



What you can do to help your child prepare for First Reconciliation

- Practice a daily Examination of Conscience. During night-time prayers, take turns looking back over your day and talking about ways you/your child followed Jesus (acts of kindness and compassion, extra helpfulness, etc.) and ways that you could try to do better tomorrow (showing more patience in the grocery line, sharing toys/including others in games, etc.). This will get your child comfortable with doing his/her own examination of conscience silently in the pew before speaking with the priest.
- Practice holding your hand over your child and blessing him/her each day. At the end of Reconciliation, the priest will raise his hand over the child and bless him/her. Sometimes, children who aren't used to this gesture don't know what the priest is doing. Practice blessing your child in this way as he/she leaves for school or at some other time when you are talking about First Reconciliation together. This will help your son/daughter be more comfortable when the priest does this.
- Visit the Reconciliation areas in our Church prior to First Reconciliation. Children often feel more comfortable in a space when they've already seen it. You can show your child these

spaces either before or after Sunday Mass or any weekday. Children will have the option of receiving Reconciliation face to face with the priest or from behind a screen for privacy. The Confessional box in the back of our church offers both options: face to face confessions are in the small room behind the door with the clear glass panel; privacy is through the solid door. We'll also have a Confessional area set up near the altar or in the Sacristy for First Reconciliation to allow for additional priests to hear confessions.

- Talk at home about the concept of Reconciliation, which means "to become friends again". Model asking for and granting forgiveness for everyday hurts at home and point these out in other settings with your child, such as story books and movies. Explain that Reconciliation works the same way with God...He is always willing to forgive us. We only need to ask and try to do better.

- Prepare to receive Reconciliation yourself. We strongly encourage parents to receive this sacrament as well. It is Important to show your child that receiving God's forgiveness through the sacrament of Reconciliation is a beautiful aspect of our Catholic faith. You don't need to worry if it's been a long time since your last Confession. Our priests are very welcoming and kind!
- On the day of your child's First Reconciliation, be on time, and be sure to allow plenty of time so that your child doesn't feel rushed. Be prepared to be at the church for about an hour. This will help your child to have a positive experience on this very special day.

