

God, give us the grace to always accept the second chances you offer us and to offer second chances to others as freely as you do. Amen

Your Child's Moral Development: RESPONSIBILITY

Family life is where children first learn right from wrong. From early on, parents intervene in numerous small ways to guide their child's behavior, increasing the child's ability to make sound moral choices. It starts with small things, like not letting your child take another child's toy or pull the dog's tail. Over time, we nurture our children's ability to be responsible for their actions.

Children will frequently find someone else to blame. Some adults continue this trend their whole life. If you provide a shame-free climate in which your child (and you) can take responsibility for mistakes and wrongdoing, you will find your child much more willing to own up to his or her behavior. Accepting responsibility also places in your child's hands the power to act differently next time.

Here's how to nurture this skill at home:

- Be sure to acknowledge your child's honesty and courage when he or she admits a mistake or wrongdoing. This doesn't absolve the child from wrongdoing, but accepting responsibility should be honored and encouraged.
- When two or more children are bickering, stop the action and invite each one to tell "what's my part in this." The purpose is to encourage accountability, not induce shame.
- When a child has trouble acknowledging a poor choice, brainstorm alternatives by asking, "What else might you have done when that happened?"

Excerpts taken from "Preparing at Home for First Reconciliation" Tom McGrath www.loyolapress.com

Responsible or Redo?

- **You promised to go help your friend put together her new kite. But another friend came over to show you a cool new handheld game just a you were supposed to leave. You stay home and play with the game instead.**
- **Your aunt and uncle hired you to feed their dog while they are on vacation. You have to walk four blocks to their house, and it's raining hard. You don't want to go out, but you know the dog is hungry, and you promised, so you grab an umbrella and go.**
- **Your mom has dinner almost ready. You are not allowed to snack right before dinner, but you are hungry. You find some candy from your classmate's birthday in your backpack, and you decide that just one piece won't hurt.**