

## How to go to Confession

- **Spend time examining your conscience.** The 10 Commandments can help you think about where you've made mistakes. Call on the Holy Spirit to help you.
- **When you're ready, enter the confessional and greet the priest.** Make the sign of the cross and say, "Bless me Father for I have sinned, it has been \_\_ (days/months/years) since my last confession."
- **Mention venial (everyday) sins and any mortal sins.** Try to be thorough but it's okay if you don't remember every sin. When you're done, say "I'm sorry for these and all my sins."
- **Listen to the priest.** He may offer some guidance and then will give you a penance which could be a form of prayer, a service or some work of mercy. Often, you'll be able to complete your penance while still at church.
- **Pray the Act of Contrition.** Don't worry if you don't have it memorized. A copy will be in the confessional for you.
- **God, through the priest, will absolve you from your sins.**
- **You may leave and fulfill your act of penance.**



### Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with Your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

Amen

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Information taken from [www.USCCB.org](http://www.USCCB.org) and  
[www.hallow.com](http://www.hallow.com).

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# A Guide to Confession

The sacrament of penance, also called "reconciliation" or "confession," is an experience of God's gift of endless mercy. Jesus entrusted the ministry of the sacraments to the Church and receiving sacraments helps us live a holier life.



As the USCCB explains, penance also "challenges us to have the same kind of compassion and forgiveness for those who sin against us."

"Confession is an act of honesty and courage - an act of entrusting ourselves, beyond sin, to the mercy of a loving and forgiving God."  
~ St. Pope John Paul II

# Examination of Conscience

## 1. I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange Gods before Me.

- Have I really loved God above all things or have I put other things (work, money, drugs/alcohol, electronics, other people) ahead of Him?
- Have I made time for God each day in prayer?
- Have I denied my faith or participated in the occult, ouija boards, tarot cards, superstitions?
- Am I whole-hearted in accepting and following God's teaching or do I pick and choose the convenient parts of His message?
- Have I ever despaired of God's love for me?

## 2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

- Have I insulted God's holy name or used it carelessly?
- Have I shown disrespect for the Blessed Virgin Mary, the saints, the Church, holy things or holy people?

## 3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

- Have I missed Mass deliberately on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation?
- Do I take Mass seriously - do I actively participate or just "go through the motions"?
- Do I arrive late or leave early?
- Have I fasted 1 hour before Communion?
- Have I received Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin?
- Have I avoided unnecessary work on Sundays?

## 4. Honor you father and your mother.

- Do I honor and obey my parents? Have I cursed at them or harmed them in any way?
- Did I neglect my duties to my husband, wife, children, siblings, or parents?
- Have I failed to be grateful for the sacrifices my parents have made for me?
- Have I disrespected family members or cause tension and fights in my family?

## 5. You shall not kill.

- Have I deliberately killed or hurt anyone?
- Have I neglected my health? Have I mutilated or harmed my own body? Did I attempt suicide or entertain the thought of taking my own life?
- Did I have an abortion, or encourage or help someone else to have one? Have I participated in the practice of abortion through my silence, financial support, or voting?
- Have I taken part in or supported so-called "mercy killing" (euthanasia)?
- Have I abused my children or others in any way?
- Have I born hatred or withheld forgiveness?
- Have I lost my temper?

## 6. You shall not commit adultery.

- Am I faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action? Have I been sexually active outside of marriage?
- Have I used artificial birth control, or been sterilized?
- Have I masturbated?
- Have I indulged in pornography?
- Have I used impure language or told impure jokes?
- Am I modest in dress?

## 7. You shall not steal.

- Did I steal, cheat, help or encourage others to steal or keep stolen goods?
- Have I cheated my employer? Have I given a full day's work for a full day's pay? Have I paid a fair wage to my employees?
- Have I made acquiring material possessions the focus of my life? Am I excessively attached to the things of this world?
- Have I destroyed property belonging to someone else?

## 8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- Have I lied or sworn falsely?
- Have I gossiped or encouraged others to gossip?
- Did I insult or tease anyone with the intention of hurting them?
- Did I fail to keep secret what should be confidential?

## 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

- Have I deliberately and consciously permitted sexual thoughts about someone to whom I am not married? Do I try to control my imagination?
- Am I responsible in the books I read and the movies I watch?
- Have I treated others as objects and not as children of God?

## 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

- Am I envious of the possessions, talents, and successes of others?
- Have I acted out in jealousy of someone's gifts or talents?
- Do I generously share my goods with others and the Church?