

# Saint Joseph Parish



## Sacrament of Reconciliation Preparation Handbook



Saint Joseph Parish

**First Reconciliation**  
**2020**

<b>Wednesday September 16, 2020</b>	<b>ZOOM - Sacrament of Reconciliation Meeting Parent/Student 6:15-7:45 p.m.</b>
<b>October 2-4, 2020</b>	<b>Eucharistic Devotions Forty Hours Schedule 1 Holy Hour</b>
<b>Saturday November 7, 2020</b>	<b>First Reconciliation Retreat Group 1 Parent and Student Saint Joseph Church 9:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Saturday November 14, 2020</b>	<b>First Reconciliation Retreat Group 2 Parent and Student Saint Joseph Church 9:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Wednesday December 2, 2020</b>	<b>First Reconciliation 7 p.m. Church</b>

## The Sacrament of Reconciliation or “Penance”

*“Those who approach the Sacrament of Penance obtain pardon for God’s mercy for the offenses committed against Him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion.” (LUMEN GENTIUM 11)*

Reconciliation is one of the two Sacraments of healing, the other being Anointing of the Sick. In Reconciliation, we are healed from the separation caused by our sins, through God’s love and mercy.

Some people view the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a negative light, yet this sacrament should be a positive and healthy component of our spiritual life. It is a gift from God that we should all take advantage of on a regular basis.

## Sin Hurts Our Relationships with God and Others

One reason for the negative view of the Sacrament has to do with the Subject matter - SIN. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines sin as “an offense against God, a rupture of communion with Him. At the same time, it damages communion with the Church (those around us).” CCC #1440

The definition of “sin” that we will be using with your children is as follows:

**“Sin is any THOUGHT, WORD, or ACT that we FREELY choose to commit even though we know it is wrong.”**

Sin is a sign of us failing to love and to trust God. It is our failure to grow in faith or to respond to the Love of Christ.”

There are less serious and more serious sins. We call less serious sins venial sins and more serious sins mortal sins. As the Catechism states:

*“One commits venial sin when, in a less serious matter, he does not observe the standard prescribed by the moral law, or when he disobeys the moral law in a grave matter, but without full knowledge or without complete consent....However venial sin does not break the covenant with God. With God’s grace it is humanly reparable...To choose deliberately—that is, both knowing it and willing it—something gravely contrary to the divine law and to the ultimate end of man is to commit a mortal sin. This destroys in us the charity without which eternal beatitude is impossible.” CCC 1862, 1863, 1874*

In other words, venial sins are of a less serious matter, but still hurt our relationship with God and others. Mortal sins are more serious and require the Sacrament of Confession to be healed.

In order to commit a mortal sin, three conditions must be met:

1. The person must be committing a gravely evil act or thought (i.e. violation of the Ten Commandments, precepts of the Church, or sins against moral teaching of the Church).
2. The person must have knowledge that the act or thought is gravely evil. It requires *full knowledge* and *complete consent*.
3. The person must fully intend to commit the act or the thought.



## **Different Names for the Sacrament Reconciliation**

### **The Catechism of the Catholic Church - 1423-1424**

***“It is called the sacrament of conversion because it makes sacramentally present Jesus’ call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin.”***

Conversion describes our response to Jesus’ call to repent and change our lives. We chose to turn away from evil and turn towards good. There must be a willingness to change.

***“It is called the sacrament of Penance, since it consecrates the Christian sinner’s personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction.”***

To recover our full spiritual health, we must do something to make amends for the sin. This should not be viewed as a punishment for our sin, but a way to help us change our life and help us avoid that sinful behavior. It gives us the opportunity to work on difficult areas in our lives, and help us make the commitment to making good choices.

***“It is called the sacrament of confession, since the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. In a profound sense it is also a “confession”—acknowledgment and praise—of the holiness of God and of his mercy toward sinful man.”***

Verbal apologies are a necessary step with other people. We actually have to say to the other person that we have offend “I’m sorry, and I don’t want to hurt you again.” The same is true with God. Confessing (admitting) our sins and then saying an Act of Contrition is our verbal apology to God.

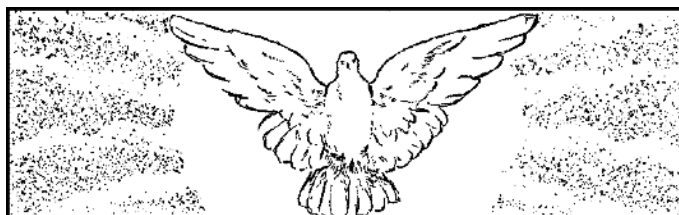
***“It is called the sacrament of forgiveness, since by the priest’s sacramental absolution God grants the penitent ‘pardon and peace.’”***

We first experience God’s mercy through Jesus, his life, death and resurrection. This was God’s plan for us, for our salvation. God wanted to save us from sin, heal us. Jesus healed and forgave sins, he taught us that sins can be forgiven. Jesus saved us from our sins and offered us a second chance.

***“It is called the sacrament of Reconciliation, because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles: “Be reconciled to God.” He who lives by God’s merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord’s call: “Go; first be reconciled to your brother.”***

The word Reconciliation means “coming back together again.” Reconciliation describes how the sacrament reunites us with God and the Church, strengthens us, and brings us peace.

Sins are personal, but not private. They hurt us and they hurt our relationship with God. Our decisions, actions and the consequences of them also affect everyone, from the person sitting next to us the person across the globe. This Sacrament brings us back together and heals the divisions that separate us.



## **Is My Child Ready?**

Look for these signs to see if your child is ready to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation:

- 1) Your Child recognizes the differences between accidental and deliberate wrongs.
- 2) Your Child understands the need to say, "I'm sorry" when they hurt another person and try to make up with those they have hurt.
- 3) Your child will forgive others when they hurt them.



4) They have the desire to try to not do the same thing again. "I'm sorry" is not just a magic formula that gets them out of trouble. Their apology must have an attempt to change behavior with it.

5) They understand that God is always willing to forgive those who are truly sorry, but asks them to forgive others in return. We must forgive as our Father forgives us.

6) They see that the priest and the church have a special role in bringing us God's forgiveness.

## **What Children need to prepare for the Sacrament**

- 1) Children need to develop healthy relationships. They need to have an authentic understanding of who they are and how they ought to relate to others. This is done by being affirmed and built up by people around them. A healthy sense of confidence and security is crucial before one can acquire an understanding of right and wrong and the consequences of any actions.
- 2) Children need to understand that sin is saying "No" to God. In sinning, we are cutting ourselves off from the life and happiness He gives us as a gift. It is not just breaking a rule, but damaging our relationship with God. They also must understand the balance, so as not to concentrate only or excessively on sin.
- 3) Children need to experience forgiveness to develop a healthy understanding of God. They need to know God is not a policeman, but a loving Father. They experience this most directly through your own example of love, care, and forgiveness. How you forgive is how they will view God's forgiveness.
- 4) Children need to learn how to form and judge their conscience. They need to develop the ability to reflect on their actions, and an awareness of what is right and wrong. We help them develop their conscience by the way we live our lives in relation to right and wrong, and by teaching them how to make right choices.



## **Practical Ways Parents can Help at Home**

- 1) Celebrate Mass with your child every Sunday
- 2) Pray with your child every day, especially the Act of Contrition.
- 3) Review with your child what they are learning in and help them complete their textbook.

- 4) Give them an example of forgiveness in your own actions, toward them and others. They will take in more from your example than from your words. Look for and encourage opportunities to use the phrases, "I love you," "I am sorry," and "I forgive you" with each other.
- 5) When you watch TV together use commercial time to talk about the actions portrayed on TV that either affirm or conflict with your own beliefs about God's love and mercy or the need for forgiveness and reconciliation.
- 6) Use occasions when your child makes a poor choice to reinforce for them that your love and God's love doesn't change for them. Help your child understand they are still a good person and to accept the consequences of their actions.
- 7) Share with them the examples we're given in the Bible of God's love and mercy: From Luke's Gospel 15:1-7, 19:1-10, 7:36-50, 15:11-32, or John 4:4-42. Reinforce and repeat often for them the fact that nothing is too bad for God to forgive.
- 8) Reconciliation is a Sacrament of Healing. Help to make it an experience of joy and peace by never using it as a threat or punishment. Use opportunities that are part of everyday family life to talk with young children about the difference between mistakes and sin.
- 9) Take your with you child when you celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Attend a parish reconciliation service as a family, especially during Advent or Lent.
- 10) Speak to them about the love and mercy of God, and help make real to them the truth that there is nothing too bad for God to forgive.



# Saint Joseph Sacramental Preparation Policies

## Parish Life and Preparation

*"Sacraments have an unmistakable importance in the worship and teaching of the Catholic community. Sacramental preparation programs cannot be content with the mere teaching about the sacrament, its history, meaning, and manner of celebration; the goal of sacramental preparation must be to invite and lead Christians into a faith-filled celebration of these important mysteries. Thus, the goal of sacramental preparation is to make "the sacraments strengthen faith and express it...The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents....[The parish] is the place where all the faithful can be gathered for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life; it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ's saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love." (CCC 1133, 2226, 2179)*



As baptized Catholics, we share in the mission of the Church throughout in the world. Therefore, the involvement of the parish community in the initiation process is essential. The preparation for and the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and Reconciliation begins at home, within the family, the "domestic church" or the "church in miniature." Students are also provided with information and formation to help them prepare for these sacraments through the Saint Joseph Parish School of Religion (PSR) program or Saint Joseph Parish School (SJPS). However, the required religious curriculum for each grade level is not specific to individual preparation for the sacraments.

Sacraments are community events, and this is reflected in the preparation and celebration of the sacrament at Saint Joseph Parish. Sacramental preparation is a parish faith formation activity. PSR, SJPS, formation at home, and the parish work together to support each other to prepare our youth for sacraments.

Families in the Saint Joseph Parish Sacramental Preparation for First Reconciliation will be given material for each sacrament to be completed at home. There will be Virtual Catechetical Gatherings for parents session held periodically. These sessions will aid parents in their own understanding and experience of the Sacraments and help them fully prepare their children for their reception. The children in PSR and the SJPS will to come together as a parish community a retreat day for both Sacraments.

## **The Goals of the Program for First Reconciliation**

To help each child:

- 1) Grow in awareness of the never-ending Mercy, Love and Forgiveness of our God.
- 2) Have an initial understanding of sin, grace, and forgiveness
- 3) Be aware that through Christ, all sins are forgiven
- 4) Understand the importance of making good choices, and learning about the consequences of the choices we make.
- 5) Understand the Ten Commandments, in relation to the new Commandment of Christ, to "Love one another as I have loved you."
- 6) Recognize the tools they have to love God and Neighbor in every day life.
- 7) Recognize the need for, and meaning of reconciliation in their own life.
- 8) Understand the basics of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- 9) Know the procedure for celebrating the Sacrament.
- 10) Experience the Sacrament as a reverent, joy-filled, and peaceful experience.

## **Sessions**

There will be Virtual Catechetical Gathering for parents session held periodically. These sessions will aid parents in their own understanding and experience of the Sacraments and help them fully prepare their children for their reception. At least one parent must attend these sessions. **PLEASE SEE PAGE 2 FOR DATES AND CALENDAR.**

## **Textbook**

We are using the ***"Together in Jesus"*** by Plfaum Publishing, which helps Each student folder includes six four-page take-home lessons with hands-on activities. Lessons focus on biblical stories about Christian living – including the Good Samaritan, the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and the Prodigal Son – to help children appreciate that God loves them and is always ready to forgive them. Families will also receive the ***"My Family Activity and Memory Book"*** which extends the lessons of the *Together in Jesus* programs even further.

## **COMPLETED Folders and Family Activity Books are due at Reconciliation Retreat**

## **The First Reconciliation Retreat**

All students and at least one parent is required to be in attendance, as there is no "make-up" retreat day. Emergencies (medical/family) can be discussed with the PCL or the Pastor. Due to Covid-19, there will be 2 retreat dates this year.

First Reconciliation is in the Church.

**PLEASE SEE PAGE 2 FOR DATES AND CALENDAR.**



## **First Reconciliation**

1. Before coming, take some time to examine your conscience.
2. Make the Sign of the Cross
3. Say "Bless me Father for I have sinned, this is my First Reconciliation."
4. We confess our sins. "I have sinned by:"

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*(You can list sins here if you want, but please remember, do not put your name on this)*

6. The priest gives you a penance to perform. Penance is an act of kindness or prayers to pray, or both.

7. Recite the Act of Contrition:

O 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 do penance, 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.

8. 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."

9. The priest dismisses us by saying, "Go in peace." Say "Thank you" to Father. We go forth to perform the act of penance he has given us, healed from all sin!

