

1

Ask your child to list the **parties and holidays** that he or she likes best.

Ask why he or she likes parties.

2

Explain that the Church family also celebrates special times. One of those times is when we confess our sins and accept God's forgiveness into our lives.

## 6 Reconciliation: Let's Celebrate!



This is a party!

- > What happens at a party?
- > Who likes a party?
- > Why do we have parties?

It's a Celebration!

- > We **celebrate** when we're happy about something or when it's a special day.
- > In the Sacrament of Reconciliation we are happy because we feel better after we confess our sins.
- > Jesus makes us free, so it's time for a party!

God loves us! We celebrate!

3

Take the time now to **plan a small party** for your child for after he or she celebrates reconciliation for the first time. Invite your child to help plan it. You may wish to join with other families for this. The child can suggest who should be invited to the party, what kind of food to have, and decide if there should be presents (of course there should be!)

Pray this together with your child, following the prayer leader.



## Prayer Celebration

Growing up Catholic means celebrating with the Church!

*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: Thank you, Jesus, for helping us live as your children.

All: **Thank you for making us free through reconciliation.**

*Please listen to the reading: 1 Corinthians 2:9.*

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

*Please listen to the leader.*

*When the time comes, bring up your folded slip of paper and place it on the table.*

Leader: Let us now pray together this prayer, thinking about each word:

*Please pause after each line:*

All: **I confess to almighty God  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned  
in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done  
and in what I have failed to do,**

**through my fault,  
through my fault,  
through my most grievous fault;**

**therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,  
all the Angels and Saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

**Amen**



1

Help your child understand that when he or she goes to confession (aka reconciliation,) they will be taking part in a **sacrament**.

2

Ask them to tell what signs there are that you love them. The signs point to something that your child can't actually see, but which are still very real. Some of the signs might be:

- You take care of all their needs
- You hug them
- You listen to them when they are sad
- You work hard to support them as your family

3

Sacraments all have **special signs/symbols** – helping us move from what we cannot see to what we can see, hear, and touch. For example, in baptism, there were certain signs (which are listed here).

5

The **seven sacraments** are: baptism, confirmation, eucharist (communion), reconciliation, anointing of the sick, matrimony (marriage), and ordination. Each has special signs, but for today, we are only concerned with baptism and reconciliation.



## What Is a Sacrament?

- > It's something we can experience with our senses: see, hear, taste, feel or smell.
- > It comes to us from Jesus.
- > It help us be stronger and experience grace.
- > It is a visible sign of God's invisible grace.



### Baptism

- > We **feel** the water when we are put into it or when it is poured over us.
- > We **hear** the words of the priest or deacon: "I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
- > We **see** the flickering candle – a sign of Jesus' presence.

### What are the signs of Reconciliation?

We tell the priest our sins when we \_\_\_\_\_

We hear the words when the priest gives us \_\_\_\_\_

We see the priest make the Sign of the \_\_\_\_\_

4

Then help them understand the outward signs of the sacrament of reconciliation. The three words you need here are: confess, absolution, and cross.

1

Ask your child to **read this passage aloud** (Luke 19:1-10). The name Zacchaeus may be difficult for your child. It is pronounced: zah-kay-us. Help your child say it aloud.

2

Ask your child to re-tell the story in his or her own words. This is an excellent way to teach children the meaning of the stories in the Bible.

3

Explain the key ideas of this story to your child:

- Even though Zacchaeus was a sinner, Jesus wanted to be his friend and Zacchaeus wanted to be Jesus' friend.
- Zacchaeus showed he was sorry for his sins by showing that he was trying to be better.
- God had already forgiven Zacchaeus and knew his heart.
- Jesus went to a party – a celebration – at Zacchaeus' house!



## Meeting Jesus in the Bible

As we prepare for First Reconciliation, we want to know Jesus better and love him more.

Jesus calls us to follow him on "the way of faith."  
How does Jesus call you?

From Luke 19:1-10 (NRSV)

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way.



When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

← A sycamore tree is a very large tree. Climbing up into such a tree would allow a person to see quite far!

1

We are in the final stages of preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is important for you and your child to see the **“way of faith”** to which Jesus calls us. In this Bible story, Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus cheerfully after meeting him.

2

Talk through each situation in this activity, sharing how you respond. You are the example of a Christian who your child will always look to.

3

As you finish this lesson, be sure to ask your child if there are any questions remaining about this Sacrament. If you can't answer them all, ask the catechist for help. Remember, your child will learn about this Sacrament mainly by watching you.



### What is the Way of Faith?

Jesus calls us to himself. He calls us in whatever situation we live. He calls us to come down from our sycamore trees and follow him. He gives us the courage and strength to seek him out and learn from him the way of faith.

The following questions reflect the teaching of Jesus. **Write your response to each question:**

When were you called on to forgive someone who hurt or betrayed you even though it was very difficult?

When did you give away your own money or something you owned to help others?

When did you reach out and offer friendship to someone who was being rejected by others?

When do you spend time talking with Jesus or just being in his presence?

When did you go “the extra mile” to help someone such as your parents, a neighbor or another person in need?



### From Papa Francis

Pope Francis encourages us to party: “A Christian is one who is invited. Invited to what? To a shop? To take a walk? The Lord wants to tell us something more: You are invited to join in the feast, to the joy of being saved, to the joy of being redeemed, to the joy of sharing life with Christ. This is a joy! You are called to a party! A feast is a gathering of people who talk, laugh, celebrate, are happy together. I have never seen anyone party on their own. That would be boring, no? ...You have to party with others, with the family, with friends, with those who’ve been invited, as I was invited. Being Christian means belonging, belonging to this body, to the people that have been invited to the feast: this is Christian belonging.”

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

1

This is the final review of the steps for the sacrament of reconciliation.

Help your child put these steps into **the correct order**. We have given two clues: step #2 and #4. Here is the correct order:

1. The welcome
2. Bible reading
3. Confess sins
4. Advice from the priest
5. Act of Contrition & Penance
6. Absolution
7. Go in peace



## Sacrament of Reconciliation

Number the steps of the sacrament in the correct order.




We go in peace




The priest welcomes us to the Reconciliation room



2

There is a reading from the Bible




We accept a penance and make an Act of Contrition




The priest gives us absolution for our sins




We confess our sins to the priest



4

The priest gives us advice and asks us to do a penance

2

The best way to prepare your child in these final days before the sacrament is to **role play the steps** with them. You play the role of the priest and ask your child to do the rest.

1

**At home this week**, work with your child to help them think about how to make your home more welcoming for Jesus. Of course, Jesus does visit your house all the time!



### At Home This Week

#### Invite Jesus to Your House



If you were to invite Jesus to visit your house, (or your room) what things would you do to get ready for him?

Would you change anything?



Can you and/or your family do those things now?



Tips and Activities for This Week  
<http://GrowingUpCatholic.com/reconciliation6>

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2

Even though this is the last session, be sure to check out the online page for this lesson at [GrowingUpCatholic.com/reconciliation6](http://GrowingUpCatholic.com/reconciliation6). Take a look at the other resources on the website, in case you want to come back to them later.