

First Reconciliation Study Guide

How can I tell if my child is ready for First Reconciliation?

There are many indicators of readiness for First Reconciliation, most of which are intangible. As a parent, listen carefully to what your child says about wrongdoing and misbehavior. Encourage the child to take responsibility for his/her behavior rather than blaming others. Watch to see if your child is capable of being sorry and asking forgiveness of others without your prompting. Then, ask yourself the following:

- Have I given my child an example to follow by bringing them with me when I go to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- Is prayer a part of your child's life?
- Does your child have the capacity for sincere sorrow?
- Does your child make an honest effort to do better?
- Can your child express remorse and describe wrongdoing in his/her own words?
- Is forgiving and being forgiven a regular part of our family life?

What does my child need to know to receive First Reconciliation?

- The difference between right and wrong.
- Accidents or mistakes are not sins.
- Doing something wrong deliberately (on purpose) is a sin.
- God our is our loving and merciful Father.
- God will always forgive us if we ask.
- We must be willing to forgive people who hurt us, just as God forgives us.
- The priest will never repeat anything that is said in Confession; he usually even forgets our sins just like Jesus does.
- In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the priest acts in the person of Christ (the priest represents Jesus).
- Jesus has given us the Sacrament of Reconciliation through which we receive:
 - the forgiveness of sins
 - reconciliation and peace with God, the Church, and ourselves
 - the grace (power) not to sin again.
- The steps of Reconciliation:
 1. Make an Examination of Conscience (remember your sins).
 2. Make the Sign of the Cross and say: "Bless me, father, for I have sinned. My last confession was ____ (or this is my First Confession).
 3. Confess (tell) your sins to the priest, and say "I am sorry for these and all of my sins" (in case you forgot any).
 4. Receive your penance (for example, the priest might ask you to pray a Hail Mary or do something nice for someone).
 5. Say the Act of Contrition, being sorry for our sins and resolving (deciding and really trying) not to sin anymore.
 6. The priest will then give you absolution (which is Jesus taking away your sins and giving you "pardon and peace").
 7. Do your penance as soon as possible.

