

Session 2

Friendship. Invite your child to tell you what it's like to be someone's friend. What do friends do with and for each other?

Explain to your child what it means that **Jesus gave his life for us**. He lived a long time ago, and he was sent by God to teach us how to live and to tell us that God loves us. Some of the people rejected his teachings and they crucified him on the Cross.

1

Child Page 1

2 I Grow Closer to Jesus

Growing up Catholic means living as a friend of Jesus

Jesus loves you very much, more than you can imagine.

Think of the person who you feel loves you the most...

Jesus' love is like that, only even more!

He calls you to be his friend.



Who are the friends of Jesus?

- Jesus was friends with many, many kinds of people: his apostles (of course), rich people and poor people, Jewish people (remember, Jesus was Jewish) and people who weren't Jewish.
- He was also friends with others who didn't often have many friends and were the outcasts of his day: prostitutes, tax collectors, and sinners.
- You also have been chosen by Jesus as a friend.
- In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, you learn to know Jesus better as a loyal person who wants to be your friend even though you are not perfect.

God Chose YOU!



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Child 1



From Papa Francis

When Pope Francis visited Rio de Janeiro he spoke about friendship with Christ: "Today Christ asks each of us again: Do you want to be my disciple? Do you want to be my friend? Do you want to be a witness to my Gospel?" Later, he added, "Put on Christ! in your life, and you will find a friend in whom you can always trust; 'put on Christ' and you will see the wings of hope spreading and letting you journey with joy towards the future; 'put on Christ' and your life will be full of his love; it will be a fruitful life."

3

Explain that in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we say we are sorry for our sins, and we thank Jesus for his sacrifice for us.



Pray this with your child, helping him or her follow along as the leader guides you.

1

Emphasize the difference between intentionally and unintentionally hurting another person.

2

Explain that we go to Confession because sometimes we fail to love God or other humans as much as we should. Confession helps us stay on track.

3

Child Page 2



Prayer Celebration

Growing up Catholic makes you a friend of Jesus

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: Jesus, we thank you for loving us.

All: **Please help us to love others in the same way.**

Leader: Jesus, please come to live in our hearts with us.

All: **We welcome you as our guest.**

Leader: Jesus, help us listen to your words from the Bible.

Please listen to the reading: John 15:12-17.

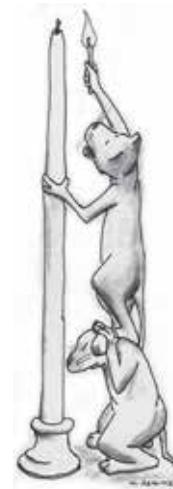
All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Please listen to the leader.

Leader: Let us pray together.

Please pause after each line:

All: **Jesus, thank you for choosing us as your friends,
and for giving your life for us.
Thank you for giving us the love
which we have for each other.
Help us learn how to be better friends
by following your teachings
And teach us how to celebrate
this Sacrament of Reconciliation.
Amen.**



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For this lesson, it is necessary for you to have a **Bible** in your hands.

1

This exercise lists teachings which come from the Ten Commandments, "**God's Rules of Love**." Help your child identify and circle them.

2

The Holy Spirit. Explain to your child that the Holy Spirit is with us every day, helping us know what God wants us to do. Tell them about your own experience of the Holy Spirit – perhaps a time when you felt inspired, or when you had an insight that came from God. Tell them that the Holy Spirit is God's Spirit – it's the Spirit of Love!

3

Child Page 3



The Bible and the Holy Spirit

What is the Bible?

- The Bible is a holy book.
- It tells the story of how God loved all of our ancestors before Jesus (the Old Testament).
- It tells us stories about Jesus and the followers who came after him (the New Testament).
- It is full of stories of people like us trying to figure out how to best live with compassion and love for ourselves and others.



Rules of Love

God gave us Rules of Love (The Ten Commandments) to help us know what to do to be good, to choose love, and to avoid sin. The Church helps us understand these Rules of Love.

From the list below, circle the ones that are in the Bible and cross out the ones that aren't:

Obey your parents

Don't steal

Keep Sunday holy

The rules for playing soccer

Never tell a lie

How to fix a car

X

What clothes to wear to school

X

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is a helper sent by Jesus to help you stay close to him. Sometimes it is called the "Advocate" because it advocates on your behalf, trying to help you do the right thing.

It is like your conscience helping you know what is right and avoid what is wrong. When you do something that is wrong, it is the Holy Spirit that nudges you to feel sorry for your action and try to make it right.

It is the **Spirit of God within you!**



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Child 3

Special Note

This would be a wonderful time to buy your child a Bible as a gift. There are several good junior Bibles available that use language that is easy for children to understand. See GrowingUpCatholic.com for suggestions. Invite them to put their name in the Bible, to make it their own. Tell them it's OK to underline favorite passages, or to write notes in the margin of their Bible. Another option is for you as a family to own a Bible which everyone uses together.



Ask your child to read this first passage aloud.

1

Ask your child to tell you what he or she thinks Jesus is teaching us in this story. Ask your child to answer the question posed by Jesus: "Which of the two did the will of the father?" [Answer: the one who did his father's will in the end.]

2

Child Page 4

Meeting Jesus in the Bible

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

Jesus asks us to live according to his teachings, even if we stumble in the process

From Matthew 21:28-32 (NRSV)

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went.

"The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?"

They said, "The first."

Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."

From Matthew 5:43-48 (NRSV)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Child 4

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Explain that **sometimes it is hard to make good choices**. We get stubborn or feel lazy. Help your child see that he or she can make bad choices even when you as parents, their teachers, or the pastor of the parish, tells them what is right and wrong.

3

Refer to the Bible story again and tell your child that what matters is that, in the end, the son changed his mind and heart and did what his father asked him to. We can make up for our bad choices by making a firm promise to do good in the future.

4

Now turn to the second passage and read it slowly to your child. On the next page, help your child understand what Jesus is teaching us and how it applies to our everyday lives.



 **The Choices We Face**

Life brings us all kinds of choices. Some flow from love. Others flow from hatred and selfishness. We must learn to distinguish between them. Then, even once we know what is the loving choice, that doesn't mean it's easy to do it. This is when we need grace – and the Holy Spirit – to help us do things that are sometimes harder than the wrong action. The Sacrament of Reconciliation (penance) helps us stay close to this grace, especially when we fail.

The Situation	The Choice - How would you respond?
"Everyone" in school dislikes one of your classmates and is mean to him all the time.	
A friend hurt you last month, and now you have heard some gossip about her that is tempting to spread around.	
You know your parents keep extra money in a box in their bedroom and you need money to buy something they wouldn't approve of.	
You lied about something and it has been bothering you ever since.	
Your parents ask you to help around the house, but you have a TV show you want to watch instead.	
You know Christ is calling you to faith, but the kids in school think faith is stupid.	

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8

Ask your child to think about the choices they face each day in school or the family. Ask him or her to think about good and bad choices he or she has made.

Use this form to help your child think about what a good response to each situation may be. This is important as we prepare for the sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance.

We should befriend those who are lonely or shunned by others. In the end, we will gain a friend and a bigger heart.

We should just "bite our tongue" and not share gossip. In the end, we will feel better about ourselves and grow as persons.

We should never "help ourselves" to anything that belongs to another. If we do steal, we will feel guilty and always have that hanging over our heads.

If we have lied, we should go to the person and tell the truth. It will clear our conscience and help us be at peace.

Dying to ourselves is how we become rich as people. Being selfish gains us only unhappiness, even if at first it seems to get us what we want.

We don't have to go around preaching at school, but we should quietly go about our lives as faithful followers of Jesus, which means following these and other teachings closely. And, if we fail, we should talk to the priest in Confession about it.





Making Good Choices

Growing up Catholic means learning to know when you commit a sin.

An accident: An action not done on purpose. Accidents are not sins.

A choice to sin: A bad action done on purpose, or choosing on purpose not to do something good. If you know it's wrong and you do it anyway, it's a sin.

Is each of these a choice or an accident?

Write an "A" in the box if the action was an accident.
Write an "S" on the line if it was a sin.

S Your mom asks you to clean your room but you hide out in your room playing video games instead.

OR

A Your mom asks you to clean your room but your ride comes to take you to soccer practice and you can't do it right now.

S You borrow your sister's favorite shirt without asking but spill something on it.

OR

A Your sister lets you borrow her favorite shirt, but you spill something on it.

S Your dad asks if you turned in your homework.
You haven't, so you lie and say you did.

OR

A Your dad asks if you turned in your homework.
You realize you forgot to, so you tell him that.



Child 6

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Help your child understand the **difference between accidents and sins**. It's not a sin to do something accidentally, even if a bad thing happens as a result.

1

Help your child understand:

- (1) **Sin is freely choosing to do wrong**
- (2) It hurts both them and the people around them.
- (3) Sin also weakens our friendship with God.

2



Explain to your child that it is necessary to **prepare** to celebrate Reconciliation. Invite them to write a prayer which asks God for help. They do not need to share what they wrote with you if they don't want to.

1

Child Page 7

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Also called "Confession" or "Penance"

You Get Ready to Make Your Confession

How do you prepare your heart for this moment?

- You spend time in quiet, thinking about ways that you have sinned.
- You ask God to help you be honest and humble (even though you may feel embarrassed about how you messed up).

The Reading From the Bible

- After the priest welcomes you, there is sometimes a reading from the Bible about God's mercy.

A Letter to Jesus

Think about something you've done wrong that is bothering you. Or it may be there is something you haven't done that you should do that is nagging at you. Write a letter to Jesus here, acknowledging that and asking for help to do it differently in the future.



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Child 7

While your child works on writing this letter, write your own on this page or on a separate sheet.

2

What have you done (or not done) that is bothering you and you may need help from Jesus to address differently in the future?



The material which you take home between the sessions (or continue to do at home if you are learning there in the first place) is very important. It helps your child see that religion is not merely something for the parish. **It's for everyday life!**

Talk with your child about the words they chose to list. Also **do this exercise yourself**. Which phrase or ideas came through to you? Share that with your child.

Take the time to **help your child learn more about the Bible this week**. Explain that the word "Scripture" and "Bible" mean the same thing. We read Scripture so often because it is God's Word. If you have a family Bible or if you gave your child a Bible, invite them to find these passages and underline them.

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2

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4

Child Page 8

At Home This Week

Work on this together at home as a way of continuing the process of preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Use the following chart to read passages from the Bible that will help you prepare to make a good Confession.

For the child to read	For the parent to read	Write one or two words that you noticed in this reading
Matthew 6:14 For if you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.	Matthew 6:15 But if you do not forgive them, neither will your Father forgive your sins.	
Luke 6:32 If you love only those who love you, how does that make you good?	Luke 6:35 Love your enemies... your reward will be great.	
James 2:14 What good is it if you say you have faith but you don't live that way?	James 2:17 It isn't enough to say you believe if you don't act that way.	
1 Peter 3:8 Have unity of spirit among you.	1 Peter 3:8 Love one another with a tender heart and a humble mind.	
1 John 2:10 Whoever loves another lives in the light of God.	1 John 2:11 Whoever hates another lives in darkness.	
1 John 3:18 Little children, let us love, not in word alone, but in truth and action!	1 John 3:23 This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of Jesus and love one another.	

Tips and Activities for This Week

Use your computer, phone, or tablet to view this week's page: GrowingUpCatholic.com/r2. Each week, find suggested activities, videos, ideas, parenting tips, and more!

Child 8

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Check out the online page for this lesson at GrowingUpCatholic.com/r2.

It includes tips and videos for learning about the Bible (and purchasing one for yourself).

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.**

