

Before Confession



How to Make a Good Confession

Confession is not difficult, but it does require preparation. We should begin with prayer, placing ourselves in the presence of God, our loving Father. We seek healing and forgiveness through repentance and a resolve to sin no more. Then we review our lives since our last confession, searching our thoughts, words and actions for that which did not conform to God's command to love Him and one another through His laws and the laws of His Church. This is called an examination of conscience.

To make an examination of conscience:

- Begin with a prayer asking for God's help.
- Review your life with the help of some questions, which are based on the 10 Commandments (see below).
- Tell God how truly sorry you are for your sins.
- Make a firm resolution not to sin again.

Examination of Conscience

Ask God to help you make a good confession. **In quiet reflection** ask yourself: Since my last confession...

YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Jesus teaches us, "Love the Lord your God." It is His first great commandment. Check the ways in which you show love for God.

1. Do I pray every day?
2. Do I use God's name with respect?
3. Do I pray with others?
4. Do I join my parents at Mass?
5. Do I listen to God's word?
6. Do I study my religion well?
7. Do I try to understand what God asks of me?

Jesus teaches us, "Love others as yourself." This is His second great commandment. Check the ways in which you show love for others.

1. Do I try to make my parents happy?
2. Do I obey them right away?
3. Do I help at home?
4. Am I friendly?
5. Do I behave in class?
6. Do I tell the truth?
7. Do I share with others?
8. Do I take care of my health?
9. Do I do my best at school, at play?



During Confession

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) involves four steps:

- **Contrition:** A sincere sorrow for having offended God, and the most important act of the person confessing. There can be no forgiveness of sin if we do not have sorrow and a firm resolve not to repeat our sin.
- **Confession:** Naming our sins—aloud—to the priest, who represents Christ and the Church.
- **Penance:** The prayers—or sometimes, the good deeds—the priest gives, for our healing and the healing of those we have hurt by our sins.
- **Absolution:** The words the priest speaks by which “God, the Father of mercies” reconciles us to himself through his death and resurrection, called the Prayer of Absolution: *“God the father of mercies through the death and resurrection of his Son as reconciled the world to himself and the sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins. Through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon, and peace and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”*

Steps for the Sacrament of Reconciliation & Penance

1. Complete Examination of Conscience
2. The priest gives a blessing or greeting.
3. Make the Sign of the Cross.
4. Say: “Bless me father, for I have sinned. This is my First Confession and here are my sins. (Confess your sins to the priest.)
5. Once you have confessed your sins, say: “I am sorry for these and all my sins.”
6. Listen to the priest. (The priest gives a penance and offers advice to help you live a holy life.)
7. Priest will ask you to say the Act of Contrition, expressing your sorrow for your sins.

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 offended 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 occasion of sin." Amen.

8. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.

9. Tell the priest thank you and exit the confessional.

10. Go to the pew and complete the penance the priest gave you.



After Confession

Rejoice! You have received the forgiveness of Christ! What should you do when you leave? Remember the words you recited in the Act of Contrition: *"I firmly intend, with you of your grace, to sin no more, and to avoid the near occasion of sin."*

Before you leave the confessional, the priest will give you your penance, which may consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy or sacrifices. These works help to join us with Christ, who alone died for us. The goal of our life's journey is to grow closer to God. We can do this through prayer, spiritual reading, fasting and the reception of the Sacraments.