

Confession Guide for Children

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

- Did I pay attention at Mass?
- Have I fooled around in Church?
- Did I say my prayers every day?
- Did I say mean things to my mom or dad?
- Did I always say "Thank You" to people?
- Am I hard to get along with (during school, at Grandma's, at home?)?
- Did I do what my mom and dad told me to do? My teacher?
- Was I lazy around the house?
- Did I do my chores?
- Did I hurt others people's feelings by calling them bad names?
- Have I started fights with my brothers and sisters at home?
- Have I blamed other people for things I do?
- Did I get other people into trouble?
- Do I hit people when I get mad?
- Have I forgiven people? Or am I holding a grudge?
- Have I cheated or been unfair in games?
- Did I refuse to play with someone for no good reason?
- Was I was lazy about my schoolwork?
- Did I fail to do my homework?
- Did I cheat in school?
- How many times did I lie to my parents? My teachers? My friends?
- Did I take anything that didn't belong to me?
- Did I avoid medicine? Did I refuse to eat food I didn't like?

A GUIDE TO CONFESSION

How to go to Confession

1. You always have the option to go to confession anonymously, that is, behind a screen or face to face, if you so desire.
2. After the priest greets you in the name of Christ, make the sign of the cross. He may choose to recite a reading from Scripture, after which you 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 root causes of your sins and ask the priest for advice or direction.

4. Listen to the advice the priest gives you and accept the penance from him. Then make an Act of Contrition for your sins.

5. The priest will then dismiss you with the words of praise: "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. You respond: "For His mercy endures forever." The priest will then conclude with: "The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace." And you respond by saying: "Thanks be to God."

6. Spend some time with Our Lord thanking and praising Him for the gift of His mercy. Try to perform your penance as soon as possible.

AN ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins, because of Your just punishment, 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 sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

HELPFUL HINTS

Use the words: Sacrament of **Peace**, Sacrament of **Penance**, and Sacrament of **Reconciliation** interchangeably.

Teach your child that **sin** is saying, No to God or disobeying God.

Do not present the terms "mortal" and "venial". These will be presented later on. Some children confuse the intent of an act and see all actions as a serious offense.

Convey to your child that a **temptation** is not a sin. Relate different, everyday, incidents in which your child can tell you whether a situation is a **mistake**, a **temptation** or a **sin**.

Make your child aware of different times in our lives when it is important to say that we are sorry, or that we forgive one another.

FURTHER AIDS FOR CHILDREN'S EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

1. There are three realities in a child's life: home, school and recreation. The examination of conscience should center on these areas.

HOME: What are the things at home that my mother and father are constantly getting after me for? (Selfishness, quarreling, being unkind, not doing what I am told, etc.)

SCHOOL: What are the ways we know our teachers are most often displeased with us? (Not doing our homework, disturbing others, cheating, being disrespectful and disobeying.)

RECREATION: What are some of my actions that make friends angry or displeased with me? (Selfishness, meanness, cheating in a game, telling tales, fighting, calling others names, etc.)

2. The child's overall relationship with God could be examined in the following ways:

Do I keep my friendship with God alive by talking to Him, knowing that He is always present, and worshipping in the community?

Do I thank God for the good things He does for me? Do I accept the things that are not pleasant?

Do I say I am sorry when I offend him?

3. As to the number of sins to be confessed, you can help your child single out the areas he/she is most conscious of failing, and urge your child to concentrate on these during confession.
4. It is good if one can help the child to aim at telling WHY he/she was mean, selfish, etc. This will help to deepen the meaning of confession as your child grows older and to develop a conscience that grows and expands as they mature (i.e., I was mean to my little brother because I didn't want to share my toys). As one grows older, the WHY becomes more important.

Some other questions that will help your child examine his conscience are the following:

Jesus told us to Love God with our whole heart, our whole mind and our whole soul.

- Do I pray to God every day?
- Do I show love for God's holy name?
- Do I go with the community to worship God on Sunday?

Jesus told us to love others as He has loved us.

- Do I speak kindly to my parents?
- Do I obey my teachers and others who take care of me?
- Do I say unkind things to others?
- Do I take things that do not belong to me?
- Am I sometimes mean to others?
- Do I tell the truth?

******* RECOMMENDED FORM FOR CONFESSION *******

You Say: **In the name of the Father and of the Son and of Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Father, it has been ____ (how long) since my last confession..

These are my sins: (tell your sins, then say:)

This is all that I can remember.

Father: (Gives you advice and a penance.)

If you have not said an Act of Contrition in a group (as in a Penance Service), you then say an Act of Contrition. You can use this simple form:

O my God, I am sorry for all my sins.

I resolve with your help to overcome my sins.

Or more commonly used:

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins, because of your just punishments, 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 sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin.

Father gives you absolution (forgives your sins), ending with: "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

You answer: **Amen.** This means: Yes, I believe my sins are forgiven.

Stories to Share for Reconciliation

Parables of Jesus by Tomie de Poala

Something Beautiful by Sharon Dennis Wyeth

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak.

Even If I Did Something Awful by Barbara Shook Hazen

Lily's Purple Plastic Purse by Kevin Henkes

Mama, Do You Love Me? By Barbara M. Joosse

The Black and White Rainbow by John Trent

Sweet Strawberries by Phyllis Reynolds

The Doorbell Rang by Pat Hutchins

King at the Door by Brock Cole

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe

The Empty Pot by Demi

Fly Away Home by Eve Bunting

Jesus Forgives My Sins by Mary Terese Donze, A.S.C.
(available at Catholic book stores)