

Preparing to Go to Confession: THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

How to use this examination of conscience: Prayerfully reflect on each commandment in light of Christ's Great Commandment: **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul, and your neighbor as yourself."** You may wish to write down your sins on a slip of paper and bring that paper with you as you celebrate the sacrament.

FIRST COMMANDMENT: "I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me."

This commandment forbids us to worship anyone or anything besides God.. We worship him by Acts of Faith, Hope and Love; by prayer and making sacrifices for others.

1. Do I truly love God more than anyone or anything else?
2. Do I pray each day?
3. Are there false gods (things, activities) in my life to which I give more attention than God?

SECOND COMMANDMENT: "You shall not take the name of the Lord God in vain." This commandment forbids us to misuse God's name (God, Jesus, Christ, Lord) in cursing or swearing. We must respect this Holy Name at all times. It reminds us to be pure in our words and to not reject God.

1. Have I used any swear words that included God's Name?
2. Do I use the Name of Jesus Christ as an expression of surprise or anger?
3. Do I joke about God or my faith?
4. Do I listen to music which disrespects God and all that is holy and sacred?

THIRD COMMANDMENT: "Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day." This commandment asks us to attend Holy Mass on Sundays/Saturday night Vigil and Holy Days of Obligation. It reminds us that any **unnecessary** work should be avoided on these days. It reminds us too that we should give our bodies the rest they need and spend quality time with family.

1. O I go to Mass regularly on Saturday evening/Sunday Masses and Holy Day Masses?
2. Do I do unnecessary activities on Sundays that prevent me from going to Mass, praying, relaxing or spending time with the family?
3. Do I give my body the rest it needs?

FOURTH COMMANDMENT: "Honor your Father and Mother."This commandment asks us to respect and show loving obedience to our parents and also to honor others in authority over us, such as teachers and coaches.

1. Have I shown love and respect for my parents, even when we might not agree?
2. Do I help my parents by doing chores and obeying them? Do I pray for them?
3. Am I respectful of my teachers and others in authority?

FIFTH COMMANDMENT: "You shall not kill." This commandment forbids not just actual murder but even those actions that are dangerous to the life of the body and the life of the soul.

1. Have I had serious thoughts of anger and hatred towards others?
2. Do I drink, smoke, or use drugs or other things that can harm my life?
3. Do I enjoy music which encourages hatred?
4. Have I harmed others by teasing them or bullying them?
5. Have I laughed at people and embarrassed them?

SIXTH COMMANDMENT and NINTH COMMANDMENT: "You shall not commit adultery" and " You shall not covet your neighbor's wife (or husband)" These two commandments deal any misuse of our sexuality, whether with others or alone. Adultery means sexual relations between two persons, when either of those two people are married to another person. Covet means that we desire or want the spouse of another person. Although these things happen to adults mainly, they carry a message for all of us. Do we have discipline of our sexual desires and urges or are they controlling us?

1. Have I respected the gift of the human body, both my own and those of others?
2. Have I encouraged the wrong use of sexual activity by myself or with another?
3. Do I look at magazines or movies or images on the Internet which are sexually explicit?
4. Do I dress in a way which respects my body?
5. Do I listen to music which encourages me to have impure thoughts?
6. Have I taken inappropriate pictures of others or myself?

SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS: "You shall not steal" and "You shall not covet your neighbor's goods". These two commandments deal with respecting the rights and property of others. They forbid us to take what does not belong to us, and to avoid even the desire to take things.

1. Have I shoplifted or taken something that is not mine?
2. Have I destroyed the property of others?
3. Have I taken someone else's possessions, even if they are little things?
4. Am I envious about things my friends have and show this by my unkind words to them or to others about them?
5. Am I greedy or selfish?

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." This commandment tells us always to be honest and truthful; it forbids us to say anything that damages the good reputation of others.

1. Do I have the habit of lying?
2. Do I lie in order to avoid punishment or to make myself look great in the eyes of my friends?
3. Do I gossip and spread rumors about others, even if I think they are true?