

First Reconciliation Session Outline Parents & Children

Materials needed:

Attendance sheet

Facilitator materials: Blessing with Water Ritual for large groups. P. 48 RCL Director's manual

Name tags for children

Bible, Lectionary or Book of Gospels

Music (optional: instrumental or appropriate hymn)

Several large bowls of water placed around meeting space

Basket for Prayer Partner's sheep

Videos: Joe Kemp for parents & children

Angel's First Reconciliation Lesson for children

(Optional) Candles & family commitment

Craft: Each child will make 2 sheep, one for home and one for prayer partner.

Sheep shapes, cotton balls, googly eye, glue sticks, markers

Index cards for the children to write a note to their prayer partner

Example: My name is (first & last name). I am 8 years old. I have two dogs and a cat. I am preparing for my first reconciliation. Please pray for me.

[Labels will be placed on back of the prayer partner's sheep (Avery 8163 2" x 4") with content of index card]

Part I

Sign in sheets for all in attendance

- Welcome & Overview of the session
- Blessing with Water (opening ritual for large group's p.48 Director's manual instead of the one on p. 19 of the Family Guide)
- Baptism & Reconciliation connection

Children and parents separated:

Parent Session:

- Children's readiness
- Essential Elements of the Sacrament
- Celebrating the Sacrament
- Distribute folders and explain home materials

Parents & Child Session:

- 20 min. DVD
- Conclude with prayer service (adapted from the RCL Catechist's Guide p.38)

Opening Prayer Service: Blessing with Water

Bible, Lectionary or Book of Gospels

Music for the Ritual

Large bowl(s) of water

Opening song: optional

Leader: Let us begin by praying the Sign of the Cross which reminds us of our baptism.

All: *Make the sign of the cross, saying,*

In the name of the Father,
And of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Leader: Loving God, our Creator,
You are with us as we gather in prayer.
Open our hearts to your word,
We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

Leader: Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us listen to the word of God as we sign our forehead, lips, and heart with the sign of the cross.

Reader: A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

All: *Reverently make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and over their heart and then say, Glory to you, Lord.*

Reader: *Proclaim Luke 15:1-7 #218 in the Children's Lectionary*
Conclude the reading saying: The gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Ritual: Signing with Water

Play instrumental music or hymn. Invite families to come forward to the bowls of water and the parents mark the child's forehead with the sign of the cross, address them by name and say,

Parent: **(Name), you belong to Christ. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, And of the Holy Spirit.**

Child: Amen

Closing Prayer: Loving God, Creator and Father, you call us by name; we belong to you.
We thank you for the gift of water that reminds us that you share your life with us.
Help us live as children of God. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Closing Prayer Service

All: *Bless themselves as they sign themselves and pray aloud,*
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Leader: We are followers of Jesus the Good Shepherd. At Baptism we were marked with the sign of the cross. This shows that we belong to Christ and share in Christ's suffering, death, resurrection and ascension. Your sheep are a reminder to us that God is our shepherd, who loves us. Boys & Girls, as your name is called please bring your sheep and place them in our basket. These will be displayed in church for another family to take home and be a prayer partner for you during your preparation for the sacrament of First Reconciliation. As each child's name is called please respond **"You belong to Jesus the Good Shepherd."**

Instrumental background music (optional)
Call each child forward and have them place their sheep in the basket).
Sing a song (optional)

Leader: May the blessing of God, our Shepherd, be with you.
as you prepare to share in the sacrament of Reconciliation Amen
May the Lord guide your hearts in the way of his love
and fill you with Christ-like patience. Amen
May the Lord open your minds and hearts
and help you choose to live as children of the light. Amen
We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord. Amen

First Reconciliation Preparation Outline – Session 2

1. Prayer Service modified from pp. 56-57 in Director's Manual (copy attached)
 - Gathering Prayer
 - Liturgy of the Word
 - Prayer of Sorrow
 - Conclude with sign of peace at the end of the Prayer of Sorrow

2. Sharing of the experience at home since first session. Family Together pages...

Watch a favorite TV show together. Discuss how the people are living the great commandment.

Watch news. Identify good Samaritans.

Did you include others in the family?

3. Parent Time 45-50 minutes

Theology & Components of the sacrament (Fr. Mike)

Parents join children in church

4. Children's Activity

Candle making activity (card stock, construction paper, markers, crayons, glue, labels with children's first and last name)

- a. Make Candles using card stock or construction paper.
- b. Children put their first name on the candlestick and color/decorate the candle
- c. Put a sticker on the back of the candle with the child's first and last name and Parish if not from your parish.
- d. Candles will be used in the closing prayer service
- e. After the closing prayer service candles could be laminated and a clasp put on the back of candle. These will be given back to the children at the celebration to use as name tags and take the "light" with them.

Other Activities: As time permits

Church tour of reconciliation room and review the sacrament with children.

Practice the Zacchaeus story letting the children act it out.

5. Parents & children in church

Walk through the celebration and what will happen.

Remind them to finish chapters 4, 5 & 6

Child & parent talk about one way to be light to the world (for sharing as child turns in candle nametag)

6. Closing Prayer Service (attached)

Reconciliation Session 2
Closing Prayer Service

Paschal Candle should be lit and be in a prominent place with a basket to collect the candle craft from the children. These will be kept until the celebration of Reconciliation and given back to the children as name tags for the celebration.

Leader: Let us begin by praying the Sign of the Cross to remind us of our Baptism.

All: *Bless themselves, saying,*
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: The Easter Candle is our reminder that Christ is the light of the world.
Jesus asked us to be lights in our world.

Ask the children to come forward one at a time with their candle. They name one thing that the Holy Spirit can help them do to be lights in the world. For example, "Be kind to others" "Listen to my parents" etc.

After each statement, have everyone respond:
Jesus, help us to be lights in the world.

Children place their candles in a basket by the Paschal Candle and return to their families.

Leader: Let us bow our heads and ask God's blessing.
May you always be kind and caring to one another.

All: Amen

Leader: May you always live as children of light.

All: Amen

Leader: May you go forth in the peace and love of the Lord.

All: Amen

Leader: And may the Lord bless us all
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Sing a closing song, such as "We Are the Light of the World", "This Little Light of Mine", etc.

Forgiveness Prayer for Families

Gathering

Play a recording of instrumental music or sing an appropriate hymn. Invite everyone to settle themselves and to become aware of God's presence.

Leader: Let us begin as we were baptized by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Let us pray.

Loving God, we turn to you in prayer. We come together because you invite us to take time out of our busy world to put ourselves in your presence. We ask your help and we need your forgiveness. Send us the Holy Spirit to help us look honestly at our lives and the way that we treat one another. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Liturgy of the Word: Zacchaeus, Luke 19, 1-10

Prayer of Sorrow

Leader: Let us bow our heads and tell God we are sorry for our sins.
For the times when we do not put God first in our lives and we do not go to Mass, we say,

All: We are sorry, Lord.

Leader: For the times when we do not say God's name with respect and we do not pray, we say,

All: We are sorry, Lord.

Leader: For the times when we are mean or cruel or say unkind things to one another, we say,

All: We are sorry, Lord.

Leader: For the times when we are dishonest, when we take things that don't belong to us, or when we do not tell the truth, we say,

All: We are sorry, Lord.

Leader: For the times when we refuse to forgive others and when we are troublemakers instead of peacemakers in our family, we pray,

All: We are sorry, Lord.

Leader: Lord of us all, you are our forgiving Father. Even when we run away from you and sin, you always welcome us back. As a sign of our return

All: to you, let us join hands and pray the prayer that Jesus taught us.
Our Father...

Leader: And now let us share a sign of Christ's peace with one another.

**First Holy Communion
Sacrament Preparation Parent/Child Meeting
Session I**

See closing prayer service for table decor

1. Sign-in sheets & Name tags
2. Welcome & Opening Prayer (attached - page 50 of Director's Manual)
3. Parents and children separated for the following catechesis and activities.
4. Closing Prayer
5. Have catalogs for First Communion gifts available for take-home

Parent Session:

1. Table discussion among parents:
 - What are your reasons for coming to Mass on Saturday/Sunday?
 - What are your reasons for not coming to Mass on Saturday/Sunday?
 - If you have attended/worshiped in other denominations, in what ways were the services similar to Catholic worship? Different from Catholic worship?
2. Large group sharing of responses
3. DVD *A Child's First Communion and More* (25 minutes)
4. Table discussion among parents:
 - What struck you or stood out for you as you watched the video?
 - What new insights did you gain?
5. Large group sharing of responses
6. Talk about the importance of parents modeling participation at Mass.
7. Distribute **Together in Jesus** folders

Children's session:

1. Using modeling dough, children fashion a chalice and paten [2 candles if time] to take home in shoe box they have brought to session.

2. Prayer Partner Chalices - Children decorate (color) the chalice with host for their prayer partners. **Children will place their chalice and host in a basket as they return to large group.**
(We will be adding a picture of the child on the front of the chalice. Their name and prayer partner instructions will already be on the back. Prayer Partners will be asked to return the chalice to the child with a card or note at the time of First Communion.)
3. DVD *A Child's First Communion and More* – segments as time allows

Closing Prayer – Table Prayer (see attached sheet)

The Prayer Table will be covered with a cloth. As each item (2 candles, flowers, Lectionary, paten, bread, chalice and wine) is introduced, a child will carry it forward to place on the table. We will need 6 helpers.

TABLE PRAYER

Opening Song: "Table of Plenty", verse 1

Leader - Opening Prayer: Lord God, thank you for calling us to your table every Sunday to grow as your people in unity with your Son, Jesus.

All: Amen.

Reading: Mark 14: 16, 22-25

Leader - Commentary: Let us set our prayer table with thanksgiving for the gift of the Eucharist, the meal at which Jesus gives us his very self.

Altar: The altar in church is a symbol of Christ. At the table of the lord we are nourished and strengthened in spirit by Jesus' body and blood. Tables are structures around which people gather to eat, converse and grow closer together in love. We gather around our prayer table and thank Jesus for giving us the Eucharist.

Altar cloth: The altar cloth is like the fine linens used for the table coverings at special celebrations. Tablecloths are used to decorate and protect tables at which people eat. The altar cloth on the altar at church protects the altar and gives it added honor and respect for its sacred use. Just as the altar is a symbol of Christ, a white garment. Like the white altar cloth, is a symbol of baptismal purity.

As the items are explained, students place them on the prayer table.

Candles: Candles remind us that Christ is the light of the world. At the Eucharistic table, we are nourished as children of God. We are called to spread Christ's light in the world.

Jesus said, "Let your light shine, so people may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5, 16).

Flowers: Tables are often decorated with flowers for a celebration. We place flowers and plants around the altar in church as signs of the new life that Jesus gives and the joy we celebrate because we belong to God's family.

Lectionary: Parents teach their children and share family stories and family history around the table at mealtime. The Bible is the sacred book that teaches God's people, tells their history, and shares family stories. This is the book of God's word that nourishes our minds and hearts.

Paten: The paten is like the plate at home on which food is placed. Someone who loves you fills that empty plate with food to nourish you, to give you energy, to make you strong and healthy. At the table of the Lord, the paten holds the host. Jesus gives us himself as food to nourish our spirits, to give us spiritual energy, to make our faith strong.

Bread: It is very common to find bread on the table where we share meals with family and friends. In the consecrated bread, Jesus is present to us. In receiving the Body of Christ we are nourished and transformed.

Chalice and wine: The chalice is like the cup on our table at home that holds a drink to quench our thirst and refresh us. The chalice at our Eucharistic table holds the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to his disciples to share. The Blood of Christ quenches our spiritual thirst for oneness with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Leader - Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ,
Bless us and bless the tables where we gather to share meals with family and friends.
Bless us, too, as we approach your holy altar in the celebration of the Eucharist. Thank you for the gift of your body and blood that nourishes our souls.

All: Amen.

Closing Song: "Table of Plenty", verse 2

First Holy Communion Sacrament Preparation Parent/Child Meeting Session II

Supplies: Prayer Table: purple cloth, Children's Lectionary, white candle; have the tables set before the beginning of the session with a pitcher of grape juice and small cups,

napkins, and baskets of bread (except for 2 tables whose bread will be baked during the children's activity). After making the bread the children will bring the baked bread to share with their parents.

Parents & Children together

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer – Sharing the Presence of Christ
2. Table sharing of memento of someone important to their family's life
3. Grandma's Bread – View & discuss (30 mins.)
Discussion questions for Grandma's Bread:
What was your favorite part of the video?

What did you like best about Mario? Nonna? Mario's parents?

Why was having Nonna's Easter bread at his First Eucharist celebration so important to Mario?

How did Nonna help to bring the family together?

What kinds of family traditions were included in the video? How do they compare with traditions celebrated by your own family?

Why do you think Jesus chose bread, such an ordinary food, to show his presence in the Eucharist?
4. Parents & children separated: Priest addresses Real Presence with parents; Catechists do bread-making activity with children. (30 mins.)
Children's session: Making Bread - Catechist's guide p. 76
5. Closing Prayer – The Last Supper (p.56 of Director's Manual)

***** Provide Easter Bread recipe sheets for taking home *****

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR EUCHARIST CHILDREN'S SESSION

You'll have about 30 minutes with the children. Someone will come to let you know when it's time to return to the cafeteria.

Bread activity:

- 1. Tell children that you'll be using a recipe to make bread that will be shared during the Closing Prayer. Maybe ask if they've ever helped make bread before.**
- 2. Ask if they know that the ingredients for making bread can be found in the Bible.**
- 3. Select the 7 children who will read the Scripture passages containing the ingredients; give them their passages.**
- 4. 2 possibilities here: have the 7 read the Scriptures, then make the bread, or, after each one reads their Scripture, use that ingredient and mix as you go.**
- 5. Place bread to be baked on the pan provided; Chris or I will come get it and take it to the kitchen for baking.**

[Additional activities: The recipe page contains another activity using each letter of the word EUCHARIST to name ways we give God thanks at Mass. The same page has a Sending Forth prayer that you can use to have each child express a gift they're thankful for. Feel free to use any other activity you may have.]