

Preparing Your Child to Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation

You have been preparing your child for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in many ways since birth.

- Teaching your child about right and wrong as you've instructed him/her about treating others with respect, sharing, and telling the truth has helped to form your child's conscience.
- Teaching your child to say, "I'm sorry," and making up after a disagreement has taught them about reconciliation.
- Showing your child unconditional love has demonstrated God's unending love for your child.
- Asking for forgiveness yourself has helped your child learn to forgive.

Consider these other ways you can help your child prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

- Share personal or family stories of forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Talk about the good experiences you have had with the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Help your child get to know the priest by talking informally with him after Mass or inviting him to dinner or a family activity.
- Help your child become comfortable with the Reconciliation Room. Take him/her into the Reconciliation Room several times. Allow him/her to sit in the chair. Each time you go into the Reconciliation Room, use resources about the Individual Rite of Reconciliation to talk about what happens during the Rite of Reconciliation.
- Role-play the Rite of Reconciliation with your child. You can act as the priest a couple of times, then invite your child to act as the priest.
- Pray the Act of Contrition together and talk about what the different words and phrases mean.
- Invite your child to write his/her own prayer of sorrow.
- Read your child books or watch videos together that have the themes of reconciliation: unconditional love, forgiveness, contrition. Discuss the themes as you talk about the stories and movies.
- As you watch television shows, talk with your child about how the characters have kept or not kept God's laws of love.
- Pray with your child and invite your child to pray alone, thanking God for God's gift of forgiveness and unconditional love.

How do you know if your child is ready for the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

- Your child knows Jesus, knows that God loves him/her no matter what, and is comfortable "talking"/praying with God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

- Your child shows a basic understanding of good and evil and recognizes when s/he does wrong.
- Your child realizes that when s/he sins s/he hurts him/herself, other people, and God.
- Your child expresses, through his/her words and actions, an understanding of being sorry when s/he does wrong.
- Your child shares forgiveness with others through his/her words and actions.
- Your child knows that because of God's unconditional love for him/her, when s/he expresses sorrow for his/her sins, doing wrong, God will forgive him/her.
- Your child knows that the priest is acting "in the person of Jesus Christ" when he absolves him/her of sins.