



The Sacrament of Reconciliation

A resource for families



Your child's faith journey began at their Baptism when the priest, family, friends and parishioners gathered together to welcome them into the Catholic faith community.



- ★ Share pictures, stories and memories with your child about their Baptism day.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation, also known as Penance and Confession, is a sacrament of healing and highlights the merciful nature of God.

Why do we need forgiveness?

As we are members of God's family and made in God's image and likeness, we have a responsibility to treat one another with respect. Our relationships should be built upon the qualities of trust, care, forgiveness and honesty. When we do something which breaks or damages relationships, we need to say sorry and ask for forgiveness. For Catholics, this happens during the Sacrament of Reconciliation when we are forgiven by Jesus, through the priest.



Photo: "I Absolve You" courtesy of <https://www.sculpturebytps.com/>

What is a sin?

A sin is when you know that something you are about to do is wrong, hurtful or harmful and you do it anyway. When this happens, you hurt your friendship with God and others.

Sometimes choices are easy.

- ★ Discuss some easy choices you make every day.

Other choices are not so easy. Sometimes you need to choose between right and wrong. These choices can be more difficult and sometimes you don't make the right one!

- ★ How do you feel when you know you've made a choice you shouldn't have?

Before you receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it is important to think about actions and choices you have deliberately made which were wrong and for which you need to ask forgiveness. This is called an Examination of Conscience.

You ask yourself questions like:

- Have I been kind and generous with my friends?
- Have I been helpful and loving towards my family?
- Have I been living as Jesus asks me to?

The forgiveness of sins through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, involves four parts:

Contrition: being truly sorry that we have hurt our relationship with God and others, and a commitment that we will do better.

Confession: telling God, through the priest, our sins or poor choices.

Penance: the priest talks to us about how we can make better choices and encourages us to talk to God through prayer.

After this we pray a prayer of sorrow to show that we are sorry and ready to do better.

Prayer
O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, because you are so good, and with your help I will not sin again.

Absolution: the priest says a special prayer and our sins are forgiven.

The clip below gives an example of some questions which commonly are asked when preparing your child for the Sacrament of Penance.

❖ [The Sacrament of Reconciliation](#)



Forgiveness

The Gospels, through the actions, teachings and stories of Jesus, show that bringing forgiveness into people's lives is very important to God.

Jesus' parables are meant to challenge us and make us think differently. Jesus also used these stories to show us what God is like. Watch this enactment of the [The Prodigal Son](#) (Luke 15:11-32).

- ★ Discuss how the Prodigal Son asks forgiveness from his father. How does the father react?
- ★ Have you been like the younger son and needed forgiveness? When?
- ★ When have you been like the older son who found it hard to forgive? Why did you find it hard to forgive?
- ★ What do we learn about God through the actions of the father?
- ★ How can you be more like the father in the parable?

In this parable Jesus shows us that God is like the father, always waiting to welcome us with love and forgiveness.

Listen to the words of this song and think about how God's forgiveness can heal you.
[You Forgive Me](#)

Through Reconciliation, we forgive ourselves and others. We learn from the decisions we make and with God's help, realise we can live peacefully with others and keep changing for the better.

Forgiveness and reconciliation in action.

Watch this reading of the book [God's Dream](#). This is an introduction to Archbishop Desmond Tutu's message of peace, connecting children of all races, religions and cultures across the world. We are all God's children and all help to create God's Dream. Share ideas from the story about God's Dream for the world.

- ★ What can you do to continue to build God's Dream? How does forgiveness and reconciliation help build this world?

Sometimes it is hard to ask for forgiveness.

- ★ Share a time when you have had trouble asking for forgiveness. What had happened? How did you feel before you asked for forgiveness? How did you feel after?
- ★ Who is the most forgiving and compassionate person you know? Why?
- ★ Look for moments in your family life when you can talk about forgiveness and reconciliation.

Reconciliation is about fixing or repairing our relationships with God and the people we have hurt.

- ★ What are some *actions* you can do to show you are truly sorry.

Parents can find more adult-level information about the Sacrament of Reconciliation via the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta's 'The Well' website here:
[The Sacrament of Penance](#)



Family prayers

- ★ We pray that God will help us to be understanding and forgiving of all those we encounter.
- ★ We give thanks to God for all of the ways we are blessed. Help us to be remember that every person, place and adventure is an opportunity to love God more.
- ★ We pray for people who feel alone and isolated, may they come to know of God's loving embrace.
- ★ Let us pray for all who are victims of injustice and poverty. May we open our arms and hearts to them, in particular those suffering in our own community.
- ★ We pray today for peace in our world.



Parents' prayer for their child as they prepare for Reconciliation.

Loving God, help our child to see that you love them totally and unconditionally. Help our child to grow in love and to learn how to say sorry, knowing that you always forgive.

We pray that our child will help build a better world by being forgiving, kind and compassionate towards others.

Amen