

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Together in Faith



Reconciliation Preparation Guide

2020-2021

Use this guide to help your child prepare for the
Sacrament of Reconciliation



**A Prayer for Parents
of our Reconciliation Candidates**

Loving God,
help me to teach my child
that You love us totally and unconditionally.

Help me to encourage my child
to grow in love
and to learn how to say sorry,
knowing that You always forgive.

Give me the courage to pray with my child
and to share my faith
as we journey together.

I ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Dear Parents,

This is a special year for your child and your entire family! When your child was baptized, you made a promise to raise him or her to learn and experience our Catholic faith. God is with you still as you continue to fulfill that promise. As parents, you are the first teachers of your child. This booklet is to guide you through the experience of teaching the faith to your child at home. Each child enrolled in Sacrament preparation through Together in Faith will receive their own Catholic Children's Bible. This bible is theirs to keep, so please encourage them to write in it and make it their own. There will also be a Parent Meeting and a Parent/Child Virtual Retreat. Be sure to participate in the Together in Faith activities, including virtual events and family at-home activities as well.

First, make your child feel special by presenting him or her with their very own bible. Turn to the first page of the bible and fill in the blanks so your child can take ownership of the bible. Have them write their name and date on the first page. Allow time for them to look through the bible and get excited! Together, agree on a special place for the bible to be kept in your home, perhaps at your prayer table or on a special shelf. Teach them to take good care of this special book full of God's precious words.

Talk to your child about your own faith journey and how it started. Do you remember your First Reconciliation and your First Communion? If you have pictures from this time in your life, show your child and share your excitement. If you are excited, your child will be too! Cherish this time with your child and share in the joy of the story of Jesus and the life-giving truths of his Church. If at any time while working with your child you have questions, please feel free to reach out to the Faith Formation Office at 515-440-1030 or yff@saintfrancischurch.org.

Sincerely,

Fr. Ray, Fr. Mark, and the St. Francis Faith Formation staff

Important Dates for your Calendar

Sunday, October 11 *(for parents only)*

- Reconciliation parents-only meeting from 7—8 p.m. There will be a virtual and in-person option. Check your email for the meeting link.

Sunday, November 8 *(for parent & child)*

- Virtual Retreat for the parent and child.
- Join us online via Zoom at 4 p.m. Check your email for meeting link.
- We will prepare a “Retreat in a Bag” for you to pick up in the Gathering Space one week prior. The activities in the bag can be completed when convenient for your family.
- On the day and time of the retreat, join in the Zoom call with your child.

Saturday, December 5 *OR* Sunday, December 6

- Sacrament of Reconciliation in the church.
- To monitor numbers for social distancing, parents will select one date and time through an online sign-up:
 - Saturday, December 5 from 10:30—11:30 a.m.
 - Saturday, December 5 from 1—2 p.m.
 - Sunday, December 6 from 2—3 p.m.
 - Sunday, December 6 from 4—5 p.m.

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, to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Amen.

This is the prayer your child will pray with the priest at the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We encourage families to start praying this prayer every day so it becomes families to your child.

Watch a video of this prayer:

Guided Prayer Act of Contrition

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwDgh0D17G8>

I Can Pray the Act of Contrition

Color the box, make a smiley face, or make an X
each time you pray the Act of Contrition!

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Vocabulary Words for your Child to Know

Act of Contrition: the prayer we say in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to express our sorrow for our sins and our promise not to sin in the future.

confession: another name for the Sacrament of Reconciliation; telling our sins to the priest during the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

examination of conscience: thinking about our actions, any sins we may have committed, how we could have better kept the Ten Commandments, and been better followers of Jesus' way of love.

forgive: to give up resentment or anger toward someone who has caused us harm, restoring friendship and love.

penance: a prayer, or good action, or act of self-denial to repair the damage caused by our sin and to show that we will do better.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: the sacrament in which God forgives our sins and brings us back together with him and with the Church; usually occurs at the age of reason for a child.

sin: something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's law. When we sin, we offend God and hurt our relationship with him.

Family End of Day Faith Activity

As your child is preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it is important to teach your child how to pray the *Examen*. In this prayer, you look back over your day to recognize how God is actively involved in your life. You can help your child learn how to review the day by asking him or her to think about what happened during each day.

Use the questions below as you are driving in the car, sitting at the table for a meal, or walking to the mailbox to guide your child.

Wow!	What made you happy today?
Ow!	What made you sad today?
Please	Ask God to help you or others.
Thank you	Say "Thank you, God, for _____."

Note: This is an informal version of a "Daily Examen".

How to Use this Reconciliation Guide

There are 5 FOCUS areas to prepare your child for the Sacrament of Reconciliation based on a bible story. Each FOCUS includes a bible story for the parent and child to read and discuss together using *The Catholic Children's Bible*. After completing each FOCUS, your child should understand what the focus means.

- Each story has a two-page spread that guides you through the story and prompts your child to *understand* the story, *live* the story, and *retell* the story.
- Allow your child to *read* aloud the scripture and then *discuss* to check for understanding.
- After discussion, *watch* a video from the Dynamic Catholic "Blessed" Reconciliation program. We have selected a few videos to watch from the series. If your child enjoys the videos, they can watch the entire series of videos!
- A *to-do* is included for your child and the entire family to do to reinforce the teaching of each lesson.

Note: *The intent is that you complete all FOCUS areas before the Sacrament of Reconciliation.*

FOCUS #1: I Will Follow the 10 Commandments That God Gave Us

Read and Discuss

- Bible Story: God Gives His People the 10 Commandments
- Read Exodus 16:2-17 on pages 132 & 133 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and discuss using the prompts on the pages.

Watch

- Watch Blessed Session 2, Video #1 ("Happiness & Free Will") and Session 2, Video #2 ("Making Decisions")
- <https://dynamiccatholic.com/blessed/program-view/first-reconciliation/session-2>

To Do

- Learn some hand signals for the commandments to help you remember them!
- "Teaching Kids the Ten Commandments":
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auBp1tiiD7c>

Extra Credit

- Teach someone in the family the hand signals OR practice the hand signals while you are driving in the car.

FOCUS #2: I Will Make Good Decisions and Do the Right Thing

Read and Discuss

- Bible Story: Love is the Greatest Commandment
- Read Mark 12:28-34 on pages 1556 & 1557 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and discuss using the prompts on the pages.

Watch

- Watch Blessed Session 2, Video #4 (“Temptation, Sin, and Grace”)
- <https://dynamiccatholic.com/blessed/program-view/first-reconciliation/session-2>

To Do

- Discuss these scenarios together. What is the right thing to do?
 - Dad is raking leaves by himself. You want to ride your bike...
 - Mom asks you to set the table. You are watching your favorite TV show...
 - A new student joins your class. He is sitting alone at lunch...
 - Your friend is angry and calls you a name...

Each time you do the right thing, you are showing love.

FOCUS #2: Let's Practice

Parents: Start having your child think about what it means to commit a sin. Chat around the dinner table or while you are driving to soccer practice. Talk about making good decisions and doing the right thing so your child becomes aware of when they are acting like Jesus or not acting like Jesus. Remind your child they should always make decisions that help others and show kindness.

Ask

- How was your day today? Tell me about one great thing you did today that helped another person have a great day!

Ask

- Can you think of something you did today that may not have been helpful or may have hurt someone's feelings? Or, did anyone hurt your feelings today with their words or actions? What would have been a nicer thing to do or say?

Having these conversations daily will help children understand the different ways they commit a sin so they can be prepared for reconciliation.

FOCUS #3: I Will Say I Am Sorry When I Make Bad Decisions

Read and Discuss

- Bible Story: The Forgiving Father
- Read Luke 15:11-32 on pages 1620 & 1621 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and discuss using the prompts on the pages.

Watch

- Watch Blessed Session 2, Video #5 (“From the Bible—Adam and Eve”) and Session 2, Video #6 (“Follow Your Conscience”)
- <https://dynamiccatholic.com/blessed/program-view/first-reconciliation/session-2>

To Do

- Whenever someone says “I’m sorry!”, always respond with “I forgive you!”
- Do some practice rounds so the kids understand. For example, accidentally step on your child’s toes, say “I’m sorry!” and teach your child to say “I forgive you!”
- Practice this response over and over so that it becomes automatic.

FOCUS #4: I Know Jesus Loves Me and Forgives Me

Read and Discuss

- Bible Story: Jesus Forgives a Woman's Sins
- Read Luke 7:37 on pages 1596 & 1597 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and discuss using the prompts on the pages.

Watch

- Watch Blessed Session 3, Video #1 ("The Mess") and Session 3, Video #4 ("The Cross, Resurrection, & Ascension")
- <https://dynamiccatholic.com/blessed/program-view/first-reconciliation/session-3>

To Do

- Pray a Daily Examen to review your day*

Oh Lord, You are wonderful because _____

Dear God, I am sorry for _____

Dear Father, please help me _____

Thank you God for _____

Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me.

***Parents:** *This is the more formal version of Wow, Ow, Please, and Thank You that was introduced earlier. Help your child pray this prayer at the end of each day.*

FOCUS #5: I Say Sorry to Jesus During Reconciliation

When bad things happen, Jesus is there to help us always. We can say sorry to Jesus and he will forgive us! We can put our trust in Jesus!

Reconciliation is a gift from Jesus to allow us to be reconciled with God.

Watch

- Watch “How Do I Go to Confession?”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ib8pzvnnL20>

To Do

- Practice going to reconciliation by doing a role play with your child on the next page.

FOCUS #5: Let's Practice

Set up two chairs face-to-face as in a real confession. Mom or Dad can act as the priest.

Step 1

- The priest welcomes and greets me. We say the Sign of the Cross together.

Step 2

- I say "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. This is my first confession."

Step 3

- I confess or tell my sins to the priest.

Step 4

- I listen to the priest as he gives me a penance which is a small act or prayer to make up for what I have done so I can show that I am truly sorry.

Step 5

- The priest prays the words of absolution or forgiveness in the name of Jesus by laying his hands over my head. I answer, "Amen."

Step 6

- The priest asks me to pray out loud an Act of Contrition to tell God I am sorry.
(You may bring your prayer card with you.)

Step 7

- I say goodbye to the priest and go do my penance.



Before Sitting With the Priest at Reconciliation, Ponder These Questions

- Have I used God's name with respect?
- Have I honored God by saying prayers?
- Have I done my best to pay attention at Mass and pray and sing with my parish?
- Have I shown love to people who care for me?
- Have I lied to my parents or others?
- Have I been helpful to others?
- Have I treated others in a kind way?
- Did I share my things with others?
- Have I taken what does not belong to me?

Lifelong Family Faith Habits for Every Day, Every Year!

- I pray the Act of Contrition every day
(or Wow, Ow, Please, and Thank You).
- I count my blessings every day.
- I attend Mass each week.*
- I go to reconciliation at least once per year.

****Parents:*** Teach your child how beautiful, important, and special it is to receive the body, blood, soul, and divinity in the Eucharist. If receiving Jesus in Holy Communion is wonderful and special, then we should receive it at least once a week. Trying to live a Catholic life without Mass is like trying to grow a plant without water. It will wither and die.

Let's Review

1. Do I know the 10 Commandments?
2. What is the Greatest Commandment?
3. What is the difference between a mistake and a sin?
4. When I make a mistake, who can I turn to?
5. Can I pray the Act of Contrition?

Other Wonderful Resources For You

5 Ways to Prepare Your Child for Reconciliation

- <https://www.catholicmom.com/articles/2015/01/19/5-ways-to-prepare-your-child-for-first-reconciliation>

Preparing Students for Reconciliation

- <https://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/2018/01/preparing-students-for-reconciliation/>

Episode 4—The Sacrament of Confession with Brother Francis

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhphVKNUX8k>

How Do I Go to Confession?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ib8pzvnnL20>