

About This Section

PART SIX • Preparing Older Children

The child's book for sacrament preparation that accompanies this series was written for ages seven to nine. This section is designed to include children ages ten to fifteen who are preparing for the sacrament of Reconciliation.

The handouts for older children, guide notes for catechists, and the guide notes for parents in this part of the manual include the same content and process as the child's book, the catechist guide, and the family guide. These materials have been adapted to be age-appropriate.

Since there may only be a few young people of these ages in your program, you may want to cluster the age groups or provide a small group of fully initiated young people to join in the preparation period as peer mentors.

This section includes:

- **Handouts for Older Children**

- Copy these handouts as needed. You may want to put them in a small binder or folder for each participant.

- **Guide Notes for Catechists**

- Copy these notes for each catechist who will be working with the older groups of children.

- Refer to part five of this manual to make sure catechists have the materials they need.

- **Guide Notes for Parents**

- Copy these notes for parents/families of the older children preparing for the sacrament.

- Copy the opening ritual for each chapter, found in part five of this manual, and distribute them to the parents/families.

- These notes were designed to assist families who are also preparing their older children at home for the sacrament.

We Listen to the Holy Spirit

FAITH FOCUS

What does the parable of the Good Samaritan teach us?

Opening Ritual

In the opening prayer we lit a candle. We talked about how the Holy Spirit is always with us.

What was it like for you to pray around the lighted candle?

The Good Samaritan (Scripture)

Bible Background

People of Jesus' time honored Jesus with the title Rabbi, or Teacher. Like other teachers Jesus often used a story to get his point across to his listeners. One type of story Jesus used is called a parable. Parables often have a surprise ending. The surprise helps the people hearing the parable understand the message of the teacher.

Think About It

What parables can you name that Jesus told?

Reading the Word of God

Look up and read the parable in Luke 10:29–37. A Samaritan is the main character of the parable. Jesus' listeners did not think that Samaritans were faithful children of God. Discover the surprise ending of the parable.

Think About It

What did the Samaritan choose to do? Why do you think the ending of the story may have surprised Jesus' listeners?

Understanding the Word of God

A parable compares one thing to another to help listeners or readers understand the main point of the story.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus compares two leaders of the people of God, a priest and a Levite, with the Samaritan. By doing this Jesus makes the point that all people are called to be good neighbors. All people receive grace to live the Great Commandment.

Jesus is also teaching that it is not enough to only say that we believe in God. We must also live as children of God. Jesus is teaching his followers that it is not enough to be baptized and call oneself a follower of Jesus. We must live our faith in Jesus. We must live as Jesus taught and showed us how to live. We must live as followers of Jesus.

Think About It

How was the Samaritan a light in the world? How are you a light in the world?

At Baptism we are given a candle, which has been lighted from the Easter candle. As we receive this candle we are told, "Receive the light of Christ. . . . [W]alk always as children of the light" (*Rite of Baptism* 64). The way we live is to be a sign that we are followers of Jesus, the Light of the World.

We Make Good Decisions (Doctrine/Liturgy)

The Samaritan made a good decision. He chose to stop and help the injured traveler.

Making Good Decisions

Followers of Christ need to make good decisions and put our decisions into action as the Samaritan did. When we put our good decisions into action, we show we are followers of Jesus, the Light of the World.

Here are some of the things you can do to learn to make good decisions.

- Pray to the Holy Spirit.
- Read, study, and pray over the word of God.
- Learn what Jesus taught about the Great Commandment, the Ten Commandments, and the Beatitudes.
- Learn what our church family teaches about how we are to live as children of God.
- Talk over our decisions—before and after we make them—with parents, teachers, and other adults.
- Ask the help of parents, teachers, and other adults.
- Choose what we know is the right thing to do and do it.

Think About It

How do you go about making a good decision? What might you do better?

Sin: A Bad Decision

We do not always make good decisions. We sometimes choose to sin. We deliberately turn our hearts away from God. To help us understand more clearly what sin is all

about, the Church speaks about sin in many ways. Here are two ways:

Mortal sin—Mortal sin breaks our relationship with God. It is a serious failure in one's love for God, for oneself, and for other people.

Venial sin—Venial sin weakens but does not break our relationship with God.

It is important that we accept responsibility for all of our decisions, including our sins.

Think About It

Why is sin a bad decision?

Sacrament of Confession

In Reconciliation we confess, or tell, our sins to the priest. This is why it is sometimes called the sacrament of confession. We must confess any mortal sin we commit. We may also confess venial sins. Because all sin turns our heart away from God's love, we should seek forgiveness of all sins, including venial sins.

Sacrament of Conversion

When we celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation, we show that living as a child of God is important to us. This shows we want to do our best to live as Jesus taught us. This is why it is sometimes called the sacrament of conversion.

Think About It

How does the sacrament of Reconciliation help us to live as lights in the world?

Whenever we think about our sins, we must remember that God wants to forgive us.

FAITH FOCUS

What does it mean to confess our sins in the sacrament of Reconciliation?

WHAT WE SEE AND HEAR

We can confess our sins to the priest either face-to-face or kneeling behind a screen. The priest will never tell anyone what we confess to him.

What Difference Does This Make in My Life?

The sacrament of Reconciliation brings God's love and forgiveness into our lives right now. The Holy Spirit helps us make decisions to show our love for God and for others.

You see an advertisement calling for an outline for a new television series. The series is about a group of young people who make a decision to live as followers of Christ in the world. Write your outline here.

MY FAITH DECISION

Talk with someone about one thing you will do this week to help you live as a light in the world.



TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Remembering Together

In this chapter you learned that followers of Jesus are good Samaritans. As followers of Jesus, we are to strive to make good decisions that bring light to the world. Discuss responses to these or similar questions:

- How does our family help one another make good choices?
- How is our family a light in the world?
- How do we celebrate being lights in the world?

Sharing Together

Choose one of these activities to do together or design a similar activity of your own:

- Light a candle during mealtime. Let the candle remind you that God has called you by name to be followers of Jesus, the Light of the World.
- Watch the television news together. Identify people who were good Samaritans. Choose one thing that your family members can do to be good Samaritans.
- Write a prayer to the Holy Spirit, asking for help to make good decisions. Pray the prayer as a family this week.



Visit the RCL sacraments web site by following the link titled "Sacraments" at www.FaithFirst.com.

Praying Together

Pray this or a similar prayer at family meals or at other family prayer times this week:

God, our loving Father,
today we gather to listen to
the Holy Spirit.

We know that the Holy Spirit is
always with us
to help us choose light over darkness.
May the Holy Spirit help us live
as lights in the world.

We ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord Amen.

Getting Ready Together

Go through the "Confession of Sins" part of the rite of Reconciliation together. Emphasize that confessing our sins in this sacrament is one way we show that we take responsibility for our sins. Reassure your son or daughter that the priest will not tell anyone what he or she confesses in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

We Listen to the Holy Spirit

Background Reflection

God has given us the special gifts of free will and conscience. By giving us these gifts God has given us the ability and the choice to love him. The choice to grow closer to God or away from God is ours to make. We can choose to turn toward God and respond to his love, or we can turn away from God and his love.

Our choice of God's love is reflected in the many good choices we make each day. Making good choices is not always easy. Fortunately we have a conscience that helps us make good choices by guiding us in knowing right from wrong. Conscience, like the muscles in our body, can be strengthened or allowed to grow weak.

A good conscience is one that is well formed and strengthened by prayer and a knowledge of faith through the Church's teachings. A well-formed conscience strengthens our freedom to make good decisions. The more we train our conscience to know what is good and what is evil, the better we will be at making those good decisions that help us live as followers of Jesus.

Sharing Together

What We Will Need

These are the items you will need for this lesson. Take the time to gather them in advance of meeting with your child.

- RCL's *Reconciliation* handouts for older children for chapter 3, "We Listen to the Holy Spirit"
- Opening family ritual for chapter 3
- Your child's baptismal candle or a large white candle
- Bible

What We Will Learn

In your time together your family will deepen your understanding and living of the Church's faith. The faith theme of this lesson is: *The Holy Spirit helps us make good decisions and put them into action.*

What We Will Do

Follow these simple steps to join with your son or daughter in preparation for the celebration of the sacrament.

- **Preparation:** Read and reflect on the background reflection.
- **Step One: Celebrate the Ritual**
 - Celebrate the ritual "Jesus, Light of the World."
 - Use the "Opening Ritual" section on the first page of the Handout for chapter 3 to share what it was like to experience the family ritual.
- **Step Two: Share the Scripture Story**
 - Point out the "Faith Focus" question on the first page of the handout and together discover the answer as you listen to the Scripture Story.
 - Using Scripture section, "The Good Samaritan," read and talk about the "Bible Background." Then read and share your understanding of the Scripture story "The Good Samaritan" (Luke 10: 29–37). Read and discuss "Understanding the Word of God." Use the "Think About It" questions to guide your sharing.
- **Step Three: Discover the Faith of the Church**
 - Using the "We Make Good Decisions" page of the handout, point out the "Faith Focus" question. Read and discuss this page. Use the "Think About It" questions to guide your faith sharing.
- **Step Four: Make a Difference**
 - Choose to make a difference in your own lives and in the lives of other people by living as followers of Jesus. Suggested activities are found on the "What Difference Does This Make in My Life?" page of the handout.
 - Enrich your time together. Read and discuss the "Together as a Family" page of the handout. Choose one activity from "Sharing Together" that will help you live your faith as a family.
- **Conclusion: Closing Prayer**
 - Conclude your time together with a family prayer of your own choosing.