

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Prior to entering the confessional, remember examine your conscience to think about what you will say. See below for 2 examples of examination of conscience.

Procedure for Reconciliation

1. After the priest greets you in the name of Christ, make the sign of the cross.
2. You say: *“Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. This is my first confession. These are my sins.”* Once you have celebrated your First Reconciliation and you return to celebrate the Sacrament again, you will say: *“Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been (state how long) since my last confession. These are my sins.”*
3. Tell your sins simply and honestly to the priest. You might even want to discuss the circumstances and the cause of your sins and ask the priest for advice or direction. Don't be afraid to confess your sins to the priest. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the priest is bound by what is called the “seal of the confessional”— meaning that he will never tell anyone else what you tell him.
4. Listen to the advice the priest gives you and accept the penance he assigns to you. You will then say the Act of Contrition for your sins.
5. Wait and listen for the priest to give you absolution. Thank the priest and leave the confessional.
6. Sit in the church quietly and spend some time in prayer, completing your penance and thanking Our Lord and praising Him for the gift of His mercy. Try to perform your penance as soon as possible. Remember that your confession is not complete until you perform the penance the priest has given you.

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.

An Examination of Conscience for Children

by Fr. Edward Filardi, Gaithersburg, Maryland

I. I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.

Do I give time every day to God in prayer?

Do I put my trust in superstitions, good luck charms, rather than God alone?

Have I rejected any Church teaching or denied that I was a Catholic?

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

Have I used the words "God" or "Jesus" in anger or irreverently?

Have I used foul or ugly language? Have I wished evil on another?

III. Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.

Have I missed Mass on Sunday or any holy day of obligation?

Do I arrive at church late or leave early? Do I try to be reverent and pay attention during Mass?

Do I avoid unnecessary work on Sunday?

Do I make Sunday a day of prayer or rest?

IV. Honor your father and your mother.

Do I respect and obey my parents?

Have I dishonored or mistreated them by word or deed?

Am I willing to help around the house or must I be nagged a hundred times?

Do I try to get along with my brothers and sisters? Am I a tattletale or bully?

Do I give a good example, especially to younger siblings?

Do I respect others in authority: priests, nuns, police, old people, baby-sitters?

V. You shall not kill.

Do I beat up others or hurt their bodies?

Do I say cruel things, or make fun of others to hurt their feelings?

Do I say mean things about others behind their backs?

Have I stopped speaking to anyone? Do I encourage others to do bad things?

Do I try to love all people, born and unborn?

VI. You shall not commit adultery.

Do I treat my body and other people's bodies with purity and respect?

Do I look at television shows, movies, or pictures that are bad?

Am I modest in my speech and the clothes I wear?

VII. You shall not steal.

Have I taken things that were not mine from a store or another person?

Have I destroyed or misused another person's property for fun?

Do I return things that I borrow? In good condition?

VIII. You shall not commit false witness against your neighbor.

Am I honest in my school work?

Do I tell lies to make myself look good?

Do I tell lies to protect myself from punishment?

Do I tell lies that make another person look bad or get them in trouble?

IX. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

Do I allow my parents to spend time with one another, or do I get jealous and want them to pay attention only to me?

Do I get mad when I have to share my friends?

Are there kids I will not play with or be mean to because they look different?

X. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Am I jealous or envious of the things or abilities that others have?

Am I thankful to God and my parents for what they have given me?

Do I share the things I have with my family, friends and poor people?

Animal Examination of Conscience

How many of you have trouble thinking of sins to confess? I do. To help us to recall our sins today, let's think about whether we are like any of the following animals.

PIG

Are you like a pig? The pig doesn't mind being muddy. He is not very neat and clean. How often do you leave your room messy, or leave dirty clothes on the floor, adding to mom or dad's work?

BEAR

Are you grouchy as a bear? Do people stay away from you because you are often in a bad mood?

DONKEY

Are you stubborn like a donkey? Do you always want your own way?

DOG

Are you a barking dog? Do you bark a lot at other people by saying things like: "I am not going to do that"; "Get out of my way!"; "Leave me alone!" or other things that hurt?

LION

Are you like the lion? He sure does roar a lot, doesn't he? Has there been the sound or roaring between you and someone in your family this week?

MONKEY

The monkey rarely settles down to business. Do you spend your time "monkeying" around at school, at home, or in Church? Do you create a problem for your family or teachers?

BUG

Are you like a bug??? A BIG bug?? Always bugging your brothers or sisters? Or maybe you bug Mom or Dad to but you something every time you are in a store?

Maybe you are like an animal we haven't mentioned. Take a little time to think about which animal(s) you are like.

Then when you come up to the Priest ask God to forgive you and help you be a better person.