

Helps in using the Sacrament of Confession

❖ Elements of Making a Good Confession

1. A thorough examination of conscience since your last confession is necessary.
2. Inform the priest of the approximate length of time since your last Confession. Say to the priest: *"Father forgive me for I have sinned. It has been ____ years (or months) since my last Confession."*
3. Confess your serious sins, or mortal sins, as completely as possible, naming them as specifically as possible and with some indication of their frequency. Less serious sins should also be mentioned specifically, but can be mentioned more generally.
4. In order to receive the effects of forgiveness from you sins, there needs to be a sincere desire to reject the sinful behavior confessed and a willingness to respond to God's grace by attempting to avoid all future sin as well as times when sinning might be too easy to fall into.

❖ Quotes from Scripture that may be helpful in thinking about your sins:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will refresh you."

-Mt. 11:28-

"A man owns a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, Will he not leave the ninety-nine out of the hills and go in search of the stray?"

-Mt. 18:12

"God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, But that the world might be saved through him.

-Jn. 3:17-

❖ Act of Contrition:

The Act of Contrition is said after you have confessed your sins to the Priest and after he has given you a penance to do.

***Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you.
I detest all of my sins because of your just punishments,
but most of all because they offend you, my God,
who are 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.***

Remember: It's completely fine to ask the priest to help you if you don't know what to say.

Examination of Conscience before the Sacrament of Confession for Pre-Adolescents and Teenagers

Below is a suggested way of examining your conscience in preparation for a fruitful confession of sin. It is based on the Ten Commandments and gives examples of the kinds of sins that tend to be committed against each of those divine precepts.

1. **I am the Lord your God. You shall not have any other gods before Me.**
 - Have I put money, popularity, material things or any other good above my relationship with God?
 - Have I rejected any of God's revelation to me of who He is or what He wants me to do?
 - Have I tried to turn away from a vocation to which I think God might be calling me?
 - Have I despaired of God's help or provision for me in my times of need?
 - Have I presumed that God would forgive me when I decided to do something sinful?
 - Have I used things that are superstitious, occult, or related to witchcraft?
2. **You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain.**
 - Have I used the name of the Lord in vain, or in any other way used in improperly?
 - Have I made false oaths or failed to keep a promise made in God's sight?
 - Have I disrespected the holiness of God and/or of persons or things that are specially associated with God (like priests, sacred objects, the parish buildings, etc.)?
3. **You shall remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.**
 - Have I failed through my own faults to not worship God on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation by attending Mass?
 - Have I made an effort to keep Sunday holy by spending time with my family, spending extra time in prayer or in charitable activities, resting from the work of the week?
 - Do I make an effort to pray regularly and attentively throughout the week?
4. **You shall honor your father and mother.**
 - Have I been respectful of my parents (and step-parents or other family members)?
 - Have I been respectful of my teachers and others in authority over me?
5. **You shall not kill.**
 - Have I done damage to someone's reputation or well being in any way?
 - Have I done damage to myself through drugs, alcohol or other self-destructive behavior?
 - Have I hoped that bad things would happen to someone else?
 - Have I been a bad example to anyone else (especially younger siblings) that might have made them fall into sin themselves?
6. **You shall not commit adultery. You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.**
 - Have I been sexually impure with myself and/or with something else?
 - Have I pursued and sought out lustful thoughts on my own or through reading/watching sexually impure materials in books, on the internet, on TV?
 - Am I careful to guard against sexually impure entertainment that I might otherwise have access to in books/magazine, on the internet or on TV?
7. **You shall not steal. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.**
 - Have I respected the property of others, both in my family and outside of it?
 - Have I been unhappy with the blessing that God has given me and been jealous of another?
 - Have I tried to get the things, clothes, etc. that I see others having/wearing, just because they have them? Am I sinfully jealous of what others have?
8. **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**
 - Have I told lies?
 - Have I gossiped?
 - Have I told others someone's faults without serious reason to do so?

