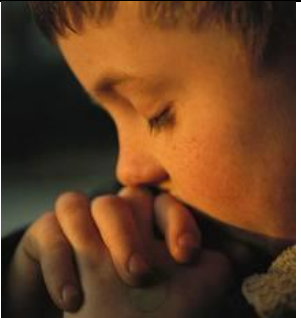








Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation

1.	<p>Examination of Conscience</p> <p>Before we meet with the priest, we examine our conscience. We spend time praying. We ask the Holy Spirit to help us know how we have failed to live as children of God and followers of Jesus.</p> <p>Examining our conscience helps us to name our sins and to tell God we are sorry.</p>	
2.	<p>The Priest and his Stole</p> <p>The priest usually wears a purple stole for the celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation. The colour purple is used as a sign of penance. The stole looks like a long scarf. It is worn by priests and bishops around their necks and over both shoulders. The priest will never tell anyone what we confess to him.</p>	
3.	<p>The Reconciliation Room</p> <p>We confess our sins individually to the priest. We can confess our sins to the priest either face-to-face or kneeling behind a screen.</p>	
4.	<p>The Crucifix</p> <p>When we go to confession, we see a crucifix in the reconciliation room. The crucifix reminds us that Jesus died on the cross to show his love for his Father and for us. The crucifix reminds us to be like Jesus by loving God and others.</p>	

THE INDIVIDUAL RITE OF RECONCILIATION

5.	<p>Greeting</p> <p>The priest greets us. Together, we pray the Sign of the Cross. The priest and penitent say:</p> <p>In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.</p> <p>Next, the priest reminds us how much God loves us. The priest may pray, using these or similar words:</p> <p>Priest: May God who has enlightened every heart, help you to know your sins and trust in his mercy. Penitent: Amen.</p>	
6.	<p>Reading from the Word of God</p> <p>The priest may read a story from the Bible to us or welcome us with words from the Bible. The Bible is the story of God's love and mercy.</p> <p>When we listen to the Bible, we are listening to God's own word to us. God is telling us that he always loves us. He is telling us what it means to be child of God.</p>	
<h3>CONFESSION OF SINS and ACCEPTANCE OF PENANCE</h3>		
7.	<p>Confession of Sins</p> <p>We tell our sins to the priest. The priest will never tell anyone the sins we confess to him. When we confess our sins, we show that we trust that God always loves us. We show we care about our friendship with God. We must confess mortal sins. We may also confess venial sins.</p>	
8.	<p>Acceptance of our Penance</p> <p>After we confess our sins, the priest talks to us. He names some of the ways we can live a holy life. He gives us a penance. A penance is something we do or say that shows we are sorry for and want to make up for our sins. Our penance helps us to repair or heal the harm we have</p>	

caused by our sins. We accept and promise to do the penance. We say or do our penance as soon as possible after celebrating the sacrament. When we are truly sorry for our sins, we want to make up, or be reconciled, with God and with the Church. We want to live as Jesus taught us.



PRAYER OF SORROW and ABSOLUTION

9.

Prayer of Sorrow

We pray a prayer of sorrow. Our prayer of sorrow is called an act of contrition. This shows we are truly sorry for our sins. We can pray this form of the act of contrition or we can pray one of the other prayers of sorrow the Church gives us.

Act of Contrition

**My God, I am sorry for my sins
with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong
and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you
whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance, to sin no more,
and to avoid
whatever leads me to sin.
Our Saviour Jesus Christ
suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God have mercy. Amen.**



10.

Absolution

Jesus gave the apostles the ministry, or work, to forgive sins. Bishops and priests share in that same work. God forgives us our sins through the words and actions of the priest in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

In the sacrament of Reconciliation the priest extends his hand over our head. This gesture is used as a sign that the Holy Spirit is at work.



<p>He also prays the PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION:</p> <p>Priest: God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give your pardon and peace,</p> <p><i>The priest makes the sign of the cross over our head as he says:</i></p> <p>and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>We may make the sign of the cross as the priest blesses us. Then we respond:</p> <p>Penitent: Amen.</p> <p>Our Amen shows that we believe that God has forgiven our sins. We are made one again, or reconciled, with God and with our church family.</p>	
<h2>PRaise OF GOD and DISMISSAL</h2>	
<p>11.</p> <p>Praise of God</p> <p>God forgives us as the father in the Bible story forgave his younger son. Together with the priest we praise God.</p> <p>Priest: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.</p> <p>Penitent: His mercy endures forever.</p>	
<p>12.</p> <p>Dismissal</p> <p>The priest sends us forth. He says these or similar words:</p> <p>Priest: Go in peace, and proclaim to the world the wonderful works of God who has brought you salvation.</p> <p>We are children of God. We want to tell everyone about God's love. We share God's gift of peace with our family, friends and neighbours.</p>	