

STEPS FOR CONFESSION

- Examine your conscience and write your sins on the lines below or another sheet of paper (or circle them in this examination).
- Enter the confessional – kneel at the screen or sit to confess face-to-face with the priest.
- Make the **Sign of the Cross**, saying, “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
- Say to the priest, “**Bless me Father, for I have sinned. It has been** _____ (say how long) **since my last Confession.**”
- Say **these are my sins:**

- Confess all the sins you remember and then say, “**For these and all my sins, I am truly sorry.**”
- Listen to what the priest tells you and ask any questions you may have.
- The priest will tell you your penance – **listen carefully**. If you do not understand, ask him to repeat or explain it.
- When the priest tells you to, pray the Act of Contrition: “**O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments, but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.**”
- Listen to the priest say the words of Absolution and **make the Sign of the Cross when you hear him say**, “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
- The priest will dismiss you. You can say “**Thanks be to God!**” before you leave.
- Do your penance as soon as you can and destroy your paper with sins. These sins have now been forgiven (if you have worthily confessed all sins)!

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE AND CONFESSION GUIDE FOR TEENS AND ADULTS



PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

We go to confession to be forgiven, restore our relationship with God, and receive graces to overcome sin and grow in holiness.

Before examining our consciences, it is necessary to pray and ask for help to know all of our sins.

Blessed Mother, in your love and kindness, please help me to know and confess worthily all of my sins. Help me not to hide any sins from Jesus, as He already knows what I have done and failed to do. Help me to love Jesus as He loves me. Help me to be ever thankful for the Mercy that He shows me and help me to make reparation for my sins and try, with the help of you, our Blessed Mother, not to offend Jesus again. Amen.

A **mortal** sin is committed when it meets **all** of the following conditions:

- *Grave Matter*
- *Full Knowledge of the act, thought, word, or omission*
- *Full Consent and deliberate will to commit the sin*

All mortal sins must be confessed according to the **kind** (what type of sin) and the **number** of times committed. Willingly failing to confess a mortal sin is another mortal sin and invalidates the absolution.

Although **venial** sins do not completely separate ourselves from God like mortal sins do, it is important to also confess all venial sins in order to cleanse our souls and receive all graces necessary to grow in holiness.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Have I...

- Harbored hatred for God?
- Disobeyed the commandments of God or the Church?
- Tempted God? (explicitly or implicitly, e.g., by exposing oneself to danger of soul, life, or health without grave cause)
- Not behaved reverently when in church? (not genuflecting to the Blessed Sacrament, talking if not absolutely necessary, distracting others, not bowing at the names of Jesus and Mary, etc.)
- Been excessively attracted to things/creatures? (to animals, television, money, power, pleasure, etc.)
- Worshipped false gods or given honor to something in place of God?
- Been superstitious, consulted horoscopes, astrology, palm readings, fortune telling, tried to communicate with Satan, demons, or the dead?
- Practiced magic or sorcery, witchcraft, voodoo, played with Ouija boards, magic 8 balls, crystals, or other occult practices?
- Committed sacrilege? (received communion in the state of mortal sin, knowingly and willingly failed to confess a mortal sin, treated unworthily the Sacraments or religious persons, blessed objects or places consecrated to God, etc.)
- Denied or doubted the existence of God or refused to accept what God or the Catholic Church has revealed or proclaimed as true?
- Presumed God's mercy? (committed a sin in expectation of going to confession)
- Joined a group forbidden to Catholics? (e.g., freemasons, masonic lodges, communists)
- Rejected the Catholic faith, joined another Christian denomination, or practiced another religion?
- Neglected to nourish and protect my faith or misled others about the faith?
- Hidden a sin or told a lie in Confession?
- Failed to confess my sins at least once per year, failed to be truly sorry for my sins, or neglected to perform the penance I was given?

Have I...

- Used the name of God in cursing, blasphemy, or in any other way that does not glorify God? (saying OMG, Oh My Gosh, Jesus Christ, Gee, etc. not in prayer, praise, or supplication of God or Jesus)
- Misused the names of the Blessed Virgin Mary or the saints?
- Committed perjury (lied under oath) or failed to keep vows or promises to God?
- Used vulgar, suggestive, or obscene speech or cursed?
- Watched television or movies, played games, or listened to music that does not respect the Catholic faith or respect the dignity of human life? (e.g., pornography, vulgar content, etc.)
- Neglected to give generously to others in need or misused natural resources?
- Revealed secrets entrusted to me?

Have I...

- Missed Mass or Holy Days (without grave reason) or failed to take my children to Mass?
- Failed to pray every day and thank God?
- Habitually come late to and/or left early from Mass?
- Shopped, labored, practiced/played sports, or done business unnecessarily on Sundays or Holy Days?
- Knowingly eaten meat on any Friday or on Ash Wednesday? (Abstaining from meat is required on *all Fridays* of the year. If physically unable to abstain, permitted substitutions would be praying a Rosary, Stations of the Cross, visiting sick or imprisoned, volunteering to help the poor, etc.)
- Failed to fast for at least one hour before receiving Holy Communion? (chewed gum, used lozenges if not medically necessary, drank any beverage besides water, etc.)

Have I...

- Disobeyed (if still under their care) or disrespected my parents?
- Neglected the needs of aging parents or in their time of need?
- Willingly allowed my children to grow up in sin?
- Neglected to give my children proper food, clothing, shelter, education, discipline, and care as long as they are still under my care?
- Delayed having my children baptized?
- Neglected to ensure that my children regularly frequent the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion?
- Neglected my children or made work, sports, etc. more important than family and God?
- Failed to provide proper instruction in the Faith to my children?

Have I...

- Hated or abused others, been rude to others, made others angry, or fought with others?
- Lied to others or about others or cheated?
- Been jealous or envious of others or other's belongings or stolen from others?
- Been impatient, lazy, stubborn, wasted time, or complained?
- Supported or voted for a politician whose positions are opposed to the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church? (e.g., ones who do not support life)
- Neglected household or work duties?
- Not allowed employees (if an employer) reasonable time for religious duties or required them to work on Sundays and Holy Days?
- Disobeyed Church or civil laws (if civil laws are in accord with Church laws)?

Have I...

- Unjustly or intentionally killed a human being?
- Had an abortion, helped or persuaded someone to have an abortion, directly or indirectly?
- Seriously considered or attempted suicide or supported, promoted, or encouraged assisted suicide or "mercy killing" (euthanasia)?
- Endangered other people's lives? (e.g. drinking & driving, driving wrecklessly, etc.)
- Excessively eaten or drank (gluttony) beyond what is necessary to nourish my body?
- Been careless about leaving out drugs, weapons, poisons, etc.?
- Mutilated my body without medical necessity (vasectomy, hysterectomy, castration, tubal ligation, etc.)
- Ignored or refused to forgive or reconcile with others?
- Taken contraceptive pills which can be abortifacient or used barrier methods to avoid pregnancy?
- Treated animals cruelly?
- Gossiped, belittled, been sarcastic to, criticized, or judged others in word or action?
- Helped another commit a mortal sin (through advice, dressing/acting immodestly, etc.)

Have I...

- Dressed or acted immodestly or neglected to grow in the virtue of chastity?
- Participated in immoral techniques such as *in vitro* fertilization or artificial insemination?
- Willfully entertained impure thoughts?
- Committed rape, incest, fornication, homosexual activity, adultery, prostitution, or had relations or cohabitated outside of marriage?
- Been attracted to children or youth as an adult?
- Engaged in unnatural sexual activities? (anything not inherently natural to the sexual act, even inside of marriage)
- Read books, listened to music, played games, or watched television or movies which are immoral or involved sex or nudity?
- Deliberately caused climax outside of intercourse within marriage? (masturbation, stimulation)