



Renewed

Your Journey to First Reconciliation

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1. What sets *Renewed* apart from other First Reconciliation programs?

Renewed: Your Journey to First Reconciliation is a 12-Session First Reconciliation preparation program that offers catechists a turn-key approach to lesson preparation and planning. *Renewed* offers children and their parents an engaging, interactive way to grow in their understanding of God's love and mercy through fun activities, live-action videos, and an attractive and approachable workbook.

Engaging video presentations, a dynamic student workbook, and easy-to-use guides for leaders and parents, along with a rich offering of free online resources, progressively call young people to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and a commitment to return to his mercy.

2. What are the components of the *Renewed* program?

Renewed: Your Journey to First Reconciliation DVD

Kids preparing for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion learn best through stories. As young Catholics prepare to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, they will follow along with Felicity's journey as she prepares to receive the sacrament. Through Felicity, they will learn about their faith, understand God's infinite love and mercy for them, and grow in excitement for the amazing gift of the Eucharist.

Each video segment is under 5 minutes long to better match their attention spans and features gorgeous live-action videos and stunning animations to reveal the spiritual dimension.

Renewed: Your Journey to First Reconciliation Student Workbook

The *Renewed* Student Workbook is designed to engage young students and prepare them to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The student workbook comes with digital access to the online course.

Features: Lesson Artwork, Scripture Verses, Prayers, *Visio Divina*; Independent Activities, Interactive Activities; Discussion Questions; Quizzes; Scripture Stories; Main Lesson Teachings; Friend on the Journey (featured saints); Key Words; Car Conversations; and Family Time Activities.

Renewed: Your Journey to First Reconciliation Leader's Guide

The Leader's Guide walks you through the lessons using easy-to-follow steps and leader's notes. Each lesson begins with a prayer for leaders; lesson overview and objectives; *visio divina* questions and additional teaching activities; tough questions and answers; and parent connection ideas. Each lesson also contains complete Student Workbook content with wrap-around leader's notes. The leader's guide comes with digital access to the Leader's Access course.

We partnered with The National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities to provide tips and resources to engage all learners.

Renewed by Jesus: My Guide to Reconciliation Book

A keepsake trade book for children to keep and use whenever they prepare to go to Confession.

Renewed Online Parent Certification Course

Our Online Parent Certifications meet parents where they are. The *Renewed Online Parent Certification* course gets parents involved in their child's sacramental preparation; offers high-quality video presentations that touch the heart; and makes it easy for parents with self-paced online access wherever and whenever they have time.

Renewed & Received Online Leader's Certification Course

There is only one Leader's Certification course for both programs. We suggest that catechists take this online certification prior to the start of the preparation period.

Convenient self-paced online course offers six helpful sessions. This course offers inspiration and encouragement to your team to lift them up for the important work they've been called to do. It provides clear, practical guidance on what to expect and how to respond to typical situations that are likely to arise in the classroom. It equips leaders to encourage family catechesis and parent engagement. It arms your team with hard-won knowledge from experienced Catholic presenters and ministry workers.

Renewed Saint Prayer Cards, Pack of 10

Each lesson of the *Renewed* program features a saint, the "Friend on the Journey." Beautifully illustrated by Elizabeth Blair, these saints can be shared as prayer cards for students to collect. This is a great way to keep students engaged and to encourage attendance/participation.

Reconciliation Crate by Catholic Family Crate

Ascension and Catholic Family Crate have worked together to create a bundle of amazing Catholic lessons, support, and fun for families to enjoy at home. Pair Ascension's *Renewed: Your Journey to First Reconciliation* program with Catholic Family Crate's First Reconciliation Crate for an incredible spiritual experience for at home catechesis for parents and children to engage and prepare for their sacraments!

3. What topics are covered in *Renewed*?

The topics of the *Renewed* program are carefully ordered to build upon one another, providing a solid framework of catechesis. Each video that accompanies the lesson seeks to tackle the most challenging objective of the lesson:

Why did sin enter the world?

Why did Jesus need to die for our sins?

What happens to our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Our goal was to get in the mind of a second grader (7–8 year old) to help bring God’s love and mercy to life.

Unit 1: Who Created the Universe?

Lesson 1.1: “God’s Plan for Creation.” For many students, this lesson will be their first exposure to God as relational and interested in their lives. They will learn about God’s goodness, the goodness of creation, and God’s desire to be reconciled with them.

In the video “Your Story,” Felicity learns that the Bible is the story of the family of God and sees how she and her own family fit into that story.

Lesson 1.2: “What Happened to God’s Plan?” This lesson focuses on the Fall, when Adam and Eve used their free will to turn against God and separate themselves from him. Through their rebellion, sin and suffering entered the world and damaged humanity’s relationship with God. God promised them a savior. This lesson introduces students to the story of salvation—the story of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

In the video “Broken,” Felicity asks why God lets bad things happen. Theo breaks a window. Felicity sees firsthand how disobedience hurts others and how God comes to help us.

Unit 2: How Did God Show His Love to His People After the Fall?

Lesson 2.1: “From Adam and Eve to the Exodus.” This lesson explains covenants as sacred promises, ways that God binds himself to human beings in love across the story of salvation. Students learn about Noah and Abraham and begin to notice how God pursues his people. This will help them understand that, even though we sin, God always desires to be close to us and redeem us.

In the video, “Trust,” Felicity’s friend breaks a promise. Felicity learns to trust God with her confusion and worries.

Lesson 2.2: “From the Ten Commandments to the Promised Savior, Jesus Christ.” This lesson teaches students about God’s covenants with Moses and David. Students are introduced to the Ten Commandments and will understand them as gentle guidance from a good Father rather than a set of restrictive rules. They will understand why God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, as the final and everlasting covenant with the entire world.

In the video, “The Laundry Wars,” the family plays a game they made up, and Felicity and Theo learn how rules make us holy, happy, and safe.

Unit 3: Who is Jesus?

Lesson 3.1: “Jesus Heals Us, Teaches Us, and Saves Us.” This lesson gives students the opportunity to “meet” Jesus—to discover his humanity and his divinity and begin learning about the extraordinary things he did while he was on earth. The Scripture stories help them connect Jesus’ Incarnation to the ways he saves them from sin.

In the video, “Stuck,” Fr. Paul comes to visit, and Felicity’s family tries to hide their imperfections. Felicity learns how Jesus responds when we show him our imperfections.

Lesson 3.2: “Jesus Gives Us the Church to Continue His Work.” This lesson teaches students about how the Church continues Jesus’ healing mission on earth. Students will understand that through Baptism, they become members of the Church. They will see that the Church is Jesus’ gift to us, supporting us in our walk with him. Through it, he gives us the sacraments, which are profound encounters with God’s grace and mercy.

In the video, “Talking to Jesus,” on a bad day, Felicity struggles to see and hear Jesus. She learns how to talk to Jesus and how to listen for his reply.

Unit 4: Why Did Jesus Give Us the Sacraments?

Lesson 4.1: “The Sacraments Bring Us God’s Love.” This lesson teaches students that a sacrament is an efficacious sign of God’s grace, an experience that truly changes us. All the sacraments draw us closer to Christ. They prompt us to respond to God’s invitation to love and serve him. In this lesson, we invite students to make that response.

In the video, “Where’s the Holy Spirit?” Felicity shares memories of how the Holy Spirit has worked through the sacraments in her family.

Lesson 4.2: “Jesus Gives Us the Church to Continue His Work.” This lesson identifies the seven sacraments and the three categories of sacraments—Sacraments of Initiation, Healing, and Vocation. It explains what each category means and looks closely at the Sacraments of Initiation and Healing so that students can begin to understand their effects in their lives.

In the video, “The Sacraments,” as Theo gets ready for a hockey game, Felicity’s parents show how each of the sacraments works in our lives.

Unit 5: Why Did Jesus Give Us the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Lesson 5.1: “Our Need for Forgiveness.” This lesson focuses on the need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation as students prepare to receive it for the first time. It is important that they understand that Reconciliation isn’t about exposing our sins; rather, it is about returning to God and receiving his mercy. The core message of this lesson is that God loves you, and when you sin, he sees your pain and wants to heal it.

In the video, “Theo’s Confession,” Theo examines his conscience and brings his sin to the confessional, where he encounters the mercy of Jesus.

Lesson 5.2: “Our Friendship with God.” This lesson emphasizes the way the Sacrament of Reconciliation prepares our hearts to receive the Eucharist. The Church teaches that we should receive the Eucharist only in a state of grace—that is, when we are in a right relationship with God, which means we are not harboring any unconfessed mortal sin.

In the video, “Light and Dark,” Mom and Dad use potting tools and kitchen supplies to show Felicity how her soul is affected by the darkness of sin and the light of God’s love.

Unit 6: How Do We Live Out the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Lesson 6.1: “Our First Reconciliation.” This lesson prepares students in practical ways for their first Confession. It describes in detail how to go to Confession—how to use an examination of conscience to prepare for the sacrament and what to do in the confessional.

In the video, “Felicity’s First Reconciliation,” Felicity is nervous about her first Reconciliation but is comforted by Fr. Paul’s words and Jesus’ mercy.

Lesson 6.2: “Living the Life God Wants for Us.” This lesson helps students understand that the call to repentance and conversion—the call to holiness— is a lifelong call, which doesn’t end after First Reconciliation. The goal is to orient students to a life of discipleship, in which they frequently seek God’s mercy and forgiveness in the sacrament rather than celebrating it as a one-time rite of passage.

In the video, “The Way to Heaven,” after her First Reconciliation, Felicity learns not to be afraid of the sins she’s already been forgiven for and sees how Reconciliation leads us to heaven.

4. How are the lessons structured?

The Leader’s Guide breaks each lesson down into an easy-to-use, seven-step format. *Renewed* allows for flexible class times ranging from forty-five minutes to two hours, as well as a five-day lesson plan structure for schools. Additional content—including keywords, Scripture references, and lesson summaries—is also included and, depending on the needs of your group, can be used either in class or as homework. Components of the seven-step lesson format include:

Step 1: Welcome

Includes: Tips for greeting students; directions for the independent bell activity; introduction to the Scripture verse of the day; proclamation of the lesson objectives; opening prayer; and optional *visio divina* exercise.

Step 2: Leader-led Activity

Includes: Directions for the first activity of the class.

Step 3: Scripture Story

Includes: Reading and discussion questions

Step 4: Main Content Teaching

Includes: Three key content points; bolded keywords; and discussion questions, with accompanying content and interactive activity ideas.

Step 5: Video and Discussion

Includes: Five-minute video to watch with the class, followed by discussion and quiz questions.

Step 6: Saint's Story

Includes: Original illustrations of the saints; content that connects to the lesson theme; fun facts about the saint; and a prayer. Saints included:

- St. Francis of Assisi
- St. Michael the Archangel
- St. Thérèse of Lisieux
- King David
- St. Blaise
- St. Peter
- St. Teresa of Calcutta
- St. John the Baptist
- St. Maria Faustina Kowalska
- St. John Vianney
- St. Ignatius of Loyola
- St. Catherine of Siena

Step 7: Wrap-up

Includes: End of lesson quiz; take home activity ideas; and the closing prayer.

5. Who would benefit from *Renewed*?

Renewed was developed as a First Reconciliation preparation program for second graders (7–8 year olds) and is appropriate for first grade and above.

Featuring amazing videos and engaging written materials, *Renewed* can be effectively used in a variety of settings. The program can fit into virtually every corner of school, parish, and family life including school and parish religious education, whole-family catechesis, home use, or any setting that calls for engaging and inspirational catechetical teaching.

6. Is *Renewed* on the USCCB's Conformity List?

Yes, *Renewed* is on the USCCB's Conformity List.

In addition, *Renewed* has been granted ecclesiastical approval by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

7. How does *Renewed* engage parents and families?

No matter how gifted a teacher is or how great a particular resource may be, nothing and no one can take the place of a parent. The *Renewed* program offers a *Parent Online Certification* course

that engages parents in their faith, as well as provides tips and strategies to accompany their child through this period of sacramental preparation.

Embedded within the *Parent Online Certification* course, there is a complete Parent's Guide that follows each lesson of the *Renewed Student Workbook*. The Parent's Guide is digital online and comes with tips and suggestions for parents about how to talk to and engage their child throughout their journey.

Recognizing the primary role that parents are called to play in their children's faith formation, *Renewed* offers a Parent Information Session. This session gives leaders an opportunity to engage parents at the very beginning of the program, and it gives parents an opportunity to show their children the importance of preparing for the sacrament. Other planning materials include an outline for the 60-minute Parent Information Session, sample letters to parents, and a checklist of things to consider before, during, and after the session.

8. What resources and support are available for leaders?

The *Renewed & Received Online Leader's Certification* is a great way to engage leaders. More than explaining how to teach the *Renewed* program, the Leader's Certification course is a self-paced experience where leaders encounter:

Video 1: "Thank You for Saying Yes." Father Mike Schmitz, Jackie & Bobby Angel, Mari Pablo, and Sister Josephine Garrett welcome leaders and provide words of encouragement as they begin their journey.

Video 2: "Tips and Strategies for Classroom Engagement." Mari Pablo and Sister Josephine Garrett reveal insider teaching tips and classroom set-up.

Video 3: "Tips and Strategies for Parent Engagement." Mari Pablo and Sister Josephine Garrett share the importance of parent engagement and present strategies to catechize the whole family.

Video 4: "Nurturing Faith Formation Communities." Mari Pablo and Jackie & Bobby Angel discuss the difference between classroom learning and forming faith formation communities. The goal of sacramental preparation is forming relationships. Mari, Jackie, and Bobby reveal strategies to make this a possibility.

Video 5: "Differentiated Learners." Charleen Katra, Executive Director of the National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities, joins us to discuss tips and strategies for setting up and maintaining an inclusive classroom that is considerate of diverse learning needs.

Video 6: "Don't Forget Your Relationship with Jesus." Mari Pablo calls catechists to maintain focus on their relationship with Jesus and their prayer life. She shares that it can be easy to talk about Jesus and not actually talk to Jesus.

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We partnered with The National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities to provide tips and resources to engage all learners.

Leaders should also encourage volunteers to view the detailed Frequently Asked Questions on this page. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions by emailing Support@AscensionPress.com or by calling 1-800-376-0520.

9. **Is *Renewed* available in Spanish?**

All components of *Renewed: Your Journey to First Reconciliation* will be translated into Spanish and ready for release in Spring 2024.

For 2023, we will have the *Renewed Online Parent Certification* course available in Spanish by the end of summer. This will include the complete translation of the written materials and Spanish subtitles (no dubbing yet) for the videos.

10. **How do I preview the *Renewed* materials?**

Experience the flexibility of *Renewed all-digital* online course for yourself, which allows you to preview a full session including the videos, workbook, and quiz questions. [Click here to access your free preview today!](#)

11. **Who are the presenters in the *Renewed* videos?**

Student Videos: The *Renewed* student videos feature actors. Journey with Felicity and her family as they learn about their faith and God's infinite love and mercy for them.



PARENT VIDEOS



Father Mike Schmitz

Fr. Mike Schmitz, a Catholic priest who is well known for his social media videos and podcasts, hosted the 2021 breakout podcast “The Bible in a Year (with Fr. Mike Schmitz)[™],” which became the #1 podcast on the Apple charts after its January, 2021, launch and is the most popular Catholic podcast of all time.

In 2023, Fr. Mike became the central figure of the all-new daily podcast “The Catechism in a Year (with Fr. Mike Schmitz),” which guides listeners through the entire *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, providing explanations, insights, and encouragement along the way.

Fr. Mike releases a weekly Catholic show, “The Fr. Mike Schmitz Catholic Podcast,” and also a weekly Sunday Mass on Ascension Presents, the largest Catholic YouTube channel in English. Both programs are also published as podcasts. Fr. Mike additionally contributes to many of Ascension’s Catholic books and faith formation programs.

For the impact of “The Bible in a Year” podcast, Fr. Mike was recognized as one of [Our Sunday Visitors’s 2021 Catholics of the Year](#) for 2021 as well as a recipient of the [2022 Cardinal John P. Foley Award](#) for excellence and innovation in Catholic storytelling.

Fr. Mike is the director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Duluth as well as the chaplain for the Newman Center at the University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD). Fr. Mike attended St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and was ordained for the Diocese of Duluth in 2003.



Sister Josephine Garrett

Sister Josephine is a native Texan, born and raised in Houston. She moved to Dallas in 1999 to begin studies at the University of Dallas where she completed a BA in Political Philosophy with a Business Concentration. Sister subsequently entered the banking industry, serving for 10 years as a Vice President in the Home Loans division of Bank of America in the roles

of Operations Manager of a staff of 200 and later as a Project Manager. Sister was raised Baptist and entered the Catholic Church in 2005. Later, in November of 2011, she began her formation to be a religious Sister. In November of 2020 Sister Josephine professed her final vows as a Sister of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

She is a licensed counselor, serving as the school counselor for the cathedral grade school in Tyler, TX, and also in private practice. Sister has also served in vocations ministry and as a national speaker for youth and young adults, speaking to groups of up to 25,000.



Jackie & Bobby Angel

Jackie Angel is a full-time traveling speaker, singer/songwriter, and worship leader from Orange County, CA. In 2006, she became an artist with Oregon Catholic Press, with whom she has released two albums. Her husband Bobby Angel is a native Floridian who worked for eight years as a campus minister and teacher at an all-boys school.

Jackie and Bobby have spoken and written on Catholic marriage, discernment, and Theology of the Body. The pair are regular video contributors on Ascension Presents, and currently live in Dallas, Texas with their four children.



Mark Hart

Mark Hart serves as chief innovation officer for Life Teen International. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame and a twenty-seven year veteran of youth ministry, Mark is a best-selling author of over twenty books, a daily radio host on SiriusXM and an award-winning writer and producer. One of the most sought-after speakers serving in the Catholic Church today, Mark's

humor and his passion for Scripture are known around the world.

His multiple video series with Ascension —*Venture*, *Encounter*, *Altaration* and *The 99*—have helped millions of Catholics, young and old, begin to read and study the Bible and engage the Catholic Faith in exciting and relevant new ways. A master catechist, Mark also serves as a book editor, speaking coach, publishing and marketing consultant, and as a research fellow for the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology.

Mark and his wife, Melanie, live in Phoenix, Arizona with their three daughters—Hope, Trinity, and Faith—and one son, Josiah.



Father Josh Johnson

After powerfully encountering Jesus in the Eucharist as a teenager, Fr. Josh Johnson dedicated his life to becoming a wholehearted disciple of Jesus Christ. Ordained for the Diocese of Baton Rouge in 2014, Fr. Josh has dedicated his priesthood to inviting all people to become saints in their walk toward eternity.

Fr. Josh travels widely as a speaker at conferences, retreats, and youth events. He is well-known for his popular Ascension podcast *Ask Father Josh* as well as his Q&A video show on the *Ascension Presents* YouTube channel, the largest Catholic channel in English. Additionally, he has written several books with Ascension, including the best-selling *Pocket Guide to Reconciliation* (co-written with Fr. Mike Schmitz), and has contributed to several Ascension faith formation programs, including *Altaration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed* and the *Rejoice!* Advent series.

Fr. Josh is the vocations director for the Diocese of Baton Rouge, as well as pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus parish. He can often be found praying the Rosary and walking in the neighborhoods of his parish, inviting those under his pastoral care to become intentional disciples of Jesus Christ.



Emily Wilson-Hussem & Daniel Hussem

Emily Wilson-Hussem is a speaker, YouTuber, author, wife and mom who shares her faith online and travels the world sharing her witness of faith at conferences and events across the globe. She writes, speaks, and creates videos on femininity, faith, and relationships, and her books, videos, and talks have inspired and encouraged women of all ages. Emily functions as the creative director of *Marcam* and oversees the entire creative and directing process.

Daniel, an equally passionate Catholic as his wife Emily, has years of business experience as a marketing and product director in the tech industry working directly with Fortune 500 caliber clientele and contributing to nearly a dozen Forbes business publications before switching his career in tech for a more meaningful adventure with Seven Fourteen Media. Daniel functions as the producer and business director of *Marcam* and oversees all production, strategy, and marketing tasks.

LEADER VIDEOS



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Jackie and Bobby have spoken and written on Catholic marriage, discernment, and Theology of the Body. The pair are regular video contributors on Ascension Presents, and currently live in Dallas, Texas with their four children.



Mari Pablo

Mari Pablo is known as a dynamic evangelist throughout the United States and Latin America. Mari grew up in a devout Hispanic Catholic family in South Florida, and later adventured north to earn bachelor degrees in theology and psychology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville, as well as a master's degree in theology from the Augustine Institute.

Mari has worked as a youth minister and high school theology teacher for over fifteen years, becoming a passionate expert in helping young Catholics encounter the love of Christ and the

truth of his Church. Mari currently works for The Evangelical Catholic, supporting parishes and universities in their efforts to spread the Gospel.

Mari has contributed to several Ascension video series, including *The 99*, the revised edition of *Chosen: Your Journey to Confirmation*, and is a main presenter in *Connected: Catholic Social Teaching for This Generation*. Mari is well-known for her engaging presentations at the annual Steubenville Youth Conferences and other national outlets.



Charleen Katra

Charleen Katra assumed the position of Executive Director of National Catholic Partnership Disability in December of 2019 after having served on NCPD's Board of Directors in 2018 and 2019. She previously served as an Associate Director in the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. For over twenty years her primary responsibility was directing the Ministry with Persons with Disabilities. Katra is the co-author of *The Adaptive Teacher: Faith-Based Strategies to Reach and Teach Learners with Disabilities* (Loyola Press, 2019) and the author of *How to Talk to Children about People with Disabilities* (Twenty-Third Publications, 2019). She has extensive experience in systematic and sacramental catechesis and has served as a national consultant, author, and speaker on the topic of inclusion for various Catholic publishers. Katra is currently a member of the Loyola Press Speaker Corp. She holds a Bachelor's in Special/Elementary Education and a Master's in Pastoral Studies.