



First Reconciliation

Dear Reverend Fathers, Reverend Sisters and the Faithful of the Diocese of Calgary,

The sacraments are visible signs of God's presence, God's activity in our lives, in the Church and in our world. But it goes beyond that! Sacraments not only show us what God is like and what God desires for us. Sacraments also make that happen!

Preparing children for the Sacrament of Reconciliation allows us to show them that God is love and that in mercy He is always ready to forgive, no matter what the wrong. It assures them that God already knows the secrets of our hearts, but sometimes we need to name these aloud in order to prepare our hearts to renew the experience of God's love and forgiveness. It shows them that just as God is One, God dreams that we might all be one as well—one with each other and one with God. God's will is that all people will be reconciled with one another and with God. What an extraordinary gift!

This parish-based sacramental preparation program supports families, catechists, Catholic schools and whole parish communities in preparing young people to appreciate the depth of God's love and to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In this program, children will explore several important aspects of responsibility, relationships, freedom, conscience, sin, forgiveness, and the truth, goodness and beauty which God wants to share with us.



+ Children will learn that we all live in the community of God's people and that we have a responsibility to know, love and serve God and one another through care, respect, prayer and service.

+ Children will begin to explore ideas of human goodness and human brokenness (sin), care for others or selfishness, living closely with God's dream for all people or disregarding God's plan. These are the first steps in the formation of conscience.

+ Children will learn that a priest, acting in the person of Jesus through the Church, forgives our sins committed after Baptism that restores our good relationships with God, other people and ourselves.

+ Children will experience the gracious presence of God in a community which helps us to live together responsibly, to make atonement for past sins and to avoid temptations in the future.

+ Children will learn the formal process of participating in confession (preparing, confessing, doing penance and living as Easter people).

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, each child together with the whole faith community meets the Risen Christ who reveals the Father's mercy and renews our life in the Spirit, by inviting us to recall our Baptism and leading us to complete communion with Christ and the Church in the Eucharist.

His Excellency Most Reverend William T. McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary

