

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE AND CONFESSION GUIDE FOR YOUTH

Before Confession:

Pray to the Holy Spirit for self-knowledge and trust in the mercy of God. Examine your conscience with the help of some questions (see below), be truly sorry for your sins, and resolve to change your life.

Examination of Conscience

1. I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD. YOU SHALL NOT HAVE ANY GODS BEFORE ME: Have you turned your back on God? Have you doubted God's love in difficult times? Have believed in fortunetellers, psychics, or witchcraft? Have you made use of any superstitious practices? Do you pray every day? Have you given into sin thinking that you can just go to confession afterwards? Have you looked at books, magazines or TV shows which you knew to be anti-Christian? Have you spoken with disrespect of priests, sacred objects, or Catholic teachings? Is anything in your life more important to you than God? Do you give quality time to God? Do you use your gifts to glorify God? Do take your Religion class seriously?

2. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE LORD'S NAME IN VAIN: Have you watched movies, read books, or listened to musicians and comedians which slander the Lord's name? Do you think it is fun when others use the Lord's name in vain? Do you use the name of God, Jesus, Mary, or any other Holy Name in anger, surprise, or disappointment? Have you sworn on the name of God? Have you cursed yourself or others, or any creature? Have you angered others so as to make them swear? Have you made a false promise?

3. REMEMBER TO KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY: Have you missed Mass on any Sunday or on Holy Days of Obligation? Do you have a positive attitude toward your family when attending Mass? Do you take one day of solemn rest every week? Have you allowed yourself to be distracted during Mass? Do you try to participate in Mass? Have you talked or laughed excessively in the church? Have you worked needlessly on Sunday? Have you neglected prayer and going to church due to sports, social functions, homework, or just plain laziness? Do you try to participate in Mass? Have you talked or laughed excessively in the church? Have you worked needlessly on Sunday? Have you neglected prayer and going to church due to sports, social functions, homework, or just plain laziness?

4. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER: Have you honored your parents, superiors, and teachers? Do you speak to them with respect? Have you deceived or disobeyed them? Do you behave appropriately toward substitute teachers in your school? Do you respect authority? Are you thankful for your parents and your family? Are you ashamed of your family? Do you listen to your parents' wishes the first time they ask you to do something?

5. YOU SHALL NOT KILL: Have you hated anyone? Have you oppressed anyone? Have you desired revenge? Have you held a grudge? Have you refused to speak to others in anger? Have you made fun of anybody? Do you pick on people? Do you stick up for those who are teased? Do you pick fights? Have you encouraged fighting? Have you injured others? Have you caused others to disagree? Do you respect your body? Have you profaned your body with alcohol, drugs or tobacco? Have you encouraged others to do so? Do you eat well and care for your health? Have you watched violent shows, movies, and games? Are you against abortion? Do you pray and speak up to end abortion? Have you cooperated in an abortion?

6. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY AND (9) YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE: Have you dressed, danced or acted provocatively? Do you surround yourself with people who dress or act provocatively? Do you watch TV shows and movies that promote un-Christian

sexual values? Have you read impure books? Have you looked at pornography? Do you tell dirty jokes? Have you willfully entertained lustful thoughts or desires? Have you given into sexual desires? Have you engaged in sexual activity? Have you flirted with impure intentions? Have you acted impurely over the Internet?

7. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL: Have you been guilty of stealing or deceit in buying or selling? Have you willfully damaged another person's goods? Have you vandalized, spoiled, or ruined someone else's property? Have you shoplifted? Have you encouraged others to do so? Have you failed to return something that belongs to somebody else? Are you wasteful with food, time, or other resources?

8. YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR: Have you lied? Have you gossiped? Have you injured someone's reputation falsely? Have you jumped to false conclusions? Have you answered questions honestly and completely? Have you judged others unfairly? Have you cheated in school? Have you publicly stood up for your Christian faith? Do you take a stand for what is right? Do you engage in television gossip and supermarket tabloids?

10. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S GOODS: Have you been jealous of what someone else has? Have you refused to be content with what you have? Are you thankful for what God has given you? Do you desire somebody else's property, success, or life?

Going to Confession:

Reconciliation may be face-to-face or anonymous, with a screen between you and the priest. Choose the option that is the most comfortable for you.

- Go to the priest and begin with **the Sign of the Cross**. Welcoming you, the priest will Give a blessing or greeting. Then say, "**Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been ____ weeks/ months/years since my last confession.**"
- Confess all your sins you have committed since your last confession to the priest. (If you are unsure or uneasy, tell him and ask for help.)
- Say, "I am sorry for these and all my sins."
- Then listen to the priest for whatever counsel he may judge appropriate. If you have any question about the faith, how to grow in holiness, or whether something is a sin, feel free to ask him. Then the priest will assign you a penance.
- Pray the Act of Contrition when the priest tells you.
- Listen as the priest absolves you of your sins and enjoy the fact that God has truly freed you from all your sins.

Act of Contrition

God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, 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 you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace to confess my sins, do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

After Confession

Rejoice! You have received the forgiveness of Christ! What should you do when you leave? Remember the words you recited in the Act of Contrition: "*I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.*"

Before you leave the confessional, the priest will give you your penance, which may consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy or sacrifices. These works help to join us with Christ, who alone died for us. The goal of our life's journey is to grow closer to God. We can do this through prayer, spiritual reading, fasting and the reception of the Sacraments.