

## A Parent's Guide to Discerning Readiness of their Child Regarding First Penance

### Readiness to Begin Preparation for First Penance

- Has the child been baptized and reached the age of reason (about seven years)?
- Does the child know the difference between right and wrong?
- Can the child distinguish between mistakes or accidents and deliberate wrongdoing?
- Can the child express sorrow for sin?
- Can the child forgive others?
- Does the child pray at home and at Mass?
- Does the child relate to Jesus as one who forgives?

From the CDR *Instruction for Sacraments - First Penance*, page 12.



### Readiness to Celebrate First Penance

“A full and perfect knowledge of Christian doctrine is not necessary” for children to receive their First Penance. Rather, children need to:

- Know the difference between right and wrong.
- Know that accidents or mistakes are not sin.
- Understand sin as deliberately choosing to do wrong, in violation of God's commandments.
- Recognize their need for forgiveness from other people and from God.
- Know that God loves them unconditionally.
- Know the person of Jesus and his message of forgiveness.
- Understand the sacrament as a means of receiving forgiveness.
- Know how to receive the sacrament, that is, how to participate in the “Rite of Reconciliation of Individual Penitents” and the “Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution.”
- Understand the difference between simply telling God that one is sorry and receiving the sacrament of Penance.

From the CDR *Instruction for Sacraments - First Penance*, page 23