



# Try It, You'll Like It!

## A CONFESSION ABOUT CONFESSION

*We can take a look into our spiritual mirror, and if we don't like what we see, we have the chance to change it, all while accepting God's gift of forgiveness.*

*Confession is always an affirmation of faith and not just a proclamation of sinfulness.*

**B**less me, reader, for I have sinned: I am not the best role model when it comes to confession.

Of course, I know how important it is. I know that there is great peace in the forgiveness offered by God, that it strengthens our relationship with him and it reminds us of our duty to live our lives in a more Christ-like way.

Like exercise, confession – or the sacrament of reconciliation, as we now call it – always makes me feel better after I go – separated from my sinful habits and inspired to adhere more closely to my spiritual path.

But convincing my children of its myriad benefits is one of the wonderful challenges of parenting, akin to making sure they've got enough spiritual veggies on their plate of faith.

Me: "Try it, you'll like it!"  
Them: "Uh, huh," as they hide their peas under the mound of mashed potatoes.

Like plenty of adults I know, my children have no problem coming up with reasons why they don't need to make a list of their less-than-stellar moments and, worse, tell someone about it.

"I haven't done anything wrong," spits out my younger daughter at my suggestion of a Saturday afternoon family trip to the

confessional. (This, of course, comes right after a morning fight with her younger brother.)

I deftly point out that while we aren't a family of murderers, it would behoove all of us to take a moment and think of the times we were less than kind to each other, when we perhaps spoke too hastily or took pleasure in another person's misfortune.

We can confess those sinful moments and receive God's forgiveness, I say. I try to explain it in different ways: It's like wiping down the dry erase board – chalkboards are so 20th century – and making a fresh start.

I say to the kids: "Try it, you'll like it!"

Kid No. 2 says: "We've got (insert random sports activity, birthday party, semiannual family ritual) coming up."

Sure, in a family of five, there is always something going on in our lives. I joke that we don't have excuses, we have exceptions – reasons why we are somehow above the rules. Except, that's not the case.

Sometimes, the day-to-day struggles are precisely why we need to make the time for a trip to the confessional. Those moments spent in the pew clicking off our list of sins – the gossip, the profanity, the desiring of what belongs to someone else – may

be the reality check we need to bring us back on course.

We can take a look into our spiritual mirror, and if we don't like what we see, we have the chance to change it, all while accepting God's gift of forgiveness.  
Me: "Try it, you'll like it!"

"You've been saying we need to go, and then we don't," my older one says to me.

Zing – the shot to the heart. She's right. Oh, I talk a good game about confession, but in the end, I make all the same excuses they do. I can't tell you how many times I've walked into church on a Sunday morning and chastised myself for missing the Saturday confession window. And then I slide into the pew, the thought discarded like a wadded-up tissue.

So what am I teaching my kids? During Lent, I took the time to teach them that confession is something we do – as a family. It doesn't matter if our sins are big or small, if we are busy or lazy. I realized the one I'm convincing is myself, that it's time for me to look into the mirror and decide if this is the reflection of God I want the world to see. Only then can I hope my children will follow my example.

"Try it, you'll like it!"

*Kelly Bothum, a mother of three, is a freelance writer.*