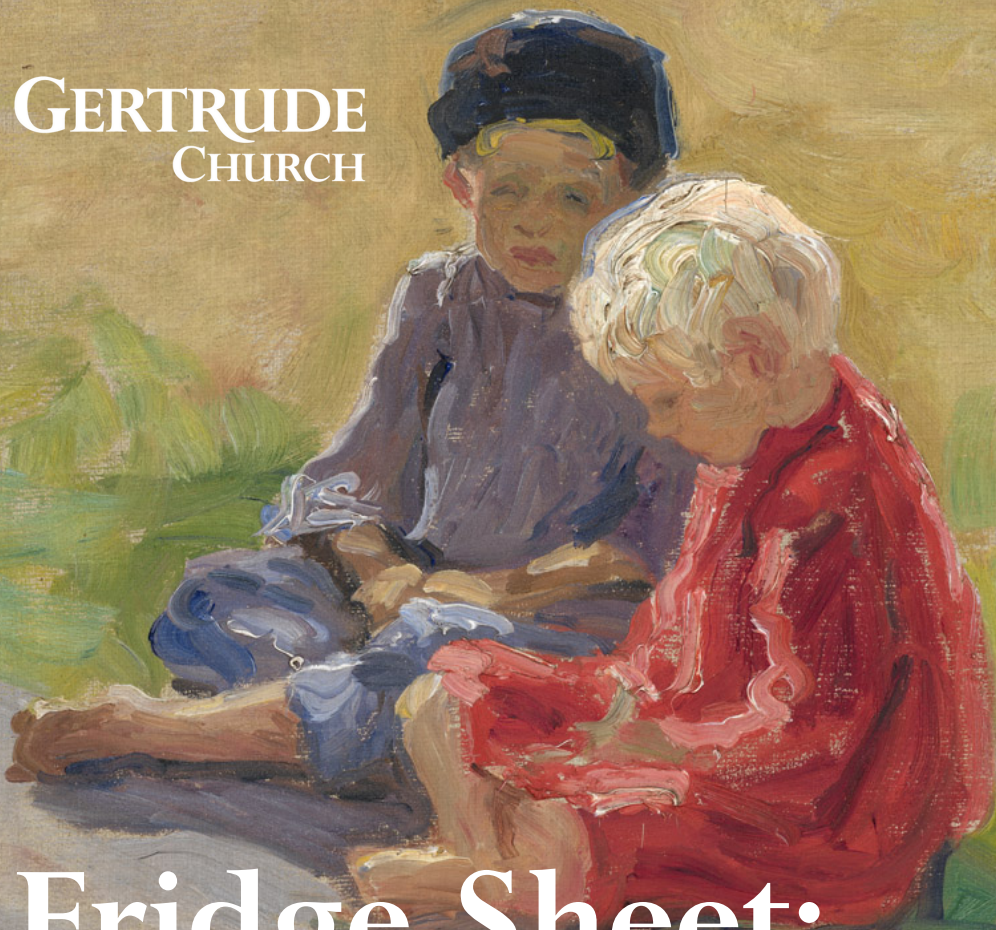




ST. GERTRUDE
CHURCH



The Fridge Sheet: Reconciliation at Home

Have you ever noticed that many times when we wrong each other in our homes, the guilty party will say, "Sorry," (and sometimes in a sassy voice) and the offended party will say, "It's okay." But, is it really okay? Is the person really sorry? When it comes to restoring relationships, we're talking about a big deal, so we should treat reconciliation (a big word that just means restoring a relationship) as a big deal. We recommend the following process for reconciliation:

1. Repentance: The guilty party fully acknowledges the wrong and apologizes—expressing true sorrow. The basic prompt goes something like this: "I _____ (state the offense) to you and it was wrong. I am sorry. Will you forgive me?" Here, the offender has to "put flesh on the bones" of what was wrong by naming it and admitting fault (it's not "okay" that I did this or that), expressing sorrow, and begging for forgiveness.
2. Forgiveness: Now, it's time for the offended party to freely respond. Remember, forgiveness cannot be forced—it is a gift, the gift of freely deciding to see the other person as a person again. So, the prompt is simple: "I forgive you." (Note: This doesn't dismiss the offense as "okay" and it isn't a magical formula that makes the offense hurt less. It simply says that you're not going to see the other has the offender anymore.
3. Atonement: Okay, forgiveness has happened—how is the person who originally offended the other going to prove that he/she really was sorry and wants to restore trust in the relationship? It's time to take action and make up for the damage! So, let's say you stole candy from your sibling and you're sorry and forgiveness has been granted. Atone for your sin, repair the damage, by giving your sibling a few pieces of your own candy.