

1

Help your child admit that he or she sometime does the wrong thing. For some children, this will be a difficult thing to admit.

Help your child by **giving examples from your own life** that the child might recognize: getting angry and impatient, shouting at your child or spouse, not helping a poor person, etc. (However, consider first what is appropriate to tell a child. Don't burden them with adult problems.)

Explain that even though we sin, God still loves us. Assure your child that **you still love him or her, too**, even when they do bad things. Let them know it is possible for you and God to love them but not approve of what they did wrong.

4 | Disobey the Rules Sometimes

Even when we disobey the rules, God still loves us!

We do commit sins sometimes

Sin hurts us and others

Sin also hurts our relationship to God

Reconciliation heals that for us



How does the Church help us celebrate God's forgiveness?

- At Mass, in the opening words when we say we're sorry we learn about contrition
- Through the sacrament of reconciliation God forgives us and the Church celebrates that with us

2

Explain how sins (including the ones you used as examples from your own life) hurt the people around us. They also hurt **our relationship with God**.

3

Explain that contrition means being sorry and also being willing to change and do better.

1

Pray this with your child.

Be sure your child **understands the words** in this prayer celebration. For example, that the terms sacrament of reconciliation, confession, and penance to refer to the same thing.



Prayer Celebration

Growing up Catholic means we start celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Everyone begins by making the Sign of the Cross.

All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Leader: Jesus, thank you for bringing us all together here today. We love you and want to learn to love you more through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

All: **We love you Jesus. Thank you for loving us.**

Leader: You have given us courage and strength, Jesus. You have given us the Holy Spirit to be with us.

All: **We open our hearts to you today.**

Please listen to the reading: Matthew 18:21-22.

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Please listen to the leader.

Leader: Let us pray together.

Please pause after each line:

All: **Oh Jesus,
Thank you for forgiving us
every time we sin
Please give us the love in our hearts
To forgive our friends and family
when they hurt us or make us angry.
Amen.**



2

With your child:

As you form your child in the process of Growing up Catholic, there are certain customs and traditions which are important. Here is the Catholic custom of **reverence**.

When we enter the parish church, we do so with an air of reverence for everything and everyone present there.

“Reverence” means we honor something by our actions and thoughts – so in the church, we remain quiet. If speaking, we talk quietly. We don’t run or shout. We allow others to have quiet time for prayer. It is reverent for us to bless ourselves with holy water when entering and leaving the church. We bow or genuflect to the altar or tabernacle.

1

Help your child understand **grace**.

2

Have your child **tell a story** about each of these pictures. (For example: in the family supper it is good to pray first and share the food so everyone has enough, but it is wrong to fight.)

3

Explain the idea of **conscience** to your child. Remind them that the Examination of Conscience which they did during the past week with you was one way for them to pause and look over their lives and see how they have made good choices and bad choices.



What Is a Sin?

A sin is choosing to do something we know is wrong or intentionally not doing something we know is right.

Sin hurts our relationship with each other and our relationship with God.

Free will – God gives us the freedom to make choices between good and bad things. No one can force us to do what is right: not our parents, and not even God. But God also gives us **grace**. Grace is the power of the Holy Spirit within us, helping us choose love and good.



Family supper



Learning to ride



Talking with friends

Look at these three pictures. Tell a story about how these people could choose to be good and loving – or choose to be bad and mean.

What is Our Conscience?

Our conscience is God's voice within us, helping us know right from wrong. Sometimes we have to listen very closely to our hearts to hear that voice.

Growing up Catholic means we learn to pay attention to our conscience and follow it. The Church helps us by teaching us God's rules of love.

In the pictures above, tell how each child's **CONSCIENCE** helped them make a decision for good and to be loving.

1

Time for a Bible story! Ask them to read this story aloud.

2

The popular name for this Scripture story is “**The Prodigal Son.**” Ask what part of the story was the most interesting to them.



Meeting Jesus in the Bible

When we commit sins, we can return to God and say we're sorry. Like the son in this story, we find that God is always waiting for us to come back. God never stops loving us, no matter what we've done.

The Son Who Asked for Forgiveness

Jesus told a story.

There was a dad who had two sons.

One of them came to him and asked for his share of his dad's money.

So the father agreed and gave him half of everything.

Then this son took it all and left.

He wasted the money and did bad things.

He became very poor and pretty soon he was starving, so he went to work on a pig farm but even the pigs had more food than he did!

So he thought to himself,

"I'm going home. I'll say to my dad, 'I'm sorry for my sins.

I realize I don't deserve your love but at least let me work for you.'"

So he got on the road and went home.

But his father was hoping he would come back and had been watching for him every day!

When his dad saw the son, he ran out to the road and hugged him, because he was so glad to see him.

Then the son said what he planned. "I'm sorry for my sins," he said.

But his father had already forgiven him and threw a big party to welcome him home!



Based on Luke 15:11-24

3

Ask them to **re-tell** it in their own words. Help them see the flow of the story.

Explain that this is **the same process** the Church has for reconciliation. We commit sins, we are sorry, we ask for forgiveness, and God takes us back as his children.

1

Time for a break! Help your child **enjoy** connecting the dots and coloring this image of the Bible story.



Color This Picture

Connect the dots.



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From Papa Francis

In Lent 2014, Pope Francis presided at a reconciliation service and was expected to start hearing confessions along with 61 priests. But he surprised his master of ceremonies (and many others) by first going to one of the priests at an open confessional to confess himself.

Just beforehand he preached about the call to conversion: "It is the call to change one's life. Conversion is not a matter of a moment or a year, is a commitment that lasts a lifetime. Who among us can be assumed not to be a sinner? No one."

Photo by Presidência da República/Roberto Stuckert Filho, Agência Brasil.

1

Play this game with your child. Place a marker (a coin or button or other item) on the "start" box. Use the "dice sheet" on the next page by closing your eyes and putting your finger blindly on one of the squares. Each player moves the number of spaces chosen in this manner.

Play This Game

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|--|
| START | Love God with all your heart | Go ahead 2 spaces | | Miss one turn You won't forgive |
| Become aware of sin | Obey your parents | Go back 2 spaces |  | |
| Feel sorry for what you did wrong | You didn't pray today | Miss one turn You were mean | | |
| Go ahead 2 spaces | Be honest! | END | Go ahead 2 spaces You shared your toys | Take the Shortcut Pass You were sorry for your sins |
| Take the Shortcut Pass | You love others | Go back 2 spaces | Take the Shortcut Pass | Take an extra turn You were good today |
| Go to Mass on Sundays |  | | Take an extra turn You were good today | Listen to your conscience |
| Make an Act of Contrition | | | Take an extra turn Love God above all things! | |
| Take an extra turn | Go ahead 2 spaces | Always tell the truth | Take an extra turn | Love God above all things! |
| Free pass for helping the poor! | Go ahead 2 spaces | Always tell the truth | Take an extra turn | Love God above all things! |

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| | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | 5 | 7 |
| 3 | 1 | 6 |
| | go back | |
| 4 | 2 | 3 |
| 5 | 2 | 6 |
| go back | | go back |
| 1 | 5 | 3 |

Parent Lesson Plans

1

Explain to your child that after he or she confesses his or her sins, and after the priest has talked with them and given them advice, the next thing which happens is that **the priest asks them to do a penance.**

Explain that penance means “making up for what we did wrong.”

2

When we are truly sorry for our sins, **we promise not to do them again.**

Read with your child and discuss this section about penances.

3

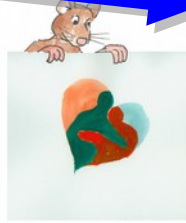
This week, help your child understand what it means **to make a promise to do better.** Help them choose ways to change based on this chart. They should write in their responses.

Find the online page for this session at GrowingUpCatholic.com/reconciliation4.

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Sacrament of Reconciliation



The Penance

What is a “penance” and why does the priest give us one?

- > A “penance” is a task given to us by the priest after we confess our sins
- > It helps us turn our hearts back to God
- > It helps us turn away from sin

Your penance might be an action, a prayer, or some other way to help you change your life and avoid sin in the future.

It might be something like:

- > helping someone who is homeless or poor
- > praying particular prayers
- > giving up something we like
- > giving money for people who are hungry

You should perform your penance as soon after your Confession as possible.



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At Home This Week

In the Act of Contrition, we promise to try our best to love more and sin less, especially the sins we have committed in the recent past. This week, practice making promises. Use the chart below to help you.

| Sins we might have committed in the past | What will you promise to do in the future? |
|--|--|
| I fought with my brothers or sisters | |
| I did not talk to God in prayer today | |
| I told a lie about someone else | |
| I played instead of doing my homework | |
| I complained when my mom or dad asked me to do my chores | |
| I stole a book from someone in school | |



Tips and Activities for This Week

<http://GrowingUpCatholic.com/reconciliation4>

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