



St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church

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August 23, 2018

Congratulations on your child's upcoming preparation and celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. It is a time for focus on God's mercy, how we forgive among our family, friends, and community, and how we celebrate forgiveness.

This letter introduces you to our preparation process for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, for which we prepare in the fall. You will receive a second letter in January about preparation for the Sacrament of the Eucharist (children receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Eucharist).

Parents are the primary educators in the faith for preparing their children to receive the Sacraments: You, with your experience, your faith, and your commitment, are the best gift you bring to sacramental preparation. *No program or book can take the place of a parent's personal witness.* We support you in this with workbooks and group gatherings to nurture this preparation period. In addition to regular attendance in our foundational faith formation programs or enrollment in a Catholic school, this period includes:

- The expectation that families **attend Sunday Mass** together regularly; our celebration of the Eucharist is the “source and summit” of all that we do
- **Child workbooks and parent guides** that families work through and discuss at home (completing six lessons together).
- **Parent/Child Retreat #1**, the beginning of the preparation time for the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- **Parent Formation** opportunities to help you by exploring the sacraments at a personal and adult level. With a better understanding of your faith, you will be better equipped to help your child prepare for this sacrament.
- **Celebration of First Reconciliation (Confession)** in November is when we gather together for a time that includes parent/child activities and your child's First Reconciliation

Please review the included schedules for dates, times, and locations of events, as well as due dates for required paperwork.

Participation in all workshops and meetings are essential to this period of preparation. If you are not able to attend a workshop or a meeting, please contact Susan Bippley (616-392-6700, ext. 115 or sbippley@stfrancisholland.org) prior to the event.

Christian parenting is a holy vocation, a sacred responsibility of bringing your family to know and live the “good news” of Jesus Christ. We invite you each day to ask for the grace of the Holy Spirit so that you can be the heart and hands of Jesus for your family. We look forward to working with you during this time as your child prepares to experience more fully the saving grace that God has to offer us.

Blessings,

Susan Bippley

Coordinator of Children's Ministries

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<https://www.stfrancisholland.org/first-reconciliation>