



# My Confession Book

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## For Parents and Priests

*“God makes no distinction; He promised mercy to all and granted His priests the authority to forgive without any exception.”*  
— St. Ambrose

This adapted confession book was designed for children with special needs, particularly for children who are non-verbal or children whose speech is limited and still emerging.

In their document, “Guidelines for the Celebration of Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities,” the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has written the following regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation for individuals with special needs:

27. *In the Sacrament of Penance, the Catholic faithful obtain from the mercy of God pardon for their sins. At the same time, they are reconciled with the Church, which they have wounded by their sins and which works for their conversion by charity, example, and prayer.*

28. *Only those who have the use of reason are capable of committing mortal sin. Nevertheless, even young children and persons with intellectual disabilities often are conscious of committing acts that are sinful to some degree and may experience a sense of guilt and sorrow. As long as the individual is capable of having a sense of contrition for having committed sin, even if he or she cannot describe the sin precisely in words, the person may receive sacramental absolution. Those with profound intellectual disabilities, who cannot experience even minimal contrition, may be invited to participate in penitential services with the rest of the community to the extent of their ability.*

29. *In the case of individuals who are nonverbal or have minimal verbal communication ability, sorrow for sin is to be accepted even if this repentance is expressed through some gesture rather than verbally... Catholics with significant communication disorders may be permitted to make their confessions using the communication system with which they are most fluent. Individuals preparing for the sacrament are to be taught to be as independent as possible in the use of their communication system to allow for the norm of private reception of the sacrament.*

Thus it is clear that:

- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is important for all children, including those with special needs.
- Even young children with special needs may experience guilt, sorrow, and contrition. Even if they cannot express their repentance fully with words, they may still receive absolution.
- Individuals with no or limited verbal skills may express their repentance through gestures or other communication systems.

The aim of this booklet is to help children with special needs to complete the five steps to a receiving the sacrament of penance worthily, while promoting as much independence as possible. These steps are as follows:

First: Examine our Conscience - pp. 1 - 4

Second: Be sorry for our sins - p. 5

Third: Make up our mind not to sin again - p. 6

Fourth: Confess our sins to the priest - p. 7 - 9

Fifth: Be willing to do the penance the priest gives us - p. 10 - 16

At the same time, the pictures and art work have been carefully chosen to make the reception of the sacrament not just a procedure, but **sincere acts of the heart: of sorrow for one's sins, love for Our Lord, and gratitude for His mercy**. To that end, I encourage you to spend time with your child pondering the pictures of Our Lord in this booklet.

Two optional visual aids are included, to be used with the discernment of the parents and priest:

- Pages 17 - 19 - The priest can ask each question while the child looks at the picture, and then the child can point to "Yes" or "No".
- Page 21 - After confessing his/her sins, the child can give the priest the picture of the broken heart as a sign of repentance. Then, after the prayers of absolution, the priest can give the child the picture of the heart and cross. This may help the child process and understand that Christ has forgiven his/her sins. This is especially helpful for children with poor auditory processing who benefit from visual aids to support comprehension.

My sincere hope in creating and sharing this resource for free is that as many children as possible, regardless of ability, will be able to participate in the Sacrament of Confession with heartfelt contrition and experience the joy of being reconciled with Our Lord.

# Before confession



Jesus,  
Help me to remember  
my sins.



Did I refuse to do my school work or chores ?  
Was I disobedient ?



Did I fight with my siblings or friends ?



Did I complain about my food ?



Did I throw things, such as toys, food, or books ?



Did I refuse  
to share my toys ?



Did I get mad when  
I didn't get my way ?



Was I mean  
to other kids ?



Was I disrespectful  
or noisy in church ?



Did I tell any lies ?



Did I take something that did not belong to me without permission ?



Jesus,  
I know my sins hurt You.  
I am **sorry** for my sins.



Jesus,  
Help me to be better.  
Help me never to sin again.

## During confession



Go into the confessional and kneel or sit.



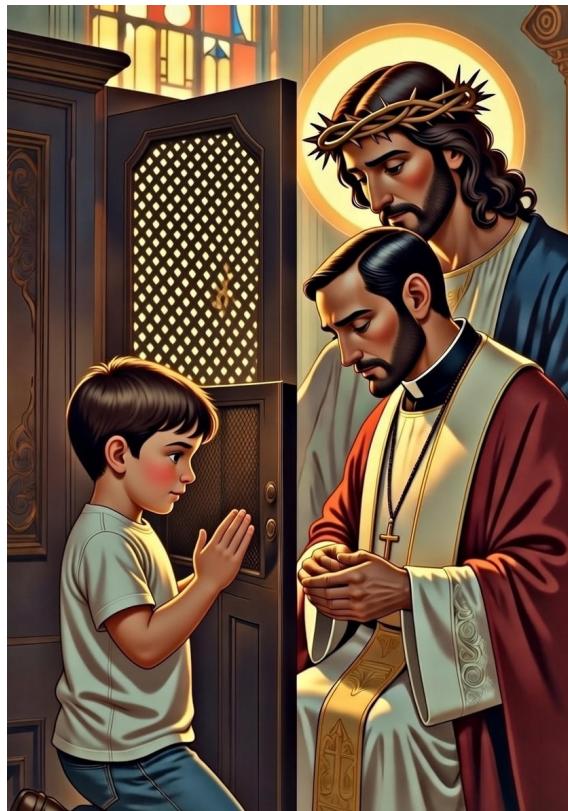
Make the sign of the cross: In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



Say: Father, I have sinned... Tell the priest your sins.



The priest gives me a **penance**. It is a prayer or good deed to make after confession.



I say: **Jesus, I am sorry.**

The priest says some prayers.  
In the name of God the Father,  
he cleans and heals my soul of its sins.

Jesus forgives my sins.



The priest says: Go in peace.  
I say: Amen.

# After confession



Thank you, Jesus, for Your mercy.

I do my **penance** as soon as I can.



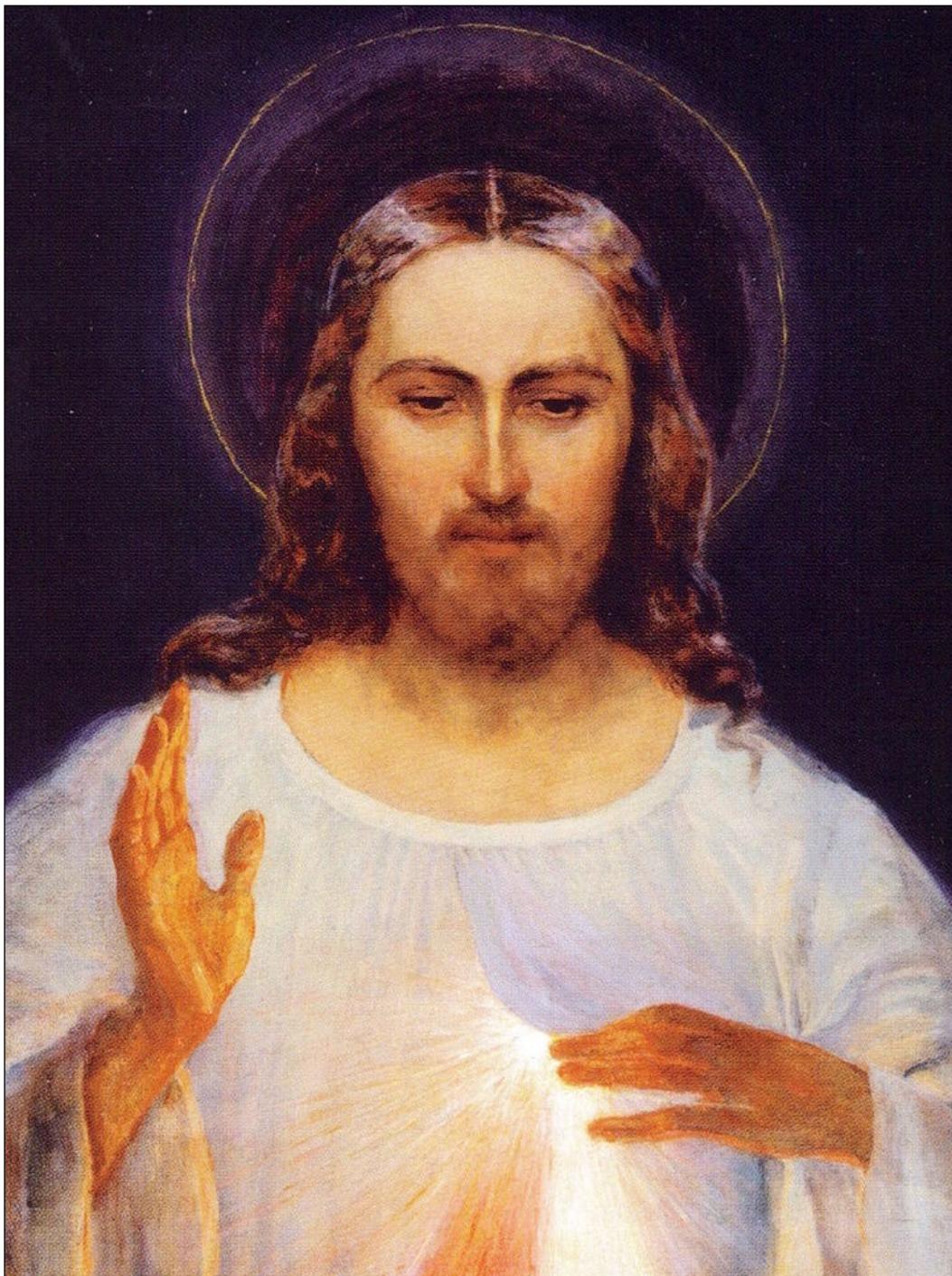
Jesus is happy that I went to Confession.

Forgiving sins gives Him great joy.

My soul is clean and bright.

I am happy and thankful.

# Prayers for Penance



# The Our Father



Our Father, Who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy name;  
Thy kingdom come;  
They will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil. Amen.

# The Hail Mary



Hail Mary,  
full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou among  
women, and blessed is  
the fruit of thy womb,  
Jesus.

Holy Mary  
Mother of God,  
Pray for us sinners,  
Now and at the hour of  
our death. Amen.

# The Glory Be



Glory be to the Father,  
to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
As is was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.

# The Guardian Angel Prayer



Angel of God, My Guardian dear,  
to whom His love commits me here.

    Ever this day, be at my side,  
To light and guard, to rule and guide.

Amen.

# Optional Visual Aid



Were you disobedient ?  
Did you refuse to do your school work  
or chores ?

Yes

No



Did you fight with your siblings or  
friends ?

Yes

No



Did you complain about your food ?

Yes

No



Did you throw things ?

Yes

No



Did you refuse to share your toys ?

Yes

No



Did you get mad  
when you didn't get your way ?

Yes

No



Were you mean to other kids ?

Yes

No



Were you disrespectful or noisy in church ?

Yes

No



Did you tell any lies ?

Yes

No



Did you take something that did not belong to you without permission?

Yes

No

Is there anything else you are sorry for?



yes

no

## Optional Visual Aid



Jesus,  
I am sorry  
for my sins.



Your sins are  
forgiven.  
Go in peace.

Credits:

Font by Kimberly Geswein fonts

All paintings are in the public domain.  
Illustrations are generated by AI

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