

- The communal rite of Reconciliation begins with the singing of a hymn. Integrate the songs on RCL Benziger's *Reconciliation* music CD into your preparation of the children. Learning the lyrics and singing the songs is a wonderful way for the children to come to know and experience the goodness and merciful love of God. The appropriate songs for each part of the rite are indicated on the "Overview" page for each chapter.
- Have the children examine the photographs found throughout this section. Relate what is happening in the photographs with the prayers and explanations. Point out that although there are some differences in the way each parish celebrates this sacrament, the main rites are always the same—Confession, Contrition, Penance, and Absolution. Point these out as you go through the rites with the children.

## The Communal Rite for Reconciliation

We can celebrate this sacrament with other members of our church family. Together we listen to the word of God. We listen to the story of God's love for us. We are invited to conversion, or to live as Jesus taught us. We examine our conscience. We take a careful look at how we are living as children of God and followers of Jesus. We help each other through prayer.



### INTRODUCTORY RITES

#### Song

We gather as the community of the Church. As the priests, readers, and other ministers enter, we stand. We sing a hymn about forgiveness or peace. We remember how much God loves us.

**All:** Hear us, Lord,  
for you are merciful and kind.  
In your great compassion,  
look on us with love.

#### Greeting

The priest greets us. His words remind us that the Holy Spirit and God's grace invite us to be sorry for our sins and to celebrate this sacrament. He welcomes us with these or similar words:

**Priest:** Grace, mercy, and peace  
be with you from God the Father  
and Christ Jesus our Savior.

**All:** And with your spirit.

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### Opening Prayer

The priest invites us to pray. He uses these or similar words:

**Priest:** Brothers and sisters, God calls us to conversion; let us therefore ask him for the grace of sincere repentance.

We pray in silence for a few minutes. Then the priest prays aloud.

**Priest:** Lord,  
hear the prayers of those  
who call on you,  
forgive the sins of those  
who confess to you,  
and in your merciful love  
give us your pardon and  
your peace.  
We ask this through Christ  
our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

### CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

We listen attentively to the Bible, the word of God. There may be several readings. There is always a reading from the Gospel. As we listen to the readings, the Holy Spirit invites us to think about God's love and mercy and to be sorry for our sins.



#### First Reading

We sit and listen to a story about God's love and mercy from the Old Testament. The reader concludes, saying,

**Reader:** The word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

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