

Sacrament of Reconciliation - How to Reinforce Ideas at Home

- Begin with Baptism. We want children to understand that they are a part of God's family. Baptism brings us into our community of faith.
- Continue with the idea of family and talk about rules in your own home. The 10 Commandments are rules for God's family. Commandments 1-3 teach us how to know God. Commandments 4-10 teach us how to get along with others. We may not understand every rule that our parents have for us, but their rules are because they love us and do not want us to get hurt. The 10 Commandments are God's rules of love for us because God loves us and doesn't want us to get hurt.
- Do we always follow every rule that our parents give us or are there times when we CHOOSE to break their rules? What happens if we choose to break God's rules? We call that sin. If we break our parent's rules – are we cut off from them forever? NO – our parents might be disappointed, but they always love us. The same is true with God. Reconciliation is our way to make things right with God and to strengthen our love and friendship with God.
- Break out the elements of Reconciliation.
 - Think about what you have done (Examination of Conscience)
 - Be sincerely sorry for any wrongs
 - Say what you have done wrong & Ask for forgiveness
 - Accept penance – that little something extra to make things right
 - Say our Act of Contrition as a way of saying Sorry
 - The priest will bless and forgive you (Give Absolution)
- Practice: Give kids different situations and ask them if its sin or an accident
- Practice: Give kids scenarios and ask what they would do
- Practice: Act of Contrition
- Remind them no one is perfect all the time. God loves us no matter what and will always forgive us if we want to be forgiven. Developing a conscience takes practice, practice, practice.

What Children Should Understand before Reconciliation

God loves us greatly. Because of His love, He will forgive us if we are sorry. The sacrament of Reconciliation is a beautiful demonstration of God's love and mercy. God will never stop loving us. He wants us to make good choices and live by His rules. If we make a bad choice, Reconciliation is our way to return to God and strengthen our friendship with Him.

The 10 Commandments are "rules of love" – love for God, love for others. The first three Commandments are about loving God; Commandments 4-10 are about loving other people.

The 10 Commandments Simplified

1. Love God most of all.
2. Use words pleasing to God.
3. Keep Sunday holy.
4. Honor your parents.
5. Do not harm anyone.
6. Be faithful to your husband or wife.
7. Do not steal.
8. Always be truthful.
9. Do not be jealous.
10. Be satisfied with your things.

To sin is to break one of God's rules of love. Mortal sin cuts off one's friendship with God. To commit a mortal sin:

It must be a serious matter.

The person must know that its serious.

The person must freely choose to do it.

A venial sin is bad but not as serious as a mortal sin. It does not cut off one's friendship with God.

A Simple Examination of Conscience

1. Did I fail to make time for God today?
2. Did I treat God's name with respect?
3. Did I go to Mass on the weekend?
4. Did I love and obey my parents?
5. Did I hurt anyone? Did I treat all living things with respect?
6. Was I a good friend?
7. Did I take anything that didn't belong to me?
8. Did I like or cheat?
9. Was I jealous?
10. Was I greedy or selfish?

The Six Steps of Reconciliation

1. Examine my conscience.
2. Be truly sorry for my sins.
3. Confess my sins.
4. Accept a penance.
5. Say an Act of Contrition
6. Receive Absolution.

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.

Our Savior Jesus Christ

Suffered and died for us.

In his name, my God, have mercy.