**Steps for the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

**Goal:**

To learn that the sacraments are celebrations that involve “ritual,” certain words and actions that point to God’s work in our lives. The sacrament of reconciliation has five ritual steps.

**Church Teaching:**

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 1450-1458

**What You Will Learn:**

To review the five steps for reconciliation, to explain why the sacrament is a “gift” and not just a requirement, to define the meaning of *sacrament* and *ritual*

**Supplies for this Activity:**

Bible, Pencils, Act of Contrition Prayer Card, 2 copies of “A Handy Way to Remember” (may use additional white sheets of paper if there are more than 2 family members participating in the retreat), Animal Examination of Conscience

**Directions for Activity:**

* **Read Matthew 16:19.** Talk about the sacraments as visible signs of God’s love. When we do something over and over in a certain way, it can be called a ***ritual***. The sacrament of reconciliation is a ritual we celebrate in a certain way.
* **Review the five steps for the Rite of Reconciliation with your child** (see how much they can remember from the video, and prompt them with the points below as needed):
	+ Thank God for the gifts of love and forgiveness, and then examine your conscience.
	+ Pray the Act of Contrition, expressing sorrow for what you have done (this step is often completed in the confessional, but may be recited together during group penance services)
	+ Promise to try to do better in the future.
	+ Confess your sins to God in the presence of the Priest. (Say, “Forgive me father, for I have sinned. This is my first confession.” Or “It has been \_\_\_\_ days/months/years since my last confession.” When they go to confession in the future.)
	+ Do the penance the priest gives you and resolve not to sin again.
* **Complete the “A Handy Way to Remember” worksheet with your child.**
* What is an examination of conscience? This is the way we make quiet space in our hearts and ask God to be with us as we look at the ways we have made unloving choices in our lives. We must be humble and open to God in order to see those areas in our life that need forgiveness and improvement.
	+ **Pray the Examination of Conscience for Children together.** This is just one of many ways to examine our conscience. We encourage you to find a method that works best for your family.
	+ **Then, with your sins in mind, pray together aloud the Act of Contrition** found on the bookmark enclosed in this packet.
	+ **Encourage your child to get excited about the sacrament of reconciliation**, where the priest will absolve these sins and you all will be made clean before God.