First Penance Session One

The following activities should be completed together by the child preparing to receive the Sacrament of First Penance and at least one parent/guardian. You may complete the session in one sitting or multiple sittings, whatever works best for your family. There is nothing to "turn in," but please complete the session by February 21.

1. Read aloud the following Scripture passage from the prophet Isaiah:

   Israel, the Lord who created you says, "Do not be afraid – I will save you. I have called you by name – you are mine. When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire, you will not be burned; the hard trials that come will not hurt you. For I am the Lord your God, the holy God of Israel, who saves you." (Isaiah 43:1-3)

2. Reflect on what you just heard. Take a few minutes to sit in silence and think about the Scripture reading. You may even want to reread the passage silently or out loud again.

3. Share with each other the following experience (take turns; it may be helpful for mom or dad to go first and set an example): *Think of and then describe a time you were forgiven for something you did.*

   - How does it feel to be loved?
   - How does it feel to be forgiven?
   - Why is it important to both receive forgiveness AND give forgiveness?
   - Why do you think we call it a "celebration" of the sacrament?
   - What are you excited and/or nervous about?

4. Watch the video, "First Penance with Father Lou" (12:12), on YouTube: https://youtu.be/1hZHcZVPHWA

5. Discuss the following questions:

   - According to Father Lou, how is sin like strawberry jam?
   - Can you remember the three things that must be present to remove the "stain" of sin?
   - When those three things are present, we receive God's forgiveness. How does that make you feel?
   - What do you think about the Act of Contrition? (on the next sheet)
   - What questions do you have? (write them down and bring them to the virtual check-in on March 3 so we can answer them together!)

For First Penance, children will all say The Act of Contrition together before going to confession. However, your child will need to know this prayer for future confessions! There are numerous versions of The Act of Contrition. Here is the one we recommend your child memorizes:

The Act of Contrition

My God,
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong
and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you
whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance,
to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ
suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy.