

How to Make a Good Confession

1. Examine your conscience.
2. Be sincerely sorry for your sins.
3. Confess your sins to a priest.
4. Resolve to amend your life.
5. After your confession, do the penance the priest assigns.

Procedure in the Confessional

Make the Sign of the Cross and say: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been - (state the length of time) - since my last confession. These are my sins."

Then tell your mortal sins and the number of times committed. If you have no mortal sin to confess, then confess some venial sins you have committed since your last confession. Then say: "For these and all the sins of my past life, I am truly sorry."

The priest now gives the necessary advice, assigns your penance and asks you to make the Act of Contrition. After the priest gives the absolution say "Thank you, Father" leave the confessional and then perform the penance assigned by the priest.

Remember the three "Bs" of Confession: Be brief. Be brutal. Begone."

"The Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven, and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all good and deserving of all My love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, do penance, and amend my life. Amen.

An Examination of Conscience

I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me. Do I give God time every day in prayer? Do I seek to love Him with my whole heart? Have I been involved with superstitious practices or the occult? Do I seek to surrender myself to God's Word as taught by the Church? Have I ever received Communion in the state of mortal sin? Have I ever deliberately told a lie in Confession or have I withheld a mortal sin from the priest in Confession?

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Have I used God's name in vain, lightly, or carelessly? Have I been angry with God? Have I wished evil upon any other person? Have I insulted a sacred person or abused a sacred object?

Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day. Have I deliberately missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation? Have I not kept Sunday as a family day and a day of rest? Do I do needless work on Sunday? Do I make others work on Sunday?

Honor your father and your mother. Do I honor and obey my parents? Have I neglected my duties to my spouse and children? Have I given my family good religious example? Do I try to bring peace into my home life? Do I care for my aged and infirm relatives? Do I respect my elders? Do I respect my pastor, bishop, and the Pope?

You shall not kill. Have I had an abortion or encouraged anyone to have an abortion? Have I physically harmed anyone? Have I abused alcohol or drugs? Did I give scandal to anyone, thereby leading them into sin? Have I been angry or resentful? Have I harbored hatred in my heart? Have I been sterilized for reasons of birth control? Have I encouraged or condoned sterilization?

You shall not commit adultery. Have I been faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action? Have I engaged in any sexual activity before marriage or outside of marriage? Have I used any method of contraception or artificial birth control? Has each sexual act in my marriage been open to the transmission of new life? Have I been guilty of any homosexual activity? Do I seek to be pure in my thoughts, words and actions? Am I careful to dress modestly, so as not to tempt others? Have I been guilty of masturbation?

You shall not steal. Have I taken what is not mine? Have I returned or made restitution for what I have stolen? Do I waste time at work, school or at home? Do I gamble excessively, thereby denying my family of their needs? Do I pay my debts promptly? Do I seek to share what I have with the poor?

You shall not bear false witness. Have I lied? Have I gossiped? Have I harmed someone's reputation? Have I spoken behind someone else's back? Am I critical, negative, or uncharitable in my thoughts of others? Do I keep secret what should be kept confidential?

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. Have I consented to impure thoughts? Have I caused them by impure television, movies, books, magazines or internet? Do I pray at once to banish impure thoughts and temptations? Do I listen to, or engage in, impure conversations or jokes?

You shall not covet your neighbor's goods. Am I jealous of what other people have? Do I envy other people's families or possessions? Am I greedy or selfish? Are material possessions the purpose of my life? Do I trust that God will care for all of my material and spiritual needs?