

First Reconciliation Parent Guide 2023-2024



St. Joan of Arc Church

OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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Resources and Information can also be found on our *First Reconciliation and First Communion* page at
<http://www.stjoans.org/sacraments/eucharist/>

Our Reconciliation services are scheduled for February 24th

Our schedule was sent via email in October and distributed in hard copy at our parent meeting

As the parent is the primary model of faith for the child, we ask that parents help to reinforce what children are learning about the Sacraments at home. The Church is here to support and guide you in your important role in the faith life of your child, and the following pages contain resources for preparing your child for the Sacrament.

These are the signs that indicate a child is ready to receive First Reconciliation:

- ❖ A desire to receive the Sacrament
- ❖ Ability to distinguish between “mistakes” (non-intentional) and “on purpose” (intentional) actions.
- ❖ Ability to distinguish between right and wrong, and the effect of actions and omissions upon others.
- ❖ Ability to feel and express “I’m sorry”.
- ❖ Ability to make amends and change behavior.
- ❖ Knowing God as loving and forgiving through Jesus Christ
- ❖ Basic familiarity of stories of forgiveness from Scripture and the prayers and gestures of the Rite of Penance

Parents have an important role in helping a child become “ready”.

- ❖ Use the “teachable moments” in your family’s life to reinforce forgiveness and reconciliation. When arguments and conflicts occur in your home, model and encourage taking responsibility, expressing sorrow and making amends.
- ❖ Practice forgiveness in your home and avoid re-hashing old arguments; let go of grudges.
- ❖ Celebrate the “making up” after a family quarrel.
- ❖ Reinforce the stories of Jesus forgiving others.
- ❖ Thank God each day for his abundant mercy when we fall short.
- ❖ Teach children responsibility for others – love takes the form of action.
- ❖ Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, at least once a year during Lent.
- ❖ Help your child learn to pray the Act of Contrition and when we are closer to the date of Reconciliation, help him or her with the examination of conscience (see the next page for the Act of Contrition and the Examination of Conscience).
- ❖ Practice going to Confession – let your child know that he or she does not need to actually tell you their sins when practicing, that this is just to practice to be ready for the Sacrament.

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.

Examination of Conscience for Children - Elementary Age

These are questions that children can reflect upon before going to Confession. The questions in an examination of conscience help us to prepare and discern what we need to confess:

Do I use God's name for praying, not in anger?

Do I pay attention and participate at Sunday Mass?

Do I pray and thank God for all the good things that He gives me?

Do I obey my parents and other in authority?

Do I show respect for my family, friends and classmates?

Do I show kindness to others?

Do I show respect for the things that belong to others?

Do I tell the truth?

Steps to Going to Confession for Children

(Before you go – think about what you want to confess.)

- ❖ Greet Father by saying “Hello Father.” ☺
- ❖ Make the sign of the Cross and say, “Bless me Father, for I have sinned, this is my first confession.”
- ❖ Tell Father your sins, and when you are finished, say “For these and all my sins, I am sorry.”
- ❖ When you are finished, Father will tell you what your penance is. Usually this will be a prayer to say quietly back in the pew, or something similar.
- ❖ Father will then grant you absolution, which means God has forgiven your sins.
- ❖ When you go back to your pew, you can say the prayers Father told you to say if that is part of your penance, and you can also say a prayer thanking God for His love and His mercy.

Note: The steps to Reconciliation can also be found in slide format with pictures, and in a video created for us by Father JM, at <http://www.stjoans.org/sacraments/eucharist/> (First Reconciliation and First Communion page)