



What is the Church?

Parent Leaflet: Unit 3

We are People who Celebrate Forgiveness



Main Themes

The children, with their catechists, are thinking about reconciliation with God and with one another.

They are being asked to think about:

- ♦ Jesus asking us to love God and each other
- ♦ The fact that we don't always do the right thing but that we can start again
- ♦ The way we celebrate reconciliation at Mass - through the Penitential Rite and the Sign of Peace
- ♦ The way we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation

They are preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. This will be in a special service involving the parish community, in preparation for the Feast of Christmas.

From Your Child's Worksheet

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation...

...we celebrate forgiveness

Sometimes we celebrate God's love and forgiveness in a special way through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Advent and Lent are very good times for this, as we prepare for the Feasts of Christmas and Easter.

We can celebrate this sacrament together with family, friends and other members of the parish community.

The hymns, prayers and readings for our special service will remind us of God's love and forgiveness.

We reflect together on how we have loved God and one another and we express our sorrow for the times we have not got this right.

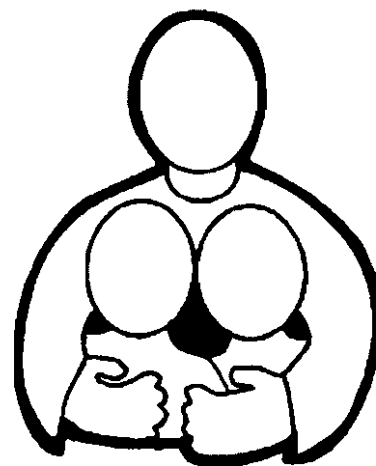


We tell the priest the things we have done wrong. There is no need to make a big list, or to worry if we forget to mention something. We are simply showing that we want God's forgiveness.

The priest gives us absolution. He tells us that God forgives our sins and that we are reconciled with God and one another.

We end our service with a prayer or hymn giving thanks to God for the love and forgiveness we have received.

*"The Lord has freed you from your sins,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord."*



What You Can Do To Help Your Child

We often hurt one another by our behaviour. Just as God loves and forgives us, ensure your home is a place of love and forgiveness.

Make use of quiet times at the end of the day (meal times or bed times) to share thoughts about each other's day. Did you hurt anyone? How could you do better?

Come to Mass each Sunday so that your child can experience the Penitential Rite when we celebrate God's readiness to forgive us.

Help your child to see that the Sign of Peace is when we acknowledge reconciliation with God and with each other and encourage your child to use this gesture when they have fallen out with you, or other members of the family, or their friends.

On occasions in the Church's year such as Advent or Lent, or at a particularly difficult time, encourage your child to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Help your child to complete their worksheet - especially the last page, where you can help them to prepare to celebrate this sacrament for the first time and to record the date and place of the celebration afterwards.

Please keep your child's worksheet safe, so that they can bring it back to the next meeting with their catechist.

Penitential Rite & Sign of Peace

“We encourage every Catholic to make the sign of peace at Mass an authentic sign of our reconciliation with God and with one another. This sign of peace is also a visible commitment to work for peace as a Christian community. We approach the table of the Lord only after having dedicated ourselves as a Christian community to peace and reconciliation.”

(Cardinal Bernardin, *Guide to the Assembly*, pages 19 - 20)