



*Preparing Your Child for First Reconciliation  
A Parent Handbook*

**YOU are the primary educator of your children in matters of faith.**

**As in most things we try to teach our children, but we cannot teach what we do not know or believe.**

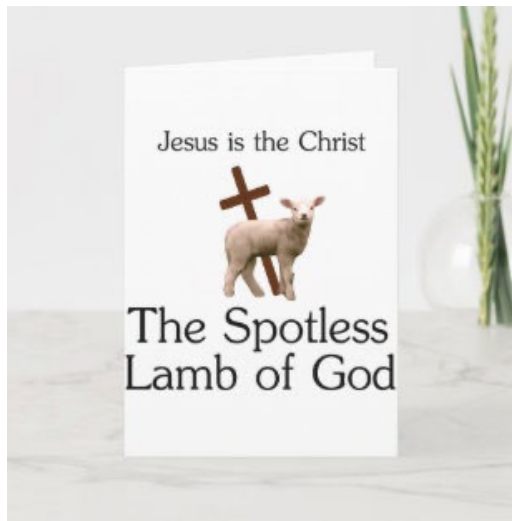
**This handbook is meant to assist you in discovering-or rediscovering-what you believe about the Sacrament of Reconciliation.**

**Contained in these pages are doctrinal, visual, and educational stories and videos to help you help your child prepare for First Reconciliation.**

**We, your Pastoral staff, are here to assist you in any way possible. So, please call on us at any time if you have any concerns or questions as you journey toward the reception of the Sacrament.**

*Jesus is the Lamb of God.  
[Understanding the Need for Reconciliation.]*

+ Before Jesus became Man, the People of God offered lambs-or lesser animals-as a sacrifice to God to make up for their sins. Unfortunately, those who were rich offered God their lambs, which were considered the best sacrifice, but those who were poor had no lambs to offer to God. So, the rich people believed that God forgave their sins because they made the best sacrifice for their sins. The rich people told the poor people that God could not forgive them because they had no sacrifice to offer Him. They even told the poor people that God did not love them because they were poor.



+ God is Love (1 Jn 4:16). He loves everyone. He has no favorites. He loves all people rich and poor. God became a Man to show people how to love one another as God loves them. God-Made-Man is Jesus. The Name "Jesus" means "God Saves." Jesus came to save all people-rich and poor.

+ God is Perfect. He is Almighty (all-powerful). There is no perfect sacrifice that we can offer our perfect God. So. God had to sacrifice Himself on a Cross to offer the one perfect sacrifice, for all people, for all sin, for all time. Jesus became the Perfect Sacrifice. He became the final Lamb of God so that whoever believes in Him will-whoever accepts Him as the Lamb of God-will have eternal life.

+ Jesus became the Lamb of God to reconcile us to God, to restore the communion that He had with Adam and Eve before they broke their friendship with Him in the Garden of Eden. The sin of Adam and Eve, original sin, became part of our human nature so that all of us continue to sin. We need to be forgiven. We need to be reconciled with God after we have sinned. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the way that Jesus gave us to be reconciled to God. When we accept Jesus into our hearts, His sacrifice for our sins becomes ours.

## *Vocabulary Necessary to Understand the Sacrament*

**Sin**: A sin is something we do, think or say-on purpose- that is against God's Law of Love. A sin cannot be done "by accident." Mistakes are not sins. Sins are not mistakes; they are deliberate wrong choices.

**The Law of Love**: God gave His People Ten Commandments to teach them how to love God, one another and themselves. But, the people did not obey His Law, because they did not know that God is LOVE. So Jesus had to become a Man to show the people that all God wants for us is to: **Love God with your whole heart, your whole soul and your whole mind, and to love one another as ourselves.**

**The Ten Commandments**: The rules that God gave Moses to teach His people how to worship Him and how to love one another.

**The Golden Rule**: Jesus told us that we must treat others the way we want them to treat us. He did not say, "Treat others the way they treat you." He said, "Treat others the way you WANT them to treat you."

**Reconciliation**: When we sin, we break our friendship with God. We must be reconciled to Him. The act of meeting again with God after we have sinned. Jesus became a Man and offered up Himself as a sacrifice to reconcile God to us, His People.

**The Sacrament of Reconciliation**: is the way Jesus gave us to meet again with God after we have sinned.

**Sacrament**: There are seven Sacraments in the Catholic Church. A sacrament is a **sign** of God's love that gives us the grace.

**Grace**: is the **gift** of God's love and life for us to make us holy, like God is holy

**Sacrifice**: Something we do- a good deed, a prayer, a donation- to make us for our sins...even if we don't want to make a sacrifice, we do it for God, not ourselves.

**Conscience**: the inner feeling or voice viewed that acts as a guide to the rightness or wrongness of one's behavior. (NOTE: Conscience is NOT the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. He does not change. A conscience develops as we grow. Listening to the Holy Spirit helps us develop a reliable conscience.)

*Sacraments Give Us New Life-God's Life in us. Sacraments make us holy.*

Jesus knew that people needed to use their 5 senses to see, hear, taste, touch, and smell to understand so before He went up to heaven, He gave us the sacraments as signs that He would be with us always.

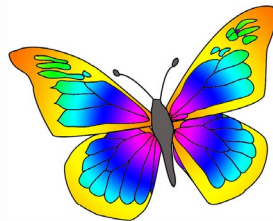
Sacraments are SIGNS of God's Life in Us.

Each Sacrament has symbols to show what the Holy Spirit is doing in and for us.

1. **Baptism**: We feel the water, cleanse us. We hear the Word of God as the priest tell us we are now children of God. We smell the Oil of Anointing (chrism). We feel the white garment as it is placed upon us to show the world that we have put on Christ. We see the light of Christ in the candle. We take the Light of Christ into the world to help others learn how to love God and one another.
2. **Eucharist**: We see, taste, and eat the bread and wine that the Holy Spirit consecrates (makes holy) to become for us the Body and Blood of Jesus. We feel closer to Jesus.
3. **Reconciliation**: The priest wears a purple stole in this sacrament because purple is the sign of penance. When the priest reaches out to make the sign of the Cross above our heads, we see the Sign of the Cross that reminds us that Jesus died on the Cross to make the one sacrifice for all sins for all people. We hear the words of God in the prayer of Absolution. We feel forgiven.

*Sacraments Give Us New Life. Butterflies are signs of new life.*

*Learn the Butterfly Song with your child:* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imO2NiKo\\_AQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imO2NiKo_AQ)



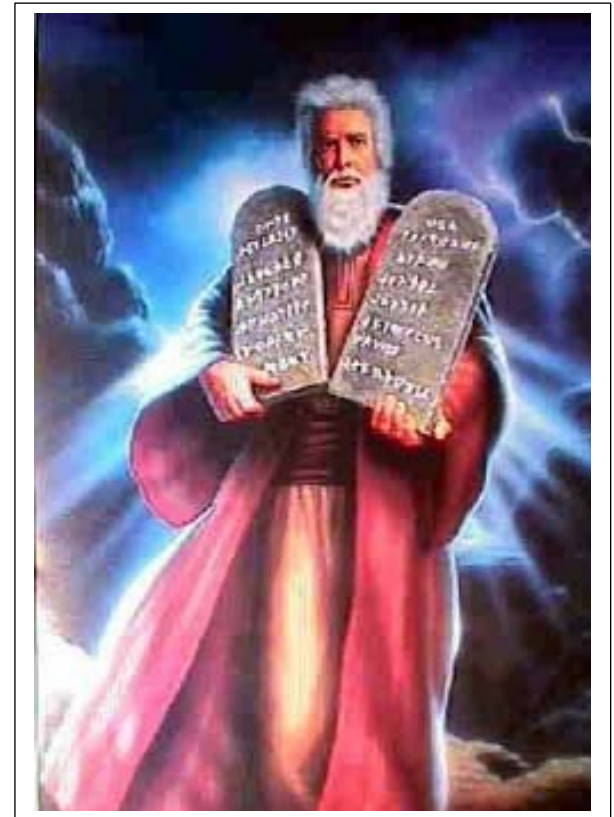
## *5 Steps: The Sacrament of Reconciliation*

1. <b>EXAMINE</b> your conscience.	1. <b>THINK</b> about your sins.
2. <b>CONFESS</b> your sins.	2. <b>TELL</b> your sins to a priest.
3. Make an <b>ACT OF CONTRITION.</b>	3. Tell God you are <b>SORRY</b> for your sins.
4. Receive God's <b>ABSOLUTION.</b>	4. Receive God's Forgiveness. Your sins are <b>ABSOLUTELY</b> forgiven.
5. Say or do your <b>PENANCE.</b>	5. <b>SHOW</b> God you are sorry for your sins.

*Before I go to confess my sins to the priest,  
I use the Ten Commandments to examine my conscience.*

### The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord Your God. You shall have no other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the Name of the Lord, Your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.
4. You shall honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.



## *A Child's Examination of Conscience*

The following examination of conscience is by Fr. Thomas Weinandy.

### **Responsibilities to God:**

- Have I prayed every day?
- Is God an important part of my life? Is He my Friend?
- Have I prayed my morning prayers and night prayers?
- Have I prayed with my parents and family?
- Have I been moody and rebellious about praying and going to church on Sunday?
- Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me do what is right?
- Have I always used God's Name in a holy way?
- Have I used bad language?

### **Responsibilities to others:**

- Have I been obedient and respectful to my parents?
- Have I lied or been deceitful to them or to others?
- Have I talked back to parents, teachers or other adults?
- Have I been selfish toward my parents, brothers, and sisters, teachers, or my friends and schoolmates?
- Have I gotten angry at them? Have I hit anyone? Have I held grudges or not forgiven others?
- Have I treated other children with respect or have I made fun of them and called them names?
- Have I stolen anything? Have I returned it?
- Have I cheated on my homework or in games?
- Have I kept my promises?
- Have I performed my responsibilities, such as homework and household chores?
- Have I gossiped or spread rumors about other people?
- Have I been kind and generous with my friends?
- Have I been jealous of other's family, friends or things?



# HOW DO I GO TO CONFESSION?

- **The Sacrament of Reconciliation usually includes the following steps:**
  1. The priest greets us, and we pray the **Sign of the Cross**. He invites us to trust in God. He may read God's Word with us.
  2. We **confess (tell the priest)** our sins. The priest may help and counsel us.
  3. The priest gives us a **penance** to perform. Penance is an act of kindness or prayers to pray, or both to show we are sorry for our sins.
  4. The priest asks us to express our sorrow, usually by reciting the **Act of Contrition**.
  5. We receive **absolution**. The priest says, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We respond, "Amen."
  6. The priest dismisses us by saying, "**Go in peace.**" We go forth to **perform the act of penance he has given us**.

## Videos For Parents:

In depth study for adults: [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org) (Forgiven)

Or, watch these videos that can be found on YouTube.com.

- Sophia Sketchpad: Confession (8 min)
- Ascension Press: “Why Confess My Sins to a Priest?”
  - Father Mike Schmitz (9 min)
- Ascension Press: “Confession is a Place of Victory”
  - Father Mike Schmitz (8 min)

## Videos for Children

On YouTube:

“Explaining the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) To Children” by Dr Steven Selvaraju  
Kids Explain First Reconciliation by the Trinity Cluster

Parables on YouTube

**Watch:** Beginner's Bible Curriculum - Jesus Rescues The Lost

- The Good Samaritan

- The Prodigal Son

**Sing:** The Baa Baa Song (He's the Good Shepherd) - Sibling Harmony

The Reconciliation Song – Brother Francis

## *Prayers to Know for Reconciliation*

### **The Sign of the Cross**

In the Name of the Father  
And of the Son  
And of the Holy Spirit. Amen

**Our Father**, who art in heaven  
Hallowed be Thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day, our daily bread,  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And, lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil. Amen.

**Hail Mary**, full of grace.  
The Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou amongst women,  
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb,  
Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us,  
Sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

### **An Act of Contrition**

O 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,  
Have mercy. Amen.

## *Going Forward*

1. When child goes to the priest for Confession, s/he will present his/her Reconciliation Activity Book to Father as a sign that s/he is ready to receive the grace of the Sacrament. These books will be distributed to Faith Formation parents at the “Celebrate New Beginnings” parish cookout on October 16 following the 11:30 am Mass. School children will receive them from their teachers on Monday, October 17 OR at the parish cookout to which ALL families are invited.
2. Our primary means of communication is via e-mails which will contain information specific to the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. If you change your email address, phone number or mailing address at any time during the year, please let us know.
3. Our parish closed-circuit television station (moreheart.tv), accessible on our website, will feature our own “home-made” videos, highlighting events of the Church year, parables, or lessons on various subjects throughout the year. We will notify you whenever something that might be of interest to you is posted.
4. Whenever you have a question or concern, please do not hesitate to call on us at anytime. We look forward to partnering with you in the faith formation of your child. (781-337-6333 or [msimmons@shstm.org](mailto:msimmons@shstm.org).)

Peace & Blessings

Maureen Simmons, Director Family Faith Formation Program

Virginia Aitken, Administrative Assistant for FFF