

FIRST HOLY  
COMMUNION  
and  
RECONCILIATION

Leader's Guide

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by

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

First Holy Communion is a wonderful time of celebration for the whole community. It is also a great opportunity to invite the parents to deepen their faith.

Whether you are an experienced catechist or just a novice, this guide will help you to run a course that is both fun and inspiring without too much effort!

This course is designed to help parents whose children are preparing for their First Holy Communion and First Reconciliation. It seeks to explain the nature of these sacraments and to help the parents appreciate more fully the value of the sacraments in their own lives. It will also encourage parents, whether they are Catholic or not, to help their children to prepare for the sacraments.

The video course, narrated by Jenny Baker, is a simple look at the sacraments, delivered in an engaging style with teaching, testimony and input from parents and children. It follows a number of children and their families as they prepare for their First Holy Communion and Reconciliation.



Jenny Baker

It recognizes that many parents are not Catholic and even the Catholics may not have had any catechesis since their own First Holy Communion or Confirmation and so it makes no assumptions about the level of knowledge or faith of the parents.

The course is flexible and can be run in different ways to fit into existing parish programmes or to start a new course for parents. It is designed to be run over four sessions lasting an hour each but it can be run over two ninety minute sessions if necessary.

Most parishes have a short meeting before the children's catechesis starts to register the children and discuss the practicalities of the children's meetings. At this time, as part of the children's catechetical course, parents may be asked to complete work books at home with their children and this would be an ideal opportunity to publicise this course by showing the trailer that is included on the first video to encourage the parents to attend.

## 2. CONTENTS OF THE COURSE

**The Course contains:**

**2 Videos**

- 1. Reconciliation**
- 2. First Holy Communion**

**A Leader's Guide**

**Reconciliation Booklets for Parents**

**Holy Communion Booklets for Parents**

**Bonus Material:**

There is **bonus material** on the videos, particularly "A Children's View of the Sacraments" This may be suitable for use in primary schools, please see section 8 for details.



Two booklets have been produced to accompany the course, one for Reconciliation and one for Holy Communion. These are designed for the parents to take home after the talks to reflect on what they have heard or to give to parents who could not attend the sessions.

They are easy to read and can help both Catholics and non Catholics to appreciate the sacraments more fully. The Reconciliation booklet includes an examination of conscience for parents and children and useful prayers for the sacrament of Reconciliation. Both booklets include Scripture reflections for parents and a few relevant quotes from the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Further copies of the booklets can be obtained from Catholic Evangelisation Services (through the website **[www.goodnewsbooks.co.uk](http://www.goodnewsbooks.co.uk)** or see Appendix 6 for more details).

**The talks cover the following topics:**

## **Reconciliation**

### **PART 1**

(includes one discussion break)

#### **The faith journey of children.**

Helping our children.  
The questions children ask.  
Does a parent's faith make a difference?  
Meeting Jesus through the sacraments.

### **PART 2**

(includes one discussion break)

#### **The power of Reconciliation.**

Why do we need it?  
What is sin?  
Freedom in forgiveness.  
A practice for life.

## **First Holy Communion**

### **PART 1**

(includes two discussion breaks)

#### **The Bread of Life.**

Belonging to God's family.  
The meal that feeds us.  
Who is Jesus?  
The mystery of Holy Communion.

### **PART 2**

(includes two discussion breaks)

#### **The Power of the Eucharist.**

The Real Presence of Christ.  
The strength we receive.  
Coming with expectant faith.  
Passing on our inheritance.



### 3. PREPARATION

#### **Who will run the course?**

There may be a team of catechists in your parish running courses for parents already and this can supplement the work that they are doing. For parishes without an existing team it is very easy to run this course with a few welcoming and friendly people.

It does not have to be run by the children's catechists but it is useful to liaise with them to determine the best time to run the various sessions to be most helpful to the parents and children.

It would also be useful to have some young parents on the team, ideally parents whose children have received the sacraments for the first time in recent years so that they are familiar with the process in the parish and can easily relate to the parents attending the course.

#### **How will the course be run?**

The team needs to meet to decide how each of the sessions is going to be run. The talks have been designed to run in four sixty-minute sessions but if necessary Reconciliation could be run in one ninety minute session. Similarly, Holy Communion could be run over one long or two shorter sessions.

#### **When will the course be run?**

They will also need to decide when in the year the sessions are to be run. This will be dependent on the timescale of the children's catechesis.

It may be possible to invite parents to attend at the same time as the children meet or, if this is not practical, then the team should decide when most parents are likely to be available.



## First Holy Communion and Reconciliation Practicalities

This course does not cover the practicalities of the children's First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion so we would recommend arranging separate meetings to tell the parents how the children's First Reconciliation will work and to discuss the practicalities of their First Holy Communion Mass. Trying to combine the practical issues with the catechesis could diminish the importance of the catechesis in the parent's minds.



### A Message from Pope Benedict XVI to parents:

*"Dear parents! I ask you to help your children to grow in faith, I ask you to accompany them on their journey towards First Communion, a journey which continues beyond that day, and to keep accompanying them as they make their way to Jesus and with Jesus. Please, go with your children to Church and take part in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration! You will see that this is not time lost; rather, it is the very thing that can keep your family truly united and centred. Sunday becomes more beautiful, the whole week becomes more beautiful, when you go to Sunday Mass together. And please, pray together at home too: at meals and before going to bed. Prayer does not only bring us nearer to God but also nearer to one another. It is a powerful source of peace and joy. Family life becomes more joyful and expansive whenever God is there and his closeness is experienced in prayer."*

Germany September 10<sup>th</sup> 2006

## **A possible timetable for the Catechesis:**

This assumes that the children are registered in September for their First Holy Communion the following June.

- September: Parents meeting to register children and be given a time table of the catechesis for parents and children.
- October: Children's Catechesis begins.
- November: Two sessions on Reconciliation offered to parents.
- February: Parents meet re: practicalities of First Reconciliation.
- February: Children make First Reconciliation.
- March: Two sessions on First Holy Communion offered.
- May: Parents meeting re: the practicalities of the FHC day.
- June: Children's First Holy Communion.



The parents' course will run parallel with the children's catechesis in the sense that the parents should have covered Reconciliation just before the children's preparation for their first Confession begins.

Similarly the parents should have covered the Eucharist before the children's catechesis on Holy Communion begins.

This will help parents to answer any questions that the children may have and also encourage them to help with the children's preparation at home.

## 4. RUNNING THE COURSE

**Hospitality** is important when running the course so it is best to hold it in a venue that will enable those attending to feel **relaxed** and **comfortable**.

There may be non-Catholic spouses attending or parents who do not regularly go to Mass so a **welcoming** atmosphere is vital.

Most parishes will run the course in their parish hall and this should be **decorated** to look as attractive as possible. We strongly recommend that the chairs are arranged '**café style**' around tables as this will enable guests to chat comfortably during the breaks and encourage them to share their thoughts when prompted by the videos.

Some parents may be worried about coming to a course. Seeing a 'schoolroom set up' of rows of chairs facing the front can be a daunting prospect. However, being given a cup of tea or coffee around a café style table with friends is much more **relaxing**.



Care should be taken to cover the tables with decorative **cloths** and have **flowers** and possibly a **candle** on each one. This will make it all look more attractive.

**Refreshments** (e.g. tea, coffee, wine, beer, fruit juice) could be served as guests arrive and it is a good idea to have a plate of **nibbles** on each table. Be as generous as you can with these.

Make sure that the team are ready to welcome the guests as they arrive; to **greet them** and introduce themselves and the guests to each other, so that no one is left on their own.

It is also a good idea to have a CD playing **soft music** in the background at the beginning and in the breaks to add to the ambience.

Obviously it is important to make sure that the TV and Video player are **set up and working** before the guests arrive and that the video will start in the correct place.



In each of the sessions there are break points for **discussion** and these will take place around the tables, so it is important to ensure that everyone can see and hear those around them with ease (try not to put the tables too close together or make the table groups too large).

There are **booklets** to accompany the talks and it is a good idea to have these available for the guests at the end of the relevant sessions.

With a large group sitting round tables some may need to **move their chairs** to see the screen and you may need to suggest this before playing the talk.

**Possible Timetable for one of the  
hour-long sessions 8:00pm – 9:00pm**  
(i.e. running the course over four sessions)

7:45 – 8:00	Guests Arrive – serve refreshments
8:00	Brief welcome, opening prayer
8:05	Show video clip (including 10 minutes discussion time)
8:45	Discussion / reflection time
8:55	Close with final prayer
9:00	Finish

**Possible Timetable for one of the  
90 Minute sessions 7:30pm – 9:00pm**  
(i.e. running the course over two session)

7:15 – 7:30	Guests Arrive – serve refreshments
7:30	Brief welcome, opening prayer
7:35	Show first video clip (include 5 minutes discussion time)
8:10	Pause for discussion
8:15	Show second video clip (include 10 minutes discussion time)
8:55	Close with final prayer
9:00	Finish

### **A summary for setting up the sessions:**

- ❖ Don't forget the hospitality & welcome.
- ❖ Decorate the room, check room temperature.
- ❖ Set up café style with decorated tables, tablecloths, flowers, and candles.
- ❖ Offer the best refreshments that you can.
- ❖ Have bowls of nibbles on the tables.
- ❖ Play background music.
- ❖ Check seating - can everyone see? Can everyone hear?
- ❖ Do you have booklets for everyone.
- ❖ Ask the team to mix with the guests as they arrive.

## 5. LEADING THE SESSIONS

Leading a session is very straightforward as most of the input is from the videos. It is a good idea for the team to have watched the talks beforehand so that they are familiar with the content and when the break points occur (as some sections have one discussion break and some include two).

The leader or front person generally will ensure that the sessions run smoothly and keep to time. To make this easier, they should write out a rough timetable for the meeting so that they can see easily if things are overrunning. They will need to keep an eye particularly on the length of the discussion breaks and bring people back to order promptly. If for any reason there is a protracted discussion or questions are asked, then it is best to invite these to be raised at the end which allows those who have got to go for babysitters etc. to leave on time.

### **FIRST SESSION:**

Start by **introducing** yourself and the team to the group.

**Give an outline** of the course to each parent. A printed notice giving the session dates and times could be handed to each of them so that they know what the commitment is and how the sessions relate to their children's catechesis.

### **ALL SESSIONS:**

Start by **welcoming** the parents, especially those who are **non-Catholics** and thank them for coming.

Explain that most of the input will be through the videos and that there will be times when they will be asked to share their thoughts and feelings about what they have heard around their table, but assure them that they will not have to answer any tricky questions or be expected to know anything beforehand.

Also allow a few minutes at the start of each session for parents to introduce themselves around the tables.

The course is designed to be accessible to everyone but some guests may not understand some of the **Catholic terms and expressions** used in the talks or in the table discussions, so invite anyone who is not sure what something means, to ask during one of the breaks and assure them that they will probably not be the only one who does not understand.

Start and end each session with a **short prayer**. Start by asking for God's blessing on the session and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit on all the sharing.

### **CLOSING THE SESSIONS:**

There are different ways that you could close the sessions:

If time allows there could be a **short discussion** time after the video input. This should be led from the front and suitable questions are included in **Appendix 5**.

You may also like to include a short liturgy or you may just say a **prayer of thanks**.

You could **pray by name for each child** who is preparing to receive the sacraments and encourage the parents to continue praying for their children throughout the preparations.

At the end of the last session on **Reconciliation** it is a good idea to tell the parents when the sacrament is available in your parish.

Ideally, to give them an opportunity to respond immediately, you could arrange for a priest to be available for a short time after the session to **hear Confessions**. He could introduce himself and stress, as it says in the talks, that he will help anyone who is unsure of what to say or do.

It is important to give the parents a **booklet** to take home and encourage them to read through the notes from the talks and the Scripture passages that they contain. Also invite them to show the booklet to any spouses who were unable to attend.

Remind everyone when the **next session** is and encourage them to come back.

On the final session if there is a **follow up course** planned, publicise this and give out the dates and times.

## **A summary for leading the sessions:**

- ❖ **Familiarise yourself with the input.**
- ❖ **Write a timetable with approximate timings.**
- ❖ **Decide how to end the sessions.**
- ❖ **Introduce yourself and the team.**
- ❖ **Outline the course for the parents.**
- ❖ **Welcome everyone especially non-Catholics.**
- ❖ **Explain discussion times.**
- ❖ **Invite questions.**
- ❖ **Open with a short prayer.**
- ❖ **Show video clips.**
- ❖ **Pause at appropriate points.**
- ❖ **Invite discussions around the tables.**
- ❖ **Bring the group back to order promptly.**
- ❖ **Close with a prayer (include praying for the children).**
- ❖ **Give out booklets.**
- ❖ **Remind them about next meeting date and time.**
- ❖ **At the end encourage the parents to any 'follow-on'.**



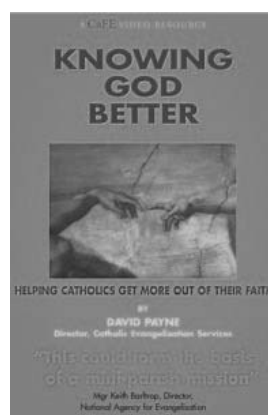
## 6. FOLLOW-ON

At the end of this course parents are encouraged to continue to develop their faith. After coming together and sharing in small groups, they may like to continue with a follow on course in a similar style. This is a good opportunity for them to begin to journey together with other parents who have the same challenges and questions and to look at how their faith can help them and their children in their daily lives.

**Knowing God Better** mentioned in the last session is a series of seven fun and stimulating talks designed to help Catholics get a better understanding and appreciation of their faith and how it can help them in their daily lives. The talks are given by David Payne, the Director of CaFE and include music, mime, testimonies and opportunities for prayerful reflection.

The talk titles are:

1. **Knowing God Better**
2. **Knowing God's Love**
3. **Knowing God's Forgiveness**
4. **Knowing God's Help**
5. **Knowing God's Word**
6. **Knowing God's Spirit**
7. **Knowing God's Hope**



This could be offered to parents as a follow-on course either in a large group setting open to all the parish or in a smaller group of First Holy Communion parents.

There are other similar resources available from Catholic Evangelisation Services:

## Knowing God even Better by David Payne

The talk titles are:

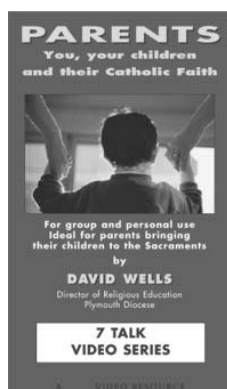
1. **Knowing the Father's Love**
2. **Knowing Jesus as Lord**
3. **Knowing the Spirit as Friend**
4. **Knowing God's Presence**
5. **Knowing the Great Commission**



This series is designed to follow **Knowing God Better** to help Catholics deepen their faith even more. The talks are filmed with a “café style” live audience and are practical, inspiring and enjoyable.

## Parents – you, your children and their Catholic Faith

This is a course for parents of young children. **It explores the day to day challenges of parenthood** and the guidance that the Church offers. It is presented by David Wells, the Director of RE in the Plymouth Diocese. He is a very gifted and amusing speaker with a wealth of very funny and at times poignant stories from his years teaching in a Catholic senior school. It includes teaching and stories which give rise to questions for discussion in small groups. It is aimed both at Catholics and non-Catholics bringing up children in the Catholic faith.



The talk titles are:

1. **Who would be a parent?**
2. **Why bother with Baptism?**
3. **Confession - do they still do that?**
4. **The Mass - do we need it?**
5. **How do children believe?**
6. **How can parents help?**
7. **Parents for life!**

## **This Is My Body**

**(A new resource available early in 2007)**

**A course of two sessions on the Mass** that is ideal for parents of First Holy Communion children. It follows a typical parish Mass with a commentary based on the book "This is my Body" by Fr Ian Petit OSB. In these sessions the Mass is unpacked, explaining the various parts of the Liturgy in a way that seeks to draw the viewer more deeply into the mystery of Christ present in the Holy Eucharist and shows how the awesome power that is available through the Mass can help them in their everyday lives.

For general parish use this course includes **bonus material** of other talks on the **Mass and the Eucharist** from a number of the CaFE series and could be used over a number of sessions as a Lent or Advent course.

**For more details of these** and other resources including details of the CaFE process please contact Catholic Evangelisation Services or see the web-site **[www.charisuk.com/cafe-ondemand](http://www.charisuk.com/cafe-ondemand)** where trailers of the resources can be viewed.

## **Mothers Prayers**

"Mothers Prayers" has grown to be a worldwide movement of mothers who come together regularly to pray for their children. Any number of mothers (or grandmothers!) can meet where they

share their worries and concerns and are supported by the others in prayer.

The very simple meeting format is explained in a small booklet (a sample is included in the box set). Each meeting is centred around a table with a cross, a candle, a Bible and a small basket on it and each parent symbolically places their children into Jesus' care by placing a disc of paper with their children's names in the

basket. Many parishes have already formed groups and it is a great way to encourage mothers to continue to meet and pray for their children. (For more details please see the booklet or for more booklets, please contact Mothers Prayers through their website: **[www.mothersprayers.org.uk](http://www.mothersprayers.org.uk)** ).



## 7. GETTING THE MOST FROM THE COURSE

1. The course will **run** most effectively **over four sessions** as this gives time for people to think about each section before moving onto the next one. It also gives longer discussion time in the sessions.
2. It is important to **get as much continuity as possible**. Although it is difficult for parents to make a regular commitment encourage them by offering lifts, babysitters or whatever is appropriate. This may mean offering two different dates and times for each session to ensure that most parents can attend.
3. After the final session on Reconciliation parents may be considering going to the Sacrament again and if one or more **priests could be available to hear Confessions immediately** this would greatly encourage them. The Act of Contrition from the booklets could be used by those unfamiliar with the words.
4. The course is relaxed and fun and this can be reflected in the set up of the room. Setting it up **café style** helps parents to get to know one another around the tables. A warm welcome and an enjoyable experience will also encourage them to come back to the next meeting.
5. Encourage each parent to take home a **Reconciliation** and a **Holy Communion booklet** and ensure that any parents that can't attend the course receive the booklets.
6. At the end of the course encourage parents by giving them a **choice of ways to continue nurturing their faith**. This might be through **RCIA** for those who are not Catholic or Knowing God Better for Catholics wanting to brush up on the basics. For those wanting to meet together to pray, a Mothers or Fathers Prayer group gives a simple format. (See previous page for more details).

## 8. BONUS MATERIAL ON THE VIDEOS

There is bonus material included on the videos:

### VIDEO 1:

1. **Parents' Trailer** to this series – This can be shown at introductory meetings to give parents a taster of the course.
2. Full 10 minute testimony from **John Pridmore**.
3. Full 10 minute testimony from **Natalie**.

### VIDEO 2:

1. **A sample of the CaFE Resources** – this may be useful when deciding how to follow up this course.
2. **A Children's View of the Sacraments** – this is an extract of the children's input including the montages of them as they prepare for and receive the sacraments. It also includes some of their comments and reflections about the sacraments. It can be used in primary schools to stimulate discussion among pupils and could help non-Catholic children get some sense of what their classmates are preparing for.



## APPENDIX 1 - CHURCH TEACHING ON THE PARENT'S ROLE

The Church gives clear guidance on the role that parents have in the spiritual growth of their children and it might be useful for the team to familiarise themselves with some of the teaching. These are a few excerpts. Much more is available from the documents mentioned and other documents available from the Vatican web-site [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

**The General Directory for Catechesis** is one of the documents available via the web-site. It is the Church's official guide on how to teach the faith. It can seem a bit daunting but there is some very good information in it. Here are three excerpts that look at the parent's role in the education and catechesis of their children.

**226.** The witness of Christian life given by parents in the family comes to children with tenderness and parental respect. Children thus perceive and joyously live the closeness of God and of Jesus made manifest by their parents in such a way that this first Christian experience frequently leaves decisive traces which last throughout life.

This childhood religious awakening which takes place in the family is irreplaceable. It is consolidated when, on the occasion of certain family events and festivities, "care is taken to explain in the home the Christian or religious content of these events". It is deepened all the more when parents comment on the more methodical catechesis which their children later receive in the Christian community and help them to appropriate it. Indeed, "**family catechesis precedes...accompanies and enriches all forms of catechesis**".

**227.** Parents receive in the sacrament of Matrimony "the grace and the ministry of the Christian education of their children", to whom they transmit and bear witness to human and religious values. This educational activity which is both human and religious is "a true ministry", through which the Gospel is transmitted and radiated so that family life is transformed into a journey of faith and the school of Christian life. As the children grow, exchange of faith becomes mutual and "in a catechetical dialogue of this sort, each individual both receives and gives".

**It is for this reason that the Christian community must give very special attention to parents. By means of personal contact, meetings, courses and also adult catechesis directed toward parents, the Christian**

**community must help them assume their responsibility—which is particularly delicate today—of educating their children in the faith.**

**179.** Beginning school means, for the child, entering a society wider than the family, with the possibility of greater development of intellectual, affective and behavioural capacities. Often specific religious instruction will be given in school. All this requires that catechesis and catechists constantly co-operate with parents and school teachers as suitable opportunities arise. **Pastors should remember that, in helping parents and educators to fulfil their mission well, it is the Church who is being built up. Moreover this is an excellent occasion for adult catechesis.**

In the Apostolic Exhortation **Familiaris Consortio** on the role of the Christian family in the modern world Pope John Paul II comments on the role of parents:

“By virtue of their ministry of educating, **parents are, through the witness of their lives, the first heralds of the Gospel for their children.** Furthermore, by praying with their children, by reading the word of God with them and by introducing them deeply through Christian initiation into the Body of Christ - both the Eucharistic and the ecclesial Body - they become fully parents, in that they are begetters not only of bodily life but also of the life that through the Spirit's renewal flows from the Cross and Resurrection of Christ.”

Family prayer has for its very own object family life itself, which in all its varying circumstances is seen as a call from God and lived as a filial response to His call. Joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, births and birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries of the parents, departures, separations and homecomings, important and far-reaching decisions, the death of those who are dear, etc. - all of these mark God's loving intervention in the family's history. They should be seen as suitable moments for thanksgiving, for petition, for trusting abandonment of the family into the hands of their common Father in heaven.

**The dignity and responsibility of the Christian family as the domestic Church can be achieved only with God's unceasing aid, which will surely be granted if it is humbly and trustingly petitioned in prayer.”**

## APPENDIX 2

### QUOTES ON RECONCILIATION FROM THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium to the Catechism contain many references to the sacraments. We have selected a few from the Catechism to help you gain a deeper understanding of Church teaching and would encourage you to read the articles on the Eucharist and the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation in the Section on the seven sacraments of the Church. You can buy copies of the Catechism and the Compendium at Catholic bookshops or they can be viewed online through the Vatican web site [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

**986** By Christ's will, the Church possesses the power to forgive the sins of the baptized and exercises it through bishops and priests normally in the sacrament of Penance.

**1424** It is called the *sacrament of confession*, since the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. In a profound sense it is also a "confession" - acknowledgment and praise - of the holiness of God and of his mercy toward sinful man.

It is called the *sacrament of forgiveness*, since by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent "pardon and peace."

It is called the *sacrament of reconciliation*, because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles: "Be reconciled to God." He who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: "Go; first be reconciled to your brother."

**1457** According to the Church's command, after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year. Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession. Children must go to the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time.



**1460** The *penance* the confessor imposes must take into account the penitent's personal situation and must seek his spiritual good. It must correspond as far as possible with the gravity and nature of the sins committed. It can consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy, service of neighbour, voluntary self-denial, sacrifices, and above all the patient acceptance of the cross we must bear. Such penances help configure us to Christ, who alone expiated our sins once for all. They allow us to become co-heirs with the risen Christ, "provided we suffer with him."

**1468** The whole power of the sacrament of Penance consists in restoring us to God's grace and joining us with him in an intimate friendship. Reconciliation with God is thus the purpose and effect of this sacrament. For those who receive the sacrament of Penance with contrite heart and religious disposition, reconciliation is usually followed by peace and serenity of conscience with strong spiritual consolation. Indeed the sacrament of Reconciliation with God brings about a true "spiritual resurrection," restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God, of which the most precious is friendship with God.

**1491** The sacrament of Penance is a whole consisting in three actions of the penitent and the priest's absolution. The penitent's acts are repentance, confession or disclosure of sins to the priest, and the intention to make reparation and do works of reparation.

**1496** The spiritual effects of the sacrament of Penance are:

- reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace;
- reconciliation with the Church;
- remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins;
- remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin;
- peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation;
- an increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle.

## APPENDIX 3

### QUOTES ON THE EUCHARIST FROM THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

These are a few extracts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. There are many more sections on the Eucharist and the Mass.

**790** Believers who respond to God's word and become members of Christ's Body, become intimately united with him: "In that body the life of Christ is communicated to those who believe, and who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ in his Passion and glorification." This is especially true of Baptism, which unites us to Christ's death and Resurrection, and the Eucharist, by which "really sharing in the body of the Lord, . . . we are taken up into communion with him and with one another."

**1348** *All gather together.* Christians come together in one place for the Eucharistic assembly. At its head is Christ himself, the principal agent of the Eucharist. He is high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharistic celebration. It is in representing him that the bishop or priest acting in the person of Christ the head (in persona Christi capitis) presides over the assembly, speaks after the readings, receives the offerings, and says the Eucharistic Prayer. All have their own active parts to play in the celebration, each in his own way: readers, those who bring up the offerings, those who give communion, and the whole people whose "Amen" manifests their participation.

**1355** In the communion, preceded by the Lord's prayer and the breaking of the bread, the faithful receive "the bread of heaven" and "the cup of salvation," the body and blood of Christ who offered himself "for the life of the world":

**1365** Because it is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the Eucharist is also a sacrifice. The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very words of institution: "This is my body which is given for you" and "This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood." In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the

very blood which he "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

**1367** The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*: The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different." "And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner.

**1370** To the offering of Christ are united not only the members still here on earth, but also those already *in the glory of heaven*. In communion with and commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, the Church offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. In the Eucharist the Church is as it were at the foot of the cross with Mary, united with the offering and intercession of Christ.

**1391** *Holy Communion augments our union with Christ*. The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus. Indeed, the Lord said: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him." Life in Christ has its foundation in the Eucharistic banquet: "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me."

**1396** *The unity of the Mystical Body: the Eucharist makes the Church*. Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body - the Church. Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism. In Baptism we have been called to form but one body. The Eucharist fulfills this call: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread:"

## APPENDIX 4

### PRAYER ON THE COURSE

#### **Ending the Sessions:**

At the end of the sessions there could be a time for reflection and prayer for the parents. This might be something like a short liturgy inviting parents to put their children's names into a basket at the front beside a Cross or just a time of quiet prayer. (This would be the time to offer the sacrament of Reconciliation after the relevant session).

#### **Parents Praying for their Children:**

We suggest that you encourage the parents to pray for their children as they prepare to receive the sacraments for the first time. One way to do this is to produce a simple prayer card for the parents to pray every day in the run up to their child's First Holy Communion. This prayer is included in the Holy Communion booklet but could be used for a prayer card:

**Lord, thank you for the gift of our child.  
Bless and protect them as they prepare for the sacraments  
of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. We pray that they  
will come to know you as a friend and a guide. Help us as  
parents to a deeper appreciation of our faith so that we  
can pass on your love by our example and the witness of  
our lives.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## APPENDIX 5 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

There are break points during the talks and discussion questions are included on the video. At the end of parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 these are not included on the screen but if time permits there could be a discussion introduced by the leader. These are some questions that you could use:

### PART 1:

**Why do you want your children to receive the sacraments?**

### PART 2:

**How can the sacrament of Reconciliation help you?**

### PART 3:

**What does the Eucharist mean to you?**

### PART 4:

**How do you feel about passing on your faith to your children?**

## APPENDIX 6 ORDERING FURTHER COPIES

To order further copies of the booklets  
**Reconciliation Booklets for Parents and Holy  
Communion Booklets for Parents** please contact:

[goodnewsbooks.co.uk](http://goodnewsbooks.co.uk)

## APPENDIX 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**Music Credits:**

**Who is This?** Sung by Wendy Whitehead and Brenton Brown  
(Written by Michael and Helen Frye © Vineyard Songs UK / Eire)

**I Have Been Redeemed.** Written and sung by Wendy O'Connell.  
From the Album "Holy". Used with permission of Vineyard Songs  
(UK/ Eire)

**Song for the Prodigals** sung by Brain Doerkson (© Father's  
House Publishing, Administered by Mercy / Vineyard Publishing)

**Yahweh** sung by Andy Park (© Mercy / Vineyard Publishing)

**I Will Hold On** written & sung by Nigel Briggs  
From the album "Winds of Worship Holy live from Nottingham".  
Used with permission of Vineyard Songs (UK/ Eire)

**Jesus Meet Me.** Written and sung by Marc James.  
From the Album "Winds of Worship Live from Nottingham".  
Used with permission of Vineyard Songs (UK/ Eire)

**Bread of Life** Written and sung by Boyce & Stanley (© CJM Music  
Limited)

**I Receive You, Lord** sung by Emmaus (© Emmaussongs /  
IMRO)

**Alleluia, Jesus is Lord** sung by Emmaus (© Emmaussongs /  
IMRO)

**Trust, Surrender** sung by Emmaus (© Emmaussongs / IMRO)

**Websites with further details of these artists:**

**[www.vmg.com](http://www.vmg.com) - Vineyard**

**[www.cjmmusic.co.uk](http://www.cjmmusic.co.uk) – Boyce & Stanley**