



In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.

-St. Thomas Aquinas

Your child is getting ready for the sacraments! What a joy in the life of a child. Our Lord said, "Let the little children come to me." They are now preparing to come to Him for grace, mercy, healing and strength as they journey in this world towards heaven. Below are a few points to keep us all together as we walk our children through this process.

◆ ***What is the Sacrament of Reconciliation?***

Jesus

entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to the Church. The Sacrament of Penance is God's gift to us so that any sin committed after Baptism can be forgiven. In confession we have the opportunity to repent and recover the grace of friendship with God. It is a holy moment in which we place ourselves in his presence and honestly acknowledge our sins, especially mortal sins. With absolution, we are reconciled to God and the Church. The Sacrament helps us stay close to the truth that we cannot live without God. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

~ From the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults

◆ ***When & Where:***

Our First Reconciliation Service will be held *Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at 6pm* in the church. There will be visiting priests to join our priests. The children will have the opportunity to speak to a priest they feel comfortable with.

◆ ***Procedure on the evening of First Reconciliation:***

The children should wear either their uniform or their Sunday church clothes. There will be a table in the gathering area to sign in and ask any question you may have. Enter the church in reverent silence. This is a time for prayer before the sacrament. The children will sit with their families. We will read from scriptures and then take some time for reflection as we do an examination of conscience. After we pray together, the teachers will help facilitate speaking to the priests. We ask that you remain seated until your family has been called up. You may then enter the line of the priest you would like to receive speak with. Remain prayerful and quiet as others are still praying. You may walk up to the priest to introduce your child and then take your place back in the line to give your child privacy. Everyone will receive the same penance prayer, which you can say as a family at the altar. When finished, please join us in the gathering area for some treats.

◆ *How do I help prepare my child for Reconciliation?*

The attached sheet is an Examination of Conscience for children. It will be helpful to review this with your child in a prayerful way. Help your child to know his/ her sins. It is fine if your child would like to write their sins down! This may help your child feel prepared and peaceful. Talk to your child about why we need God to heal us and give us strength as Christians - so we can love each other better. Help your child to understand that the priest stands in the place of Jesus - they are only his representatives. Many saints have said that Jesus assures them it is HE who hears their sins and speaks through the priest.

There are some videos and resources on the family faith website: [www.stmichaelfamiliestogether.weebly.com](http://www.stmichaelfamiliestogether.weebly.com) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade page.

◆ A Quick 'How To' Review:

1. The priest greets us, and we pray the Sign of the Cross. He invites us to trust in God. He may read God's Word with us.
2. We confess our sins. The priest may help and counsel us.
3. The priest gives us a penance to perform. Penance is an act of kindness or prayers to pray, or both.
4. The priest asks us to express our sorrow, usually by reciting the Act of Contrition.
5. We receive absolution. The priest says, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We respond, "Amen."
6. The priest dismisses us by saying, "Go in peace." We go forth to perform the act of penance he has given us.

◆ Act of Contrition:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all  
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 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