
EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Come, O Holy Spirit, and help me to remember my sins. Give me the honesty I need to reflect upon my thoughts, words, and actions of this day. Amen.

First Commandment: “I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods besides me.”

This commandment forbids us to worship anyone or anything besides the one true God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We worship him by Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity; by prayer; and by self-denial.

1. Do I truly love God more than anyone or anything else?
2. Do I say my prayers every morning and night?
3. Are there “false gods” such as popularity, fashionable clothing, and horoscopes or other superstitious practices that I worship by giving them more attention than I give to the true God?

Second Commandment: “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.”

This commandment forbids us to misuse God’s name (God, Jesus, Christ, Lord) in cursing or swearing. We must respect his holy name at all times and the names of his holy ones too.

1. Did I use any swear words that included God’s name?
2. Did I use the name of Jesus Christ as an expression of surprise or anger?
3. Did I joke about God or religion, including Mary and the saints?

Third Commandment: “Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.”

This commandment tells us to attend Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. It reminds us that any unnecessary work or shopping should be avoided on these days.

1. Have I been faithful to Sunday and Holy Day Masses (which can also be celebrated on Saturday evenings or on the night before the Holy Day)?
2. Have I prepared for Sunday Mass, especially by going to confession if I have sinned?

Fourth Commandment: “Honor your father and mother.”

This commandment orders us to show respect and loving obedience to our parents and also to honor others in authority over us, such as teachers and government leaders (as long as they do not tell us to do things that are against God’s law).

1. Have I shown love and respect for my parents, even when they punish me?
2. Do I help my parents by doing my chores and obeying their orders? Do I pray for them?
3. Do I listen to my teacher(s) and do the homework they assign?
4. Do I obey civil laws, including those that forbid the use of drugs or alcohol for minors?

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. Do I have serious thoughts of anger and hatred toward others?
2. Do I do what I can to oppose murderous actions such as abortion, suicide, or euthanasia (the taking of the life of someone who is incurably ill or dying)?
3. Have I gotten drunk or used drugs? (These things threaten human life.)
4. Have I neglected the life of my soul by keeping company with those who lead me to sin?

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE *(continued)*

Sixth and Ninth Commandments: “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.”

These two commandments deal with our human sexuality. Adultery means sexual relations between two persons when one or both of them are married, but not to each other. Here, to covet means that we desire or want the spouse of another person. Although these are things that happen to adults, they carry a message for you too.

1. Do I respect the gift of sex and the human body, both my own and those of others?
2. Do I realize that sex is for married people so that they can have children and show their love for one another?
3. Do I encourage the wrong use of sexuality by myself or among my friends by looking at magazines or movies that degrade sex? Do I realize that sex is an expression of spiritual communion between a man and a woman joined in the Sacrament of Matrimony?
4. Do I try to be chaste in my thoughts, words, and actions by myself and with others? Do I realize that masturbation and sex outside of marriage are mortal sins?
5. Do I realize that it is dangerous to my soul to spend time in impure daydreaming about sexual activities? (This can easily lead me to commit sins by myself or with others.)
6. Do I realize that sexual desires are good and are given to me by God so that I will one day use them properly in marriage?
7. Do I remember to pray to the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, who are models of purity? Do I ask them to show me a healthy respect for human sexuality and to help me when I am tempted to sin against chastity?

Seventh and Tenth Commandments: “You shall not steal; 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?
2. Have I destroyed the property of others—for example, painted on buildings, purposely broken a window, or ripped up someone’s homework?
3. Have I taken someone else’s possessions—for example, movies, video games, books, magazines, or clothing?
4. If I have a job, do I do it properly, or do I waste time on the job? (This is like stealing my boss’ money, since I do not really work for it.)
5. Am I envious about the things my friends have and show this by my unkind words to them or to others about them?
6. Do I dislike someone simply because I am envious of his good looks or popularity, as well as his talent in sports or school?

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 would damage 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? Am I afraid I will not be accepted by others unless I make myself seem better than I am?
3. Do I gossip and spread rumors about others, even if I think they are true? Do I find pleasure in telling my friends about the sins and faults of other students?
4. If a friend tells me a secret, do I keep it to myself, or do I let someone else “in” on it? Do I know that telling the secrets of others is a misuse of friendship and a sin?

You do not have to use this entire examination of conscience every night. It may be more helpful to choose one commandment each night and think about it in relation to your life.

How to Make a Good Confession

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| 1. Examination of Conscience | Examine your conscience. Use the Ten Commandments, precepts of the Church, capital sins and their opposing virtues, and Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as a guide. See Student Text, pp. 181–83, or Appendix p. B-33 handout. |
| 2. Contrition | You must be sorry for your sins. Pray for perfect contrition. |
| 3. Purpose of Amendment | Make a firm resolution to do all you can to avoid sin and occasions to sin in the future. Strive to not repeat the sins. |
| 4. Confess your sins to a priest in the Sacrament of Penance | Make an honest confession. The priest will not yell at you; he will be happy that you are there. He is there to give you God's forgiveness. The priest is bound by the Seal of Confession; the priest can never reveal your sins. |
| 5. Receive absolution and penance | In absolution, you will receive God's forgiveness. Your penance will be a few prayers or a good deed to make up for your sins. Do your penance as soon as possible. |

Sacrament of Penance

Priest: The priest will greet you. You will begin with the Sign of the Cross.

You: *Bless me, Father, for I have sinned; it has been* (length of time) *since my last confession.*

You: Tell the priest your sins, being honest.

Priest: The priest may ask you questions or give you advice.

Priest: The priest will give you a penance. You accept it.

You: You recite the Act of Contrition.

Priest: The priest will give you absolution.

You: Thank the priest.

Priest: The priest will dismiss you.

You: You complete your penance.

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee. I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life.
Amen.