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**KIDS IN THE
DIVINE SERVICE**
+ + +



What is the “Office of the Keys”?

When you hear this question, you might think that there is an office somewhere in the church building that holds a lot of keys. But this use of “office” means duty and obligation. For example, when someone is elected to Congress, they are elected to a public office with authority and certain duties. The Office of the Keys is an authority given by Christ to His Church with the duty to forgive repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

Why is this authority called “keys”?

This authority given to the Church works just like a set of keys that locks and unlocks the gates of heaven. When forgiveness is withheld, the door of heaven is locked. When forgiveness is given, the door of heaven is opened and God’s forgiveness in Christ is poured out on the repentant person!



Parents: Trying to understand why the Church would withhold forgiveness may be difficult. Be sure to study John 20:22–23 and Matt. 18:18 with your child. Discuss what it means to be unrepentant as opposed to repentant. An unrepentant person is not sorry for their sins and does not believe in Jesus Christ. A repentant person is sorry for their sins out of love for God and believes in Jesus Christ for salvation!

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