

To make a good confession, we need to look at the following steps:

- ❖ **WHAT TO DO BEFORE CONFESSION**
- ❖ **WHAT TO DO DURING CONFESSION**
- ❖ **WHAT TO DO AFTER CONFESSION**

WHAT TO DO BEFORE CONFESSION

1. Examination of Conscience - Recall your sins

Take a few minutes to think about what you have done against God's Commandments. Review your life with the help of some questions (listed below), which are based on the 10 Commandments.

Keep in mind that the Church asks you to confess all the mortal sins that you can remember to have committed since your last confession. Deliberately failing to mention a mortal sin is another mortal sin of sacrilege.

*1st Commandment: **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?

*2nd Commandment: **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?

*3rd Commandment: **Remember to keep holy the Sabbath 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?

*4th Commandment: **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?

*5th Commandment: **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?

*6th Commandment: **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?

*7th Commandment: **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?

*8th Commandment: **You shall not bear 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?

*9th Commandment: **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?

*10th Commandment: **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?

1. Be truly sorry for your sins

The essential act of penance, on the part of the penitent, is contrition, i.e., a clear and decisive rejection of the sin committed with the resolution not to commit it again.

As you recall your sins, you should try to foster a sorrow for them. You are not trying to just put together a list of thoughts, words or actions that you have done wrong. Each sin reflects a lack of love for your Father God. And it is important to be sorry for these lacks of love.

The resolution to avoid committing these sins in the future (amendment) is a sure sign that your sorrow is genuine and authentic. It is not enough to say you are sorry, you should try to struggle to eliminate these sins from your life. God's grace with the intention to rectify your life will give you the strength to resist and overcome temptation in the future.

WHAT TO DO DURING CONFESSION

In general, you should mention your sins and the number of times you have committed them.

You begin with the usual introductory greeting and make the sign of the cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The priest says:

May the Lord be in your heart and help you to confess your sins with true sorrow.

The priest or you may read or recite from memory a few words from Holy Scripture relating to God's mercy and to repentance, for instance:

Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.

You then confess your sins. You may begin by saying:

Bless me father, for I have sinned. My last confession was (state number of weeks, months or years since your last confession).

My sins are as follows: (state sins)

Following your confession of sins, say: I am sorry for these and all of my sins

The priest gives you appropriate advice and imposes a penance.

The priest invites you to make an act of contrition. You may say, for instance:

O 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 fully intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.

or

Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.

You answer: Amen.

The priest continues, saying:

May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, whatever good you do and suffering you endure, heal your sins, help you to grow in holiness, and reward you with eternal life. Go in peace.

WHAT TO DO AFTER CONFESSION

Give thanks to God for the grace of reconciliation you have just received.

You should fulfill the penance given you by the priest as soon as possible. The fulfillment of the penance is one way to make amends for the lack of love that each sin represents.

If you recall some mortal sin you forgot to tell, rest assured that it has been forgiven with the others. But be sure to confess it in your next Confession.



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Confession



Guidelines about what to do before, during and after Confession