

About This Section

PART FOUR • For the Family

The role of the family is woven throughout this entire program—in the child’s book, in the older children handouts, in the *Reconciliation Family Guide* for parents, and in notes for parents. This part of the program director’s manual supplements and further develops these resources. It includes:

- **Orientation Meeting with Parents**

This orientation meeting can be held at the beginning of the preparation for sacraments period.

- **How to Use the *Reconciliation Family Guide***

- As the program director there are various ways you can incorporate the family guide into your sacrament preparation program. This piece highlights many of these ways.
- The features and function of the family guide are described in this piece.

- **Parent and Child Sessions**

- These sessions provide two options for family sessions: First, the parents stay with their child for the entire session; second, the parents are with their child for an opening session and a closing session with an adult-focused session held while children are in age-appropriate groupings.
- The adult-focused sessions can be used as a parish adult formation program. Invite all interested adults to participate.
- The adult-focused sessions can be used as a parish Lenten program focusing on updating the parish’s awareness and understanding of Reconciliation.

—The adult-focused sessions can be incorporated into a process for Catholic adults who are returning to the Church.

- **Celebrating Reconciliation**

This section which contains both the individual rite and communal rite for reconciliation, will help families of older children understand the celebration of Reconciliation. The same section is found in the back of the child’s book.

- **Examination of Conscience**

This examination of conscience can be used during the communal celebration of Reconciliation.

- **Raising Moral Children, What Do Children Understand About Sin? and Readiness for Reconciliation**

- These three essays make perfect handouts for parents. You can distribute these at registration, parent orientation meetings, or other parent gatherings.
- The first two essays can be used as handouts during the year at other parenting functions. You may have a mothers’ group or an active parent group at your school that would find these informative.

- **Frequently Asked Questions**

Use this as a handout at parent orientation or anytime adults or parents are asking questions about children and the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the Church ask of parents in sacrament preparation?

The Church views the role of parents in the religious formation of children as both a privilege and an obligation. When you presented your child to the Church for Baptism, you were distinctly reminded that you have the responsibility “to bring [your child] up in the practice of the faith” (*Rite of Baptism of Children* 56). This privilege and obligation extend to sacrament preparation.

How does my child’s *Reconciliation* book include the family?

The child’s *Reconciliation* book includes a “Together as a Family” section on the Scripture and doctrine pages in each chapter. In addition, an entire page is devoted to “Together as a Family” at the conclusion of each chapter. This page includes four parts:

- “Remembering Together,” which invites you to discuss what your child has learned as well as to share stories of your own faith.
- “Sharing Together,” which provides suggestions for family activities.
- “Praying Together,” which offers a simple prayer for your family to pray together.
- “Getting Ready Together,” which gives practical suggestions for ways your family can prepare for first Reconciliation together.

What does my child need to know?

Your child needs to know—

- the difference between right and wrong.
- that accidents or mistakes are not sins.
- that when we deliberately choose to do what is wrong and turn away from God, we sin.
- that God is loving and merciful and will always forgive us if we are sorry and ask.
- that Jesus has given us the sacrament of Reconciliation through which our sins are forgiven and we receive the grace to live as God’s children.
- that we must be willing to forgive others as God forgives us.

How can I tell if my child is ready for first Reconciliation?

There are many indicators of readiness for first Reconciliation, most of which are intangible. As a parent, listen carefully to what your child says about wrongdoing and misbehavior. Encourage your child to take responsibility for his or her behavior rather than blaming others. Watch to see if your child is capable of being sorry and of asking forgiveness of others without your prompting. Then ask yourself the following:

- Is prayer a part of my child’s life?
- Does my child have the capacity for sincere sorrow, and does he or she make an honest effort to do better?
- Can my child express sorrow and describe wrongdoing in his or her own words?