

1 God Chooses Me

Parents & guardians, start here.
Read these numbered instructions to yourself throughout the process.

1

In this session you and your child will remember his/her Baptism. Baptism is how we begin our initiation into the Church.

2

You will need:

- a Bible
- a slip of paper and pen or pencil for each person
- a candle and match/lighter
- a small basket or bowl

3

God's love. Make sure your child understands that God has always loved him or her. Always. Even if they do something wrong God will never stop loving them.

Growing Up Catholic begins at Baptism

God already loved you
before you were baptized!

But... at baptism you became
a special friend of Jesus.

What else happened
at baptism?



Who is the Church? Explain to your child that the Church is all those who have been baptized, including your child and yourself. The people in the Church are all trying to follow the teachings of Jesus, and they get help in doing this from the Holy Spirit and the sacraments.

1

The special help we all get is called “grace” which is God’s own life within us.

2

3

What we believe. At baptism, our godparents (along with the whole parish) professed the faith that we are now learning about. It’s the same as the Creed we all say at Mass on Sundays. In the prayers to be memorized on the web site, you will find the Apostles’ Creed. This would be a good time to help your child memorize that.



From Pope Francis

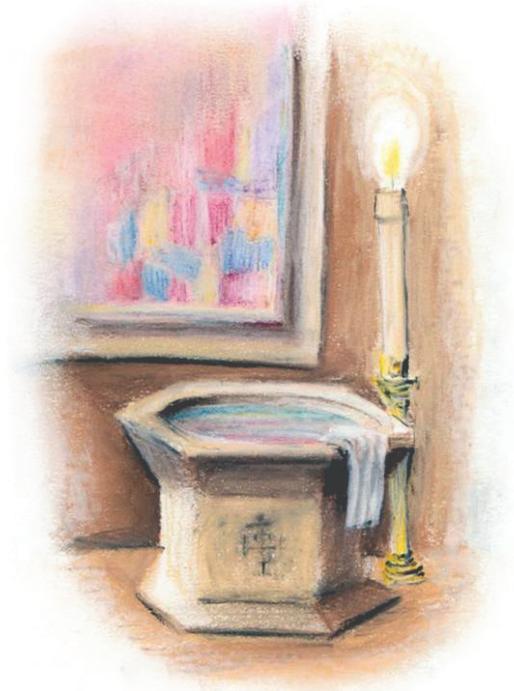
Pope Francis spoke passionately about baptism: “It is not a mere formality! A baptised child is not the same as a child who is not baptised; a baptised person is not the same as one who has not received baptism. It is an act that touches the depth of our existence. We are immersed in that inexhaustible fount of life that is the death of Jesus, the greatest act of love of all history; and thanks to this love we are able to live a new life, no longer at the mercy of evil, sin and death, but rather in communion with God and with our brothers and sisters.”





What Happens at Baptism?

- You became part of the Church, God's family.
- You received special grace from God to overcome temptations.
- You went under the water, and came out a **Christian** and **friend of Jesus**.
- The **Holy Spirit** came to you in a special way.
- You professed your **faith** along with everyone else (if you were just a baby, your parents and Godparents professed it for you).
- You began the process of **growing up Catholic**.



God Chose YOU!





Prayer Celebration

1

Pray this with your child, helping him or her follow along. If a leader is guiding the process, follow their lead. Otherwise, speak the leader parts below.

If you have a candle available, light it now. Have the slips of paper and basket/bowl available.

Growing Up Catholic begins at Baptism

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: We thank you, Jesus, for giving us this water, which has been blessed by you and the Church.

All: **With water, we were all baptized.**

Leader: We thank you, Jesus, because you forgive our sins and help us live as your people.

All: **In baptism, we were made your children.**

Leader: Now we thank you, Jesus, because we in this room are all members of your Church. With these people, we will prepare for the wonderful Sacrament of Reconciliation.

You have called us by name to this important time of our lives.

All: *Please listen to the reading: Matthew 4:18-20.*

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

2

Child of God. Explain what it means to be a “child of God.” It means that God chooses us and loves us as much as our parents do! God really loves us and will never stop loving us. God knows all our names and calls us by name to be his children!

3

When we’re wrong. Explain that we go to Confession because sometimes we fail to love God or our parents or each other as much as we should. Confession helps us admit that to someone else, reminds us we are forgiven, and helps us get back on track.

4

Have the children **write their names and their parents’ or guardians’ names** on a slip of paper and then read them aloud. Place them in the prayer basket/bowl afterwards.

5

At this point, open your Bible and **read these verses out loud.**



6

Use the talking points below to reflect on the reading with your child, pausing to let your child respond to questions and sharing your own answers.

- Just like Jesus called Peter and Andrew to be his friends and follow him with their lives, now he is calling us to learn about forgiveness and how to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This sacrament is also called “confession” or “penance.” The important thing is that we know that to follow Jesus means we are willing to learn how to love Jesus more.
- At baptism, we were given grace. Grace helps us love God and love our parents and friends, and all the people of the world. But sometimes we do things that aren’t very loving. Still, God wants us to be near him and calls us back through this sacrament.
- **He is calling you by your own name, each of you here. God has already forgiven you, but we all need to celebrate that in the Church – which is why we have this sacrament.**

Leader: Let us pray together

Please pause after each line:

All: **Jesus, we accept your invitation
to grow closer to you in love
and to learn about the
sacrament of reconciliation.**

Please bless us and be with us.

We love you and want to love you more.

Amen.



Your Baptism Day

Your child's baptism. Help your child complete the first part of this page. Tell them about their baptism – when, where, who were the godparents, and any other details.

1

At baptism, you became a special friend of Jesus

When were you baptized?

What is your full name?



What happened at your baptism?

The priest or deacon began the baptism.

The first thing he did was to trace the Sign of the Cross on your forehead.
He said, "I claim you for Christ...by this sign..."

Words! Write the words we say in the Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father

And of the Son

And of the Holy Spirit. Amen.





Meeting Jesus in the Bible

As we prepare for First Reconciliation, we want to get to know Jesus better. We want to pay attention to how he lived, the things he said, and how he acted with others so we can decide if we want to live like he did.

Jesus calls us all to himself and he teaches us how to be his followers

From Mark 10:13–16 (NRSV)

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Now turn to the passage from Luke 6:27-36. This time, you read the passage to your child. Read slowly and allow the words to really sink in.

Invite your child to think about an experience in his or her own life when he or she followed the teaching of Jesus, even if it was difficult.

We will work together to understand this better with the activity on the following page.

2

Have your child read the first passage aloud.

3

Tell your child that you believe in Jesus, too. Explain that Jesus gives us the strength we need to be forgiving, to be loving, to be generous.

Use some examples from your family life of times when you did something for which you depended on strength from Jesus.

From Luke 6:27–36 (NRSV)

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

4



1

Work through this page with your child, using the following notes.

2

Love your enemies. An “enemy” might not be someone against whom we have declared personal war. It could also include people whom we hold at arm’s length, people we don’t like, or people whom we judge to be less than us.

3

The word “hate” here can also be understood to include anyone who is mean to us, who shuns us, or who judges us harshly.

4

Turn the other cheek. The old saying for this verse was “turn the other cheek” which means don’t hit back, or be the big one. By this we mean that in order to avoid violence and fighting, sometimes we have to “die to ourselves” and be “bigger” than those who hurt us.

5

Poverty. Begging is not just a personal appeal for money. People may beg from us simply by living in poverty or homelessness near us.

We should be on the watch for people who may need what we have and could use it well, and once we give it, we should not ask for it back. It should be a total gift.





What Does Jesus Teach?

For each of Jesus' teachings, write two practical things you can do to make it part of your life:

Love your enemies.

1

2

Do good to those who hate you.

1

2

If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also.

1

2

Give to everyone who begs from you. If anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.

1

2

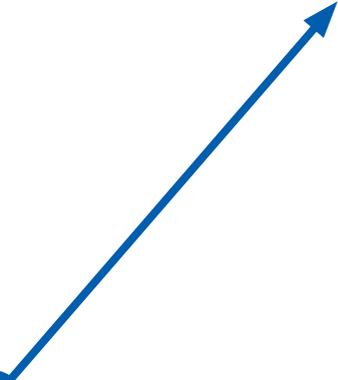


Let your child follow the instructions here and write their letter to Jesus privately. Give them some space to do this.

While they do so, think about how you would answer these same questions, and answer them by offering a silent prayer to God. This is what we are helping your child learn here: how to pray.

You can then look through the rest of these materials a little more and/or take a break.

1





Write a Letter to Jesus

Now write Jesus a letter. You can tell him anything at all – he can handle everyone's honesty. What are you feeling or thinking today?

Is there anything you want to ask him for?

You don't have to share this letter with anyone else, not even your parents if you don't want to.

Dear Jesus,



Love,



1 Explain that the names “Reconciliation,” “Confession,” and “Penance” refer to the same sacrament.

2 If possible, take your child to see the parish reconciliation room.

3 Tell them that they will be in the reconciliation room with the priest. **Assure them** that you will be there that day with them, just outside the room.

Explain that when they go to confession, they do not have to tell you what sins they are telling the priest but they can if they want to. The priest will never tell anyone else what they say.

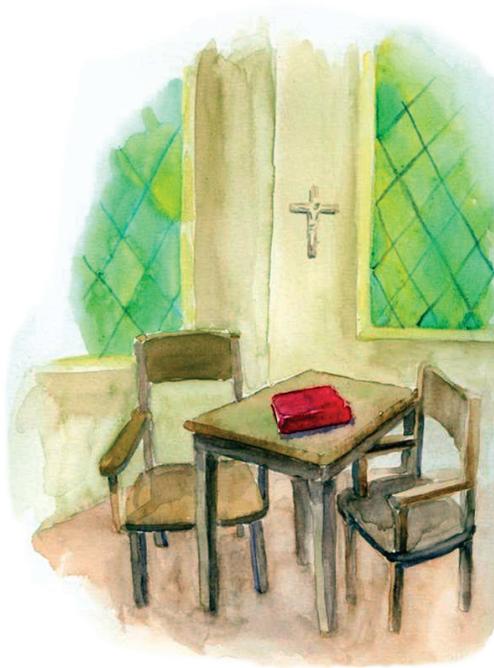
4 Use these notes to explain what the priest will say to them and how to begin.

5 It helps a great deal to **share with your child what it's like** for you when you go to confession. If you have not been to the Sacrament of Reconciliation lately, this is a great time for you to return and make a confession. Usually the parish offers this at a certain time every week. You can also call the parish office to make an appointment.





Sacrament of Reconciliation



The Reconciliation Room

Where do we go to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

- It's a small room
- The priest is there waiting for you.
- It has chairs and a Bible
- You sit down or kneel and begin

The Priest Welcomes You

What is the first thing the priest will do when you enter the room?

- He invites you in and welcomes you, saying: "May God bless you and help you to make a good confession today." Or he may be less formal.
- Then you make the Sign of the Cross together.



Closing prayer

Dear Jesus,
we know you are with us here.
You are present in this room.
We love you
and want to love you more.
Help us be more loving this week.
Thank you for giving us faith.
Increase our faith every day.

Now let us pray together:

**Glory Be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end, Amen.
In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**





At Home This Week

Work on this together at home as a way of continuing the process of preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Prayers - Make sure your child knows the four prayers below by heart this week. Help him or her practice them and pray them together at bedtime each night.

Every Catholic child should know certain prayers by heart. Of course, you as parent or guardian should know them, too.

Help your child learn these prayers by heart this week. When helping your child **memorize a prayer**, take it one line at a time. Practice with your child until he or she knows it.

Help him or her practice these and pray them together at bedtime each night. Another good time to practice might be on the way to Mass or to these sessions.

- **Sign of the Cross**
- **Our Father**
- **Hail Mary**
- **Glory Be**

Find the text for these prayers and tips for helping your child memorize them at GrowingUpCatholic.com/r1 (see next page).

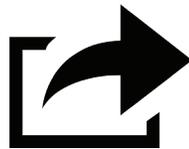




The *Growing Up Catholic* website offers great resources, including videos, extra tips for you as a parent, and more. Be sure to check them out!

This week has a great video for parents to help you understand Reconciliation a little better.

1



Tips and Activities for This Week

Use your computer, phone, or tablet to view this week's page:

GrowingUpCatholic.com/r1

Each week, find suggested activities, videos, ideas, parenting tips, and more!

