

Reconciliation Guide for Children



Much of the following material was adapted from the fine text from Loyola Press which prepares second graders to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. It is entitled: **God's Gift: Reconciliation.**

To order copies with expansive content for children, visit <http://www.loyolapress.com/gods-gift-reconciliation-childs-book-english.htm>

Making Good Choices

In Baptism, we begin to live as followers of Jesus. We live as his disciples. As Jesus' disciples, we want to make good choices. The Holy Spirit guides us in making good choices. He is our special helper.

Some choices are easy. I might choose whether to eat an apple or a banana for lunch. Other choices are not so easy. Sometimes I have to choose between what's right and what's wrong. This is called making a **moral choice**.

If I'm not sure a choice is a good one, this is what I do:

1. I stop before I act
2. I think about the Ten Commandments
3. I ask help from my parents, my teacher, a priest, or a deacon
4. I pray to the Holy Spirit to help me choose.

We are Tempted to Sin

Even when we try to make good choices, sometimes we are tempted. We are tempted to act in ways that hurt ourselves or other people. When we turn away from God's laws, we sin. Sin hurts our friendship with God.

Sometimes turning away from God and others can be very serious. It is a **mortal sin**. A mortal sin is a serious choice to turn away from God's laws. It cuts us off from God's love and grace. We must confess mortal sins to a priest and receive absolution.

Sometimes we can turn away from God and others in a less serious way. Then we commit a **venial sin**. Every time we sin, we hurt our friendship with God and with others.

Jesus always loves us, even if we sin. Jesus looks into our hearts. He sees that we are good. If we do something wrong and we are sorry, Jesus forgives us. Jesus gives us another chance.

Something to think about: *Mistakes and Accidents are Not Sin.*

Jesus Forgives Our Sins

Jesus wants to forgive our sins. We come to Jesus for **forgiveness** in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In this sacrament, we **confess** our sins to a priest. He forgives us in Jesus' name. The grace we have lost is given back to us.

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus comforts us. He strengthens us on our journey. We are reconciled with God, with the Church, and with the people we have hurt. Through this sacrament the Church celebrates Jesus' gift of forgiveness.

Something to think about: *Only Bishops and Priests can forgive sins in Jesus' name.*

Conscience: Our Inner Voice

Conscience is a voice within each of us. It helps us to know what God wants us to do. It helps us know the difference between right and wrong. It helps us know the ways we have sinned. The Holy Spirit helps us to listen to and follow our conscience.

Before we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we prepare ourselves. We examine our conscience.

Here is a way to examine your conscience before going to confession:

- Pray to the Holy Spirit for help.
- Review the Ten Commandments and the teachings of the Church
- Think about the times you did not act as a loving child of God.
- Think about the sins you are going to confess.

After your **examination of conscience**, you are ready to go to confession.

Something to think about: *The priest can never tell anyone what he has heard in confession. This is called the Seal of Confession.*

The Ten Commandments

I Learn God's Laws	I Follow God's Laws
1. I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange Gods before me.	1. Love nothing more than God.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.	2. Use God's name with reverence.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.	3. Keep Sunday a day of prayer and rest.
4. Honor your father and mother.	4. Respect those who care for you.
5. You shall not kill.	5. Treat all human life with respect.
6. You shall not commit adultery.	6. Respect married life.
7. You shall not steal.	7. Keep only what belongs to you.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	8. Tell the truth. Do not spread gossip.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.	9. Respect your neighbors and friends.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.	10. Be grateful when your needs are met.

Going to Confession

After my examination of conscience, I am ready to go to confession.

1. At the beginning of our confession, the priest welcomes me, and we pray the Sign of the Cross. He invites us to trust in God who loves me. We may read a passage from the Bible together.
2. I tell my sins to the priest. We must confess all our mortal sins. It is also good to confess our venial sins.
3. The priest helps and counsels me. Then he gives me a penance. This may be a prayer to pray or a good deed to do. We do our penance to show that we want to make up for what we have done wrong and that we are ready to change our way of acting.
4. The priest asks me to tell God I am sorry. I do this by praying the Act of Contrition.
5. I receive absolution from the priest. He absolves me from my sins in Jesus' name. The priest is the only one who can give us absolution, the words of forgiveness and peace. He says "I absolve you of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
6. The priest says "God in peace," and I answer "Amen." I leave and do the penance the priest gave me as soon as possible.

Examination

My Relationship with God

- Do I remember to pray each day?
- Do I pay attention at Mass? Have I fooled around in Church?
- Do I use God's name or Jesus' name without respect or when I am angry?

My Relationship with Family, Friends and Neighbors

- Do I obey my parents and my teachers? Do I do what they ask me to do?
- Do I say mean things to my mom or dad?
- Do I always say "Thank You" to people?
- Am I hard to get along with (during school, at Grandma's, at home?)?
- Am I lazy around the house? Do I do my chores?
- Do I hurt others people's feelings by calling them bad names? Do I make fun of others?
- Do I tell lies?
- Do I bully others?
- Do I start fights with my brothers and sisters at home?
- Do I blame other people for things I do?
- Do I get other people into trouble?
- Do I hit people when I get mad?
- Do I forgive people when they hurt me? Or do I hold a grudge?
- Do I cheat or play unfair in games?
- Do I refuse to play with someone for no good reason?
- Am I was lazy about my schoolwork?
- Do I fail to do my homework?
- Do I cheat in school?
- Do I take anything that doesn't belong to me? Do I return things that I borrow in good condition?
- Do I take care of my belongings and those of others?
- Do I refuse to eat food I didn't like?
- Do I follow rules about using the computer at home?

Act of Contrition:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all of 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. Amen.

Act of Contrition (Short Form):

O my God, I am very sorry for all my sins, because they displease you, who are all good and deserving of all my love. With your help, I will sin no more. Amen.

Sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

The Lord's Prayer/Our Father

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.

The Hail Mary

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.

Glory Be to the Father

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Words of Absolution Spoken by the Priest

God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

Confession of Sin

I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do; and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.