sin weakens our friendship with or separates us from God/Jesus, the more serious it is.)

What repairs your friendship with God?

(Reconciliation because Jesus provides healing to our friendship through forgiveness.)

Does God ever hurt HIS friendship with you? Is there anything that He won't forgive?

(No)

Show me how you start your Confession?

(Bless me Father for I have sinned, this is my first confession/first reconciliation.)

What is our Conscience and what is an Examination of Conscience?

(Our inner voice that helps us to know what is right and wrong. To prayerfully think about what we have done or failed to do that we believe are sins we have committed.)

What is Confession?

(To confess or tell the priest our sins.)

Why do we Confess to a Priest?

(Because he is taking the place of Jesus. Because the Bible tells us this is what we are to do.)

Will a Priest ever tell anyone what you have confessed?

(No)

What is the Act of Contrition?

(The prayer said to tell God that we are truly sorry for our sins and that we will try to do better.)

What is Penance?

*(Prayers or good deeds the Priest will ask us to do to show we are sorry and want to turn away from sin so that we can be best friends with God.) ***

What is Absolution?

(God's Forgiveness that we receive through Jesus Christ, given by the Priest who is taking the place of Jesus.)

*****On the following page are prayers that are often given as Penance to young children. While your child does not need to know all of these by heart before their First Reconciliation, it is suggested that you continue to help them learn them by heart by reciting them at home often.***

PRAYERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Below are some of the traditional prayers that your child/ren, as Catholics, will be praying for their entire life and can be asked to pray as part of their penance. Please incorporate them into your routines at home, in the car, and at gatherings of friends and family. Please help your children learn these prayers by heart! Remember, the Mass is the most important way we pray and is where we encounter Jesus, who is truly present to us through the Word, the Eucharist, each other, and the priest who acts in the person of Christ.

Sign of the Cross: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. (With actions.)

Glory Be (Doxology): 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

Guardian Angel Prayer: Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day (night), be at my side, to light and to guard, to rule and to guide. Amen

Lord's Prayer (Our Father): 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

Hail Mary: Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen

Act of Contrition (Prayer of Sorrow): 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, 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. Amen

The Apostles' Creed: I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

The Ten Commandments:

1. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honor your father and mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

The Rosary, along with all of the mysteries. See <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/rosaries/index.cfm>.