

## God's Forgiving Love

We must take responsibility for all our actions, loving and unloving. Sometimes it is hard to admit that we have done wrong. We might be afraid of being punished or embarrassed; we might be afraid of disappointing someone. But in Reconciliation we say we are sorry for our sins and take responsibility for our actions. We must truly be sorry for our poor choices and want to make things right again.

How did the Sacrament of Reconciliation begin? On the evening of the first Easter Sunday, Jesus appeared to the apostles. He said to them "Peace be with you." The apostles were so happy to see Jesus! Jesus told them "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them." In that way, Jesus gave us the gift of reconciliation. We meet Him through the priest, who acts in His place. Jesus blesses us and forgives us through the priest. In this way, we can become friends with Jesus again as our sins are forgiven.

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we tell God that we are truly sorry for our sins and promise not to sin again. This is called contrition – being sorry for our sins because we believe in God and love Him and honestly promise not to sin again. Confession is when we tell our sins to a priest. He will always keep them secret. The priest listens to us and then gives us ways to show God we are sorry – this is called penance. Penance may be a prayer or a kind act. After we talk with the priest, he "takes away" our sins – God forgives our sins through the words of the priest and we receive absolution. In this way we come to experience the loving forgiveness of God and the gift of peace.

When we go to Confession, after we tell the priest our sins and tell God we are sorry, Father talks to us about things we can do to atone for our sins. Atone means to make things right again. Father will tell us what to do and help us learn not to commit these sins again. This is called our penance.

Doing our penance shows that we are truly sorry and will try not to sin again. Below is a list of sins followed by a list of possible penances. Can you match the sin to the penance? Put the correct letter in the box following each sin.



| Sin   |                          | Penance   |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| I was giggling with my brother at Mass and didn't pay attention.      | <input type="checkbox"/> | A. Write an "I'm sorry" note to your mother.  |
| I used the name of Jesus in anger.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | B. Tell your friend you are sorry you hurt his feelings.  |
| I fought with my best friend.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | C. Say, "I'm sorry," to your sister and promise to ask her before you touch her things. Do something special for her. |
| I took my sister's new music box without asking.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | D. Learn this prayer and say it often: "Lord Jesus, I love your holy name."   |
| I disobeyed my mother.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | E. Listen carefully to the readings at Mass. Later, tell your parents what the readings were about.                   |
| I told my friend his new jacket was dumb because I was jealous of it. | <input type="checkbox"/> | F. Tell your friend you are sorry for fighting. The next time you are together, play your friend's favorite game.     |

Prayer:

*Jesus, I want to be your friend. Be with me to help me love God my Father and other people. Help me welcome you into my heart. Amen.*