



**WELCOMING
CHILDREN
in WORSHIP**

**THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA**



Reconciliation

Adaptive Activities for Children



**National Catholic
Partnership on Disability**

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Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your ministry that serves the liturgical formation of children for their participation in the Eucharist, the “source and summit of the Christian life.” This resource is provided by the Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD). It aims to offer an adaptive catechetical opportunity for all who have a heart for disability ministry to reflect on the liturgical year. We welcome you to this virtual community and hope you find this resource beneficial.

Here you will find reflections to guide children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or diverse learners, through the current liturgical season with adaptive catechesis to help them to participate fully. Each offering includes prayer, Scripture, activities and more that incorporate the senses and take into consideration the needs of all learners. We invite you to gather children around the table of the home or the table of the classroom as preparation for their participation at the sacred table of the Eucharist.

Each monthly edition incorporates the following:

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Sacred Scripture**
- 3. Reflection**
- 4. Faith in Action**
- 5. Activities**
- 6. Saint**
- 7. Resources/Bibliography**

A Prayer for Reconciliation

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Leader:

Sometimes we make choices in our lives that hurt our relationship with God and with each other. During these times, God has given us the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that we can receive his forgiveness. It is important to seek forgiveness when we make a bad choice. At Mass, we ask God for his forgiveness at the very beginning of the Liturgy of the Word. We say:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: Now let us listen to the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians as he speaks about reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:20 –21

So, we speak to people on behalf of Christ. It is like this: When we speak, God himself is speaking to you. On behalf of Christ, we say to you, 'Please come back to God, and be reconciled as his friends!' Christ never did any wrong thing but was punished as if he had. He died as punishment for our sins. As a result, we become right with God when we belong to Christ. We become right, because he is right.

(Adapted from the EasyEnglish Bible. *EasyEnglish Bible. MissionAssist: United Kingdom. 2018.*)



Servus Tuus, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Leader:

Loving God, thank you for sending us your son, Jesus, to die for our sins so that we could be reconciled to you. We ask you for your help when we choose to sin, so that we can be reconciled and make better choices in the future. Thank you for giving us the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a way to seek your forgiveness and to help us follow the example of Jesus in our lives. We ask this in the name of Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song Suggestion:

Kyrie Eleison (By Chris Tomlin)

<https://youtu.be/n50HIBUJN34?si=n38NtZBB26yN6xug>



Image from Vecteezy

Reading of Sacred Scripture:

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Tax collectors and sinners were all crowding around to listen to Jesus. So, the Pharisees and teachers of the Law of Moses started grumbling, “This man is friendly with sinners. He even eats with them.”

Then Jesus told this story:

“Once a man had two sons. The younger son said to his father, ‘give me my share of the property.’ So the father divided his property between his two sons.

“Not long after that, the younger son packed up everything he owned and left for a foreign country, where he wasted all his money in wild living. He had spent everything when a bad famine spread throughout that land. Soon he had nothing to eat.

“He went to work for a man in that country, and the man sent him out to take care of his pigs. He would have been glad to eat when the pigs were eating, but no one gave him a thing.

“Finally, he came to his senses and said, ‘My father’s workers have plenty to eat, and here I am, starving to death! I will leave and go to my father and say to him, “Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son. Treat me like one of your workers.”’



The Prodigal Son in Misery. Lithographer: Unknown; After: D. W. Kellogg & Co. (active Hartford, Conn., 1830–40); After: Amos Doolittle (American, 1754–1832). Culture: American. Date: mid 19th century. Object number: 1946.9.597.

"The younger son got up and started back to his father. But when he was a long way off, his father saw him and felt sorry for him. He ran to his son and hugged and kissed him.

"The son said, 'Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son.'

"But his father said to his servants, 'Hurry and bring the best clothes and put them on him. Give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. Get the best calf and prepare it, so we can eat and celebrate. This son of mine was dead but has now come back to life. He was lost and has now been found.' And they began to celebrate.

"The older son had been out in the field. But when he came near the house, he heard the music and dancing. So he called one of the servants over and asked, "What's going on here?"

"The servant answered, 'Your brother has come home safe and sound, and your father ordered us to kill the best calf.' The older brother got so mad that he would not even go into the house.

"His father came out and begged him to go in. But he said to his father, 'For years I have worked for you like a slave and have always obeyed you. But you have never even given me a little goat, so that I could have dinner for my friends. This other son of yours wasted your money on bad women. And now that he has come home, you ordered the best calf to be killed for a feast.'

"His father replied, 'My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we should be glad and celebrate! Your brother was dead, but he is now alive. He was lost and has now been found.'"

Lectionary for Masses with Children. Catholic Book Publishing Co. New York. 1993



Gospel Reflection

In this Gospel from St. Luke, Jesus tells us a story about a father and two sons. The younger son asked for his share of what his father owned. He left home to live in a new land. But this son did not make good choices and soon found himself without money to buy food to survive. He found work but was treated badly and he was very unhappy. He realized that his father's workers were well cared for and decided to go home, hoping to become a worker on his father's land. This son knew he had wasted the gifts his father had given him. He realized that he needed to ask both God and his father to forgive him for his bad choices. When his father saw his son, he was very happy. He planned a celebration to welcome him home as a son, not a worker.

But this made the son's older brother very angry. He had made good choices. He stayed home and worked on the land and followed his father's rules. But his father begs him to be glad. His brother was lost to them and is now home.

Which brother are you? Do you make good choices all the time, or do you turn away from what is right? Do you say, "I am sorry," when you make bad choices?

Jesus is telling us that, just like the father in the story, God loves us no matter what. Even when we make bad choices, God wants us to come home. He is always ready

to forgive us. And just like the father who rejoiced when his son came home, God celebrates when we are sorry and ask to come back to him. God loves us and his mercy is always there for us. We just have to ask him.



Image from Vecteezy

Faith in Action

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a beautiful sacrament of healing in our Catholic faith tradition. It is the sacrament where we celebrate God's love and forgiveness. Where we confess our wrong choices to a priest and receive guidance in the form of a prayer or right action to show that we are sorry for what we have done. It also gives us an opportunity to reflect on the choices we have made, and to do what is right. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is an opportunity to do what is pleasing to God to reconcile with him and with others.

Practicing reconciliation in day-to-day family life is a great way to prepare for the reception of the sacrament. Even in a family where love abounds, we are challenged by sin and do not always make the right choices. While these experiences can be painful, they also provide

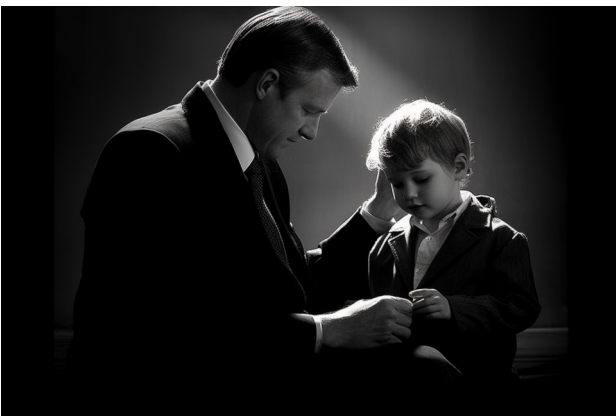


Image from Vecteezy

opportunities to heal through the process of reconciliation. It is in the family where we first learn of the love of God. It is in the family where we also learn about forgiveness. Whether your children are currently preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation or have a few years before celebrating this sacrament for the first time, talking about it and modeling it for them is very important.

Our children learn the most from us when we set the example. This is true when we pray and celebrate Mass and the sacraments together as a family. It is also true when we can say we are sorry when we hurt one another. Reconciliation begins when we identify ways that we have disobeyed God and when we have hurt someone else. As a family take the time to talk about making right and wrong choices and how they may affect someone else.

Perspective taking can be hard for children, especially children who have challenges with social communication skills. Talk to your children and help them understand that our actions

have consequences. Even when we do not intend to do harm to someone else, we can hurt others' feelings. Help your children understand this and how they can reconcile with others even when they are hurting. Help your children learn how to express their feelings as well. This may be hard for some children so you want to give them many options for expressing how they feel through drawing, writing, or saying the words. You can model this for your children as well. It is important to acknowledge these feelings as normal and support your child in sharing them.

Reconciliation can be a hard concept for most children to understand. Sharing your experiences of when you made wrong choices as well as good choices helps them understand that we all struggle with sin, and it is through God's gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation that we are healed and can find true joy. Tell about times when you have made a mistake and hurt someone or turned away from God. Talk with your child about how you think the other person felt because of the choices you made and talk about what the consequences are when you hurt someone and do not say you are sorry for what you did.



Talk about your experience with Reconciliation with your child. How do you prepare for it, what happens when you go to church to confess your bad choices to a priest? How does the priest react and what are you inspired to say after you confess your sins? How do you feel after confession? If possible, take your children with you, with a trusted adult to sit with them when you go into the confessional. Share with them how wonderful it feels to get right with God, how relieved and how grateful you are that you belong to a God who loves you no matter what.

It is never too early to share the Act of Contrition with your child. Teach them these beautiful words, talk about the meaning, and pray it together as a family. Have your children respond to the prayer talking about each line and sharing ways that they may have turned away from God and made bad choices. Be supportive and share your experiences as well. Encourage your child to respond to the whole Act of Contrition by drawing what they are hearing, creating a song or dance, and perhaps performing a skit which ends in the loving embrace of Jesus from the cross. Conclude this time of sharing and reconciliation with hugs for each other reminding us of the love that God has for us no matter what. Pray the Glory Be prayer to remind yourselves that reconciliation is a gift from God, and he alone deserves praise and glory.

Another way to help your child become more aware of the power of reconciliation is to read developmentally appropriate literature that speaks to the importance of thinking of others and when we make mistakes how we can go about being reconciled with others and with God. Use these resources to talk about this challenging topic. Below are two suggested resources available on Amazon:

When We Are Kind by Monique Gray-Smith

A Child's Guide to Reconciliation by Elizabeth Ficocelli



Image from Vecteezy

Activities with Children

In the article, “The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation: Forgiveness in Four Easy Steps,” Rev. Msgr. Richard B. Hilgartner describes the steps as:

1. Admitting one's sin.
2. Expressing sorrow for sin.
3. Doing penance.
4. Absolution from sin.




Steps 3 and 4 involve actions between the individual and the priest. Penance is a personal suggestion determined by the priest for the individual. Absolution is offered by the priest on Christ's behalf. Therefore, this month's activity will focus on how family members can help a loved one prepare for the first two steps of Reconciliation.



Image from Pexels.com

Step 1 - Admitting One's Sin

An individual may need help in determining times when he or she has sinned. Rev. Msgr. Hilgartner describes sin as making a “choice to do wrong or avoid the good.” Family members can discuss with their loved one times when he or she may have done something wrong or avoided doing something good. For some individuals, a visual prompt may be needed to help him or her remember their sins or organize their thoughts. A visual prompt may include written information and/or pictures. Family members would help the individual create the visual prompt that will be used during the sacrament. Following is an example of a visual prompt:

I did not listen to my mom.	
I hit my brother.	
I got angry at my teacher.	

Images from www.clipart-library.com

Step 2 - Expressing Sorrow for Sin

The *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities* state:

As long as the individual is capable of having a sense of contrition for having committed sin, even if he or she cannot describe the sin precisely in words, the person may receive sacramental absolution.

If an individual is not able to say the Act of Contrition or verbalize that he or she is sorry for their sins, consider using gestures, a communication device, sign language, pictures, writing, or digital materials. Perhaps your loved one can sign “sorry” to express sorrow for their sin by making a circular motion on their chest with a closed fist.



Images from www.clipart-library.com

Family members are encouraged to practice with their loved one so that he or she can become as independent as possible with the method of communication chosen for use during the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is also essential for family members to work with their parish priest - before the sacrament is performed - so that the priest becomes familiar with the method of communication that will be used.

Saint for September

Blessed Herman of Reichenau

Feast Day September 24, 2024

The Saints inspire us to devote our lives to God, overcome adversity, and to let our lights shine for the glory of God. This month we celebrate the life and legacy of Blessed Hermann of Reichenau, a holy man whose love of God and learning is an inspiration to all. Hermann of Reichenau is also known as Hermann the Cripple. While he was a holy man who experienced multiple disabilities in his life, he did not allow his disabilities to define who he was. Hermann was a child of God, created in God's image and likeness and he exceeded anyone's expectations in his many contributions to the world of faith, science, mathematics, history, and music.

Born on July 18, 1013, Hermann experienced many disabilities from early childhood including a cleft palate, spina bifida, and cerebral palsy. Hermann had difficulty walking and his communication was impacted by his disability. Overwhelmed by his disabilities, Hermann's parents felt that they could not take care of him and brought him to be taken care of in a Benedictine monastery in Southern Germany. This was where Hermann fell in love with

theology and decided to join the Benedictine order as a monk. It was here that Hermann flourished. His love of God and learning led him to become literate in several languages. He became interested in mathematics, science, and history. He also developed a love of music



Anthony van Dyck, Public domain, via Wikimedia

and became an accomplished composer and builder of musical instruments. It wasn't till Hermann became blind in later years that he began to write hymns for the Church. Among his many compositions, he has been credited with writing the beautiful hymn Salve Regina (Hail Holy Queen).

Hermann was known for his brilliance as well as his commitment to faith. After the death of the Abbot Berno, Hermann was made the abbot at the very Benedictine Monastery that took him in as a child. Hermann's commitment to God and his determination to use the many gifts that God gave him for his glory is a wonderful inspiration to all of us. As Angelo Stagnaro, writes in the National Catholic Register, "Blessed Herman the Cripple stands as a shining light, reminding us that God purposely chose what the world considers weak in order to shame the powerful" (National Catholic Register, September 24, 2016).

The refrain of the hymn Salve Regina states "Triumph, all ye cherubim; Sing with us, ye seraphim! Heaven and earth resound the hymn: Salve, Salve, Salve, Regina!" Hermann's extraordinary life, gifts, and his faith and service to God are inspirations to us all, especially to those of us who believe that all things are possible for those who believe in our good and

gracious God.

Some activities to do with your family to celebrate Blessed Hermann of Reichenau's feast day:

1. Talk with your family about times in your life when you have had obstacles big and small to overcome. Discuss what role your faith had in overcoming it and how it makes you feel to know that with God all things are possible. Talk about Blessed Hermann and how his faith and his courage helped him overcome the obstacles that he faced. Celebrate the faith and love of God that we share with Blessed Hermann.



Th. Fink Veringen, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

2. Listen to the hymn “Salve Regina” a couple of times. Close your eyes and let the music carry you away to another place and time. Imagine what it was like for Blessed Hermann to compose it. Talk about how this music makes you feel and how it aides in your faith and worship.
3. Reflect on the words and the melody of the song. Sing along with it, joining your voices with the angels as you sing, “Salve, salve, salve Regina!” Reflecting on the words, draw a picture for each verse of the song.
4. Watch the video on the link below. Learn how to sign the beautiful hymn, “Salve Regina.”

Christ Music Kids & Faith and Flavor:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ag56XTnZ768>

5. Hail Holy Queen Coloring pages

Click on the link below to access the wonderful Hail Holy Queen Prayer and Coloring Pages. Print out a copy for each member of the family. Pray the Prayer together, color together, and thank the Blessed Mary, Ever Virgin for her influence in the life of Blessed Hermann and in your lives.

https://www.thecatholickid.com/hail-holy-queen-prayer-coloring-page-cnt-mls/#google_vignette



Image from Vecteezy.com

September Resources

Act of Contrition in ASL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJ32gU_tJNk

Adaptive Reconciliation Kit (English and Spanish): <https://store.loyolapress.com/parishes/childrens-faith-formation/adaptive-learning>

Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities - Revised Edition:

English: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/divine-worship/policies/guidelines-sacraments-persons-with-disabilities>

Spanish: <https://www.usccb.org/es/committees/divine-worship/policies/orientaciones-sacramentos-personas-con-discapacidades>

“Her reverence was evident - A child with Down syndrome participating in the sacraments”: <https://ncpd.org/Reffett>

“Reconciliation Flip Book” (English & Spanish): <https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/special-needs/adaptive-learning-kits/reconciliation-about/reconciliation-flip-book/>

Sacrament Preparation Books - “Gifts for All” Reconciliation Resource Binder (English and Spanish): https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/ipi/inclusive_catechesis_resources/books.php

Sacrament of Reconciliation - a program in American Sign Language to prepare students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (video, lesson plans, work sheets): https://ncpd.org/files/resources-toolkits/PR_NCOD_reconciliation_0.pdf

Spanish Reconciliation Resources: <https://ncpd.org/es/catequesis/preparaci%C3%B3n-sacramental>



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“The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation: Forgiveness in Four Easy Steps”, by Rev. Msgr. Richard B. Hilgartner, 2014: <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/sacramental-forgiveness/teaching-aid-hilgartner>