

An Examination of Conscience for Children

Jesus' affection for children is clearly affirmed in the Gospels. When his disciples attempted to halt people from bringing children to Jesus for his blessing, he insisted: "let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs" (Mt 19:14). Jesus also demonstrated his solicitude for children by healing them and raising them from death. His fundamental concern was always for the spiritual development of children.

Recalling these examples of Jesus' attention to children sets the proper context for helping children examine their conscience and preparing them for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This sacrament allows Jesus to express his love for children today. Through it, he continues to influence their lives; he demonstrates his power to heal them, to free them from the bondage of sin, and raise them to new life. In turn, this sacrament allows children to come to know and love Jesus. For these reasons, Jesus still exhorts us: "Let the children come!"

Responsibilities to God:

- 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?

Responsibilities to others:

- Have I been obedient and respectful to my parents?
- Have I lied or been deceitful to them or to others?
- 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 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?

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