

## Catholic Diocese of Raleigh

### Sample Service for the Celebration of First Reconciliation

#### Greeting

Presider: In the name of the Father...  
All: Amen.

Presider: The Lord who opens our hearts to forgiveness and love be with you.  
All: And with your spirit.

The Presider could then briefly remind the children why they have come together and what the Sacrament of Reconciliation can offer them. After this, an opening song may be sung.

#### [Song/Hymn]

#### Reading

The Presider may give a short introduction to the reading in these or similar words:

Presider: My dear children, each one of us has been baptized, and so we are all daughters and sons of God. God loves us, and God asks us to love ourselves, each other, and him with all our hearts. God also wants us to be good to each other, so that we may all live happily together.

But sometimes people do not always do what God wants. They act this way because they are afraid it won't work or they are afraid of being rejected and made fun of, so they say: "I will not obey! I am going to do as I please." When they refuse to listen to God, they do not realize that they make the world a very unhappy place. We, too, often act like that.

This is why sin is so bad. We turn our backs on God and on one another. We become strangers to ourselves and to each other. We don't learn from our mistakes but keep on making them again and again.

And yet, what does God do when someone turns away? Does God abandon us, throw us out, says we are no good? No, God is always there to pick us up and help us remember why we are loved and how it's possible to keep loving God, others, and ourselves, especially when we fail.

Here is what God does, in the words of Jesus himself:

Only one text of Scripture should be proclaimed, and if possible, should be taken from the translation in the Lectionary for Masses with Children.

Luke 15:1-10  
Luke 19:1-10  
Luke 15:11-32

## **Homily**

### **Examination of Conscience**

The Examination should be adapted to the children's level of understanding by brief comments and reflect some concrete situations in the lives of the children who are present.  
Silence or reflective music can accompany the recitation of the Examination.

Have I prayed every day?  
Have I prayed my morning prayers and night prayers?  
Have I prayed with my parents and family?  
Have I been moody and rebellious about praying and going to church on Sunday?  
Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me whenever I have been tempted to sin?  
Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me do what is right?  
Have I been obedient and respectful to my parents?  
Have I lied or been deceitful to them or to others?  
Have I been arrogant, stubborn or rebellious?  
Have I talked back to parents, teachers or other adults?  
Have I pouted and been moody?  
Have I been selfish toward my parents, brothers, and sisters, teachers, or my friends and schoolmates?  
Have I gotten angry at them? Have I hit anyone?  
Have I held grudges or not forgiven others?  
Have I treated other children with respect or have I made fun of them and called them names?  
Have I used bad language?  
Have I stolen anything? Have I returned it?  
Have I performed my responsibilities, such as homework and household chores?  
Have I been helpful and affectionate toward my family?  
Have I been kind and generous with my friends?

### **Act of Repentance**

This litany can be begun by the Presider with the intentions read by a student or catechist. The response should be said by all present, and it may be sung.

Presider: God our Father,

Lector: Sometimes we have not behaved as your children should.

All: But you love us and come to us.

Lector: We have given trouble to our parents and teachers.

All: But you love us and come to us.

Lector: We have quarreled and called each other names.  
All: But you love us and come to us.

Lector: We have been lazy at home and in school, and have not been helpful to our  
parents (brothers, sisters, friends).  
All: But you love us and come to us.

Lector: We have thought too much of ourselves and have told lies.  
All: But you love us and come to us.

Lector: We have not done good to others when we had the chance.  
All: But you love us and come to us.

Presider: Now with Jesus, our brother, we come before our Father in heaven and ask him to  
forgive our sins:  
All: Our Father...

### **Celebration of Individual Reconciliation**

For the Act of Contrition the following may be used:

Father,  
I am sorry for all my sins:  
for what I have done  
and for what I have failed to do.  
I will sincerely try to do better.  
Help me to walk by your light.

After celebrating the Sacrament, each child may light a candle with their parents and place it in a prepared or designated area in the sanctuary; or the children may prepare a written prayer or resolution and place these on the altar or a designated table in the sanctuary.

### **Closing Prayer**

After all have had the opportunity to individually celebrate the Sacrament, the Presider concludes:

Presider: Let us pray.

(Pause)

God our Father,  
we know you always seek us out.  
When we walk from the path of goodness  
or lose our way because of our selfishness,  
you are there to lead us home again.  
Please be ready always to forgive us  
when we have fallen down.

May your love for us  
always be stronger than our sins  
and may your abundant mercy  
forgive us and bring us to everlasting life.  
We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Presider: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your Spirit.

Presider: May almighty God bless you, Father, Son, ✠ and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Presider: God has forgiven your sins, go in peace to love the Lord and to love one another.

All: Thanks be to God.

*An appropriate hymn of thanks and praise may conclude the service.*