

God, give us the grace to let go of anything that would break our friendship with you.

## Your Child's Moral Development: EMPATHY

How does a child learn right from wrong? Most experts believe that moral emotions, such as empathy, admiration, and self-esteem, as well as anger, shame, and guilt, are natural emotions that are present at a very early age. Your job is to help nurture your child's ability to access and manage these emotions.

Empathy is the ability to comprehend and imagine life from another's perspective. It is the ability to "walk a mile in another's shoes." Children show signs of empathy early on: it's not unusual for the crying of one infant to set off a chorus of wailing among other nearby infants.

Your child is old enough to be aware of how others feel and that each person may have different responses to the same situation. Try these ways to help fine-tune your child's sense of empathy.

- Regularly invite your child to imagine being one of the characters in a book, TV show, or video. Ask, "What would you do if you were there?"
- Stop your child if he or she is being cruel. Review the situation together and imagine how the other person feels.
- Talk about situations in your life at work and your child's life at school that call for empathy and compassion.
- Make it a clear expectation that sharing is a part of life in your family.

*Excerpts taken from "Preparing at Home for First Reconciliation" Tom McGrath [www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com)*

### Fix-a-Friendship

1. Say you're sorry.
2. Repair what went wrong.
3. Try to do better the next time.
4. Reconcile with God .