

SACRAMENTS OF RECONCILIATION AND HOLY EUCHARIST

Readiness for Sacraments.

The responsibility and joy of leading children to the sacraments belong first of all to the parents.

Children should demonstrate:

1. An understanding that God loves and cares for us.
2. That God loves us so much He sent His only Son, Jesus.
3. An understanding of God's forgiveness.
4. Identify that their conscience is God's way of guiding them.
5. Connect Holy Thursday to institution of the Eucharist.
6. Identify Good Friday as the day Jesus suffered and died for us.
7. Develop a personal relationship with Jesus.
8. Recognize Penance and Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament.
9. An understanding/a sense of sin – child knows right from wrong.
10. Desire to receive The Sacrament.

How can parents help prepare their children for this wonderful year:

1. Use the gathering at family meals as a time of reflection and prayer.
2. Recall memories of your child's Baptism – through photographs.
3. Talk about the importance of Sunday Mass.
4. Guide your child in the reverence & respect for Jesus' presence in the tabernacle.
5. Prayer time should bring everyone together, use scripture, formal prayers and invite your child to create their own prayers.
6. How do you express forgiveness to your child?
7. Help your child to express forgiveness.
8. How do you make the words "I'm sorry", part of your family life?
9. Demonstrate your own desire for the Sacraments.
10. Guide your children through the Mass using a children's Mass book of Missal.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

(A Fact Page for Parents)

Faith

Catechesis of children for reconciliation

It seeks, first, to make clear the relationship of the sacrament to the child's life; second, to help the child recognize moral good and evil, repent of wrong-doing, and turn for forgiveness to Christ and the Church; third, to encourage the child to see that in this sacrament, faith is expressed by being forgiven and forgiving; fourth, to encourage the child to approach the sacrament freely and regularly.

Parents should be involved in the preparation of children for this sacrament.

Sharing the Light of Faith #126

Facts

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a meeting with Christ to obtain forgiveness of sin. This sacrament can be received whenever we are sorry for not loving God and others as we should. While only mortal sins must be confessed, it is helpful to confess lesser sins, too. The sacrament gives grace to be more like Jesus.

Experiencing temptation is *not* a sin; giving in to it is a sin.

Sin is choosing to say no to God. It offends him and hurts ourselves and others.

The priest forgives us in the name of Jesus. He is bound not to reveal our sins.

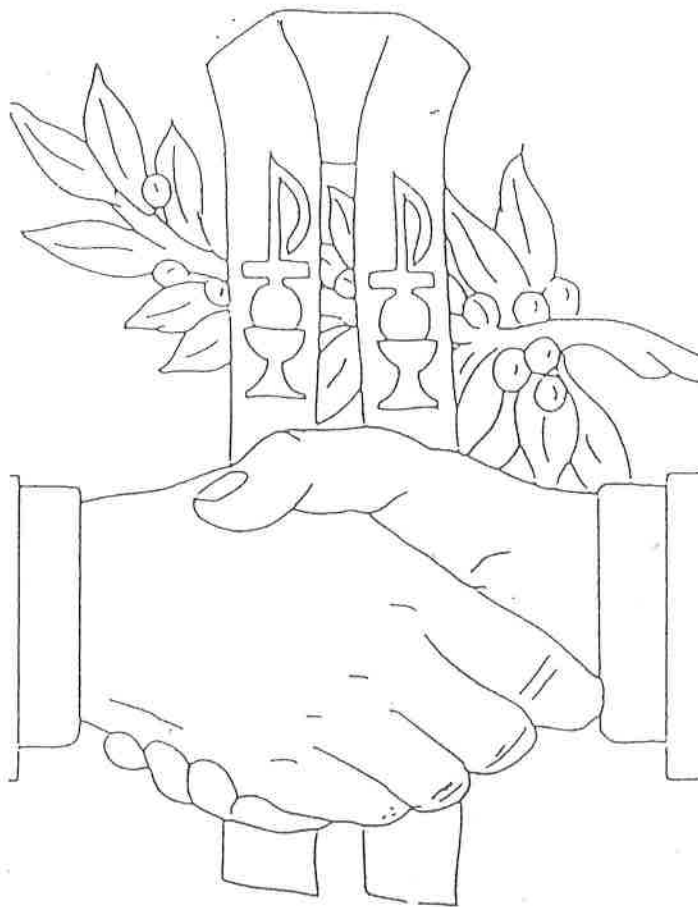
We are encouraged to express why we committed the sins we mention.

Ordinarily we are forgiven in the Eucharist.

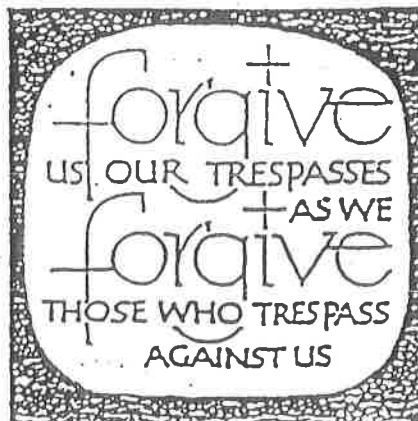
For Your Information

When you prepare for the sacrament:

1. Pray to the Holy Spirit for help in determining how well you love God and others. (Examination of Conscience)



2. Tell Jesus you are sorry for your sins—for the times you didn't love him. Ask him to help you to do better.



Confession

Childhood Memories

Things have definitely changed, but I still have vivid childhood memories of the confessional. I remember the green and red lights that indicated when the box was occupied, and the click of the kneeler-switch that turned on those lights.

Mostly I remember the sound of the panel between the priest's box and mine as it slid open to signal my turn. When I heard that, I knew it was time to launch into my well-rehearsed, "Bless me Father for I have sinned."

The confessions of my childhood were simple propositions. I went in a sinner and came out forgiven, with nothing left but my penance of three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys to seal the deal. As I walked home from church, I would always feel giddy with worthiness, as if the weight of the world had been lifted from my shoulders.

Even though the place and manner of confession is different for me now, I still have good experiences of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. But, when they are over now, I feel more challenged than worthy. When I talk to a priest these days, I focus on such things as bad habits and damaged relationships—the kinds of things that take more than the recitation of a few prayers to fix.

The feeling of being forgiven hasn't changed. The difference is that now, as an adult, I know that forgiveness compels me to want to change. And change is always a little scary.



What are your feelings about the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

How has your experience of the Sacrament of Reconciliation changed over the years?

Think About This

*God, the Father of mercies,
through the death and resurrection
of his Son
has reconciled the world to himself
and sent the Holy Spirit among us
for the forgiveness of sins;
through the ministry of the Church
may God give you pardon and peace,
and I absolve you from your sins
in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.*

Words of absolution used by the priest in the
Sacrament of Reconciliation
Rite of Penance, no. 46

From God's perspective, forgiveness is always a simple proposition. God loves us more lavishly than we can know; he's always willing to go the extra mile to make right relationships that have been broken. God gives forgiveness freely, without reservation or condition.

We, on the other hand, complicate the process of forgiveness. It could be pride or a feeling of unworthiness, or even a stubborn unwillingness to let go of the past. Sometimes the hardest part of forgiveness is asking for it.

Any number of human frailties can, if we allow them, become stumbling blocks to accepting God's forgiveness. But none of this in any way changes God's love. God waits for us in hopeful anticipation, always ready to embrace and forgive.

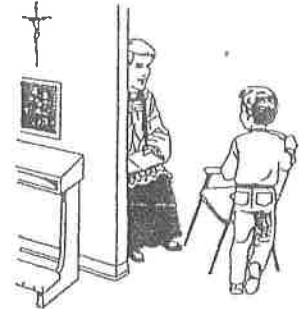
Reflect upon a time in your life when you were in need of forgiveness. Did you seek it?
If not, what prevented it?

How can you be a model of spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation within your own family and community?

Something TO DO

Make an effort this week to forgive or to ask forgiveness of someone.

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STEPS IN GOING TO CONFESSION:

1. Make the Sign of the Cross and say:

Bless me Father for I have sinned, this is my _____ confession /or say how long it has been since your last confession.

2. Then tell Father your sins, the number of times you have committed them and anything else you would like to tell Father.
3. Then say, "For these sins and all the sins of my life, I am truly sorry."
4. Listen to what Father has to say to you.
5. Pray the Act of Contrition.

O. My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments; but most of all, because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin.

6. *Father will give you the absolution, and when he makes the sign of the cross you answer, Amen.*
7. Say, "Thank you Father."
8. When you leave the confessional, remember to do your penance, say the prayers that Father gave you. Thank God for all his goodness.

