

P R E S E N T E R ' S G U I D E

A Child's First Penance: Joyful Reconciliation

Program note: This video is not a substitute for a full preparation program of Catholic teaching. It presumes that the child has begun and will continue to receive instruction. Although this video can be used with any preparation program, it's best used with *First Penance: Preparing Children for the Rite of Reconciliation* (see Recommended Resource).

HOW TO USE THIS DVD

- Use it to prime interest and enthusiasm in parents and students at the introductory session of your preparation program.
- It can be given to families for home viewing.
- It can be viewed in one sitting or in several.

SUMMARY

This DVD is divided into three parts. Parts 1 and 2 help children prepare for first penance by discussing sin in the context of a relationship with God and neighbor and then showing them a reconciliation chapel. Part 3 is for adults. It discusses sin, the personal and social dimensions of sin, and preparing for confession after a long absence from the sacrament.

Parts 1 and 2 will help each child

- grow in awareness of the never-ending love of our kind, merciful, forgiving Lord;
- understand the basics of the sacrament of penance;
- recognize the need for confession and the meaning of penance in his or her life; and
- experience reconciliation as a reverent, joyful, peace-filled celebration.

In addition, this DVD demonstrates and helps develop the following signs of readiness for first penance:

- *A personal relationship with God:* The child is aware of a loving God who calls him or her to a life of faith.

- *A sense of sin:* The child knows right from wrong and can communicate his or her sense of wrongdoing as well as sorrow for wrongdoing.
- *The recognition of penance as a sacrament:* The child, in a child's way, sees penance as the special way Catholics meet the forgiving Jesus through the mediation of a priest.
- *The desire to receive this sacrament:* Awareness of sin normally gives rise to a sense of need for forgiveness and help from God. Any child who is unwilling to celebrate penance is not ready for it and should not be forced into it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When does God love me?

God loves me all the time.

2. How do I show God that I love him?

I pray. I take part in Mass.

3. How do I show God that I love myself?

I care for myself. I learn. I play and work.

4. How do I show God that I love others?

I pray for others. I help others.

5. How do children sin?

Children sin by being selfish on purpose.

6. How does God want me to forgive others?

God wants me to forgive others as God forgives me.

7. How and when does God forgive my sins?

God always forgives me when I'm sorry for my sins.
At prayer, Mass, and the sacrament of penance, I
ask God to forgive me.

8. What is the sacrament of penance?

Penance is the way Jesus shows he forgives me.

9. How do I celebrate penance with the priest?

I pray. I confess my sins. I tell God I'm sorry. And
the priest and I share the forgiveness of Jesus.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

First Penance: Preparing Children for the Rite of Reconciliation. Eight colorful nested lesson handouts cover topics such as God Loves Me, Love One Another, God's Rules, Jesus Forgives a Sinner, Coming Home Again, Families Work Together, and A Brand New Beginning. Each lesson includes games, activities, and a section for parents.

For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit liguori.org.