

## A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO CONFESSION

### BEFORE GOING TO CONFESSION:

1. Pray. Ask God to give you the grace to make a good confession.
2. Examine your conscience. Reflect on your life, trying to recall all the times you sinned against God since your last confession. Use an Examination of Conscience to help you.
3. Be truly sorry for your sins.
4. Make the resolution to avoid committing these sins in the future.

### DURING CONFESSION:

1. Upon entering the confessional take your place, kneel, or seat, depending on the confessional.
2. Greet the priest. A simple **“Good Morning”** or **“Good Evening”**.
3. Make the sign of the Cross (**In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**) and say the following: **“Bless me father, for I have sinned. It has been ...** (state how many days, weeks, months, or years) **since my last confession. These are my sins...”**  
**Or “Bless me father, for I have sinned, this is my First Confession. These are my sins... “**
4. Confess your sins briefly and clearly. It might be helpful to start with the one that is most difficult to say since it will make it easier to mention the rest. And if you can remember, mention how many times.
5. When you finish confessing your sins, say: **“...and I am truly sorry for all my sins.”**
6. The priest will then give you some ways that you can do better.
7. He will then assign you a penance which you are to do when you leave the confessional. It might be something like saying a few prayers, doing an act of charity, or making some sacrifice. Whatever it is, make sure that you understand it clearly and that you remember to do it later.
8. After giving you the penance, the priest will ask you to say the Act of Contrition.

#### 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.**

9. When you are finished praying the Act of Contrition, the priest will say the Prayer of Absolution. He will stretch out his hand and say a prayer over you. Listen attentively to that prayer. At the end he will make the sign of the cross over you and you should **make the Sign of the Cross** yourself too. At the end, answer, **“Amen.”**
10. The priest will say, “Give thanks to the Lord for He is good.”  
You respond: **“His mercy endures forever.”**  
The priest says: “Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace.”  
You respond: **“Thanks be to God.”**

### AFTER CONFESSION:

1. Leave and pray or do your penance and thank God for His mercy and love.

## EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

### **1. I am the Lord your God. You shall not have any other gods before Me.**

Make God the most important thing in your life.

Have I put God first, or have I sometimes made other things in my life more important than God? Do I remember to talk to him? Do I choose what God wants for me over what I want for myself?

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

Use God's name the right way.

Have I used God's name with care? Have I used God's name in the wrong way (for example, in anger or irreverently?) Have I used bad language?

### **3. You shall remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.**

Make Sunday a day to worship God.

Have I tried my best to worship God at Mass by singing, praying, and listening? Have I misbehaved during Mass?

### **4. You shall honor your father and mother.**

Love your parents and follow their rules.

Have I obeyed my parents — even when they are not looking? Have I talked back to them?

### **5. You shall not kill.**

Be kind to the people and animals God made.

Have I been kind to others? Have I solved disagreements in a peaceful way? Have I fought with anyone?

Have I taken good care of my pets?

### **6. You shall not commit adultery.**

Be respectful in the things you do with your body.

Have I followed God's rules in how I treat my body? Do I respect the bodies of others? Do I look at tv shows, movies, pictures or games that are bad?

### **7. You shall not steal.**

Take care of other people's things; don't take what belongs to someone else.

Have I respected other people's things? Have I taken something that doesn't belong to me?

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

Tell the truth.

Have I told the truth? Have I told a lie or things that were only partly true? Have I told lies that I should ask forgiveness for? Have I cheated in my schoolwork?

### **9. You shall you covet your neighbor's wife.**

Keep your thoughts and words clean.

Have I tried to keep my mind on good things? Have I been jealous of others? Have I said unkind words about others because of my jealousy?

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

Be happy with the things you have.

Have I been happy with the things I have? Have I been jealous of others and what they have? —