

God, give us the grace to know when we need to seek forgiveness and the grace to give it freely.

## Your Child's Moral Development: APOLOGIES

Our culture offers endless examples of apologies that aren't really apologies: "Mistakes were made." Or "I am sorry if our actions hurt anyone." Because healing and reconciliation come through honest acknowledgment of our own behavior and its consequences, we owe it to our children to coach them in the fundamental human skill of apologizing. Here are three steps necessary to any apology:

1. I admit what I've done.
2. I say I'm sorry.
3. I do something to make up for the wrong I have done.

Notice that there are no "buts" included in an apology. We don't say, "I'm sorry I teased you, but you made me angry." There is a time and place to analyze and discuss one's motivations and intentions, but not during an apology. The apology is the time to acknowledge and accept that my actions have hurt others and to express my sincere sorrow for what I've done. Some may fear that apologizing shows weakness, but an honest apology is actually the way to strengthen our relationships. It takes a lifetime to learn this lesson, so begin while your child is young. Here are a few steps.

- Model apologizing in the home.
- Gently encourage apologies whenever you see the need.
- Realize we need God's help and pray for the strength to apologize.

**"An apology is the superglue of life. It can repair just about anything."**

Lynn Johnston

### Catholic Fact

It is not your priest who forgives sins. He acts as God's representative, offering absolution only through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation when he told his apostles "whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 18:18) Confessing to a priest invites us to own up to our wrongdoing and reconciles us with our Church community.