

HOW TO PREPARE FOR CONFESSION

An examination of conscience using the Ten Commandments.



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I examine my conscience to check on my relationship with God right now. What are the ways I turn toward him and what are the ways I have turned away from him?

1



I am the Lord your God; you shall have no strange gods before me.

- Is God the center of my life? Do I allow things such as money, work, pleasure, and superstition to replace God as my chief concern? Do I pray daily? Have I done things that endanger my faith? Do I ever pray when tempted to sin?

2



You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

- Do I reverence the name of God? Have I used God's name to curse other people? Have I been careless with his name, using it as a joke? Have I used his name as an exclamation when I'm angry or surprised?

3



Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

- Do I honor God, especially on Sunday and holy days? Have I deliberately (without just cause) missed Mass on these days?

4



Honor your father and your mother.

- Have I always shown kindness and respect to my parents? Do I ever pray for them? Do I ever show them gratitude for being responsible for my life and welfare? Do I cause them undue worry? Do I always give them the obedience that I owe them? Do I always show due respect and obedience to those who have authority over me?

5



You shall not commit adultery.

- Do I respect the sanctity of marriage? Have I ever engaged in a form of sexual activity with someone who is not my spouse? Have I masturbated or had sex outside of marriage?

6



You shall not kill.

- Do I respect human life in all its forms? Have I ever been responsible or partly responsible for the death of another (including abortion)? Have I been drinking even though I am not of legal age? Have I used drugs? Have I ever endangered my life or the lives of others by driving recklessly or driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

7



You shall not steal.

- Have I stolen what does not belong to me? Have I deliberately damaged the property of another? Have I cheated anyone from having what was due to him? Do I always respect public property?

8



You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- Have I lied? Have I damaged the reputation of another by unkind words, gossip, or negative humor? Have I betrayed another by revealing secrets that were entrusted to me? Have I cheated on exams?

9



You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

- Am I chaste? Do I invite feelings of sexual desire for anyone who is not my spouse? Do I express lustful thoughts in the company of others? Do I look at pornography? Do I avoid all occasions of sexual temptation?

10



You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

- Instead of delighting in God's generosity to me, am I ever jealous of the talents and possessions others have? Do I ever wish the misfortune of others so that I will profit? Am I ever selfish and self-centered to the exclusion of concern for others?

HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

1



Approach the priest and begin.

Begin by saying, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned."

2



Say how long it has been since your last confession.

The priest will give you a short Scripture or words of welcome.

3



Confess your sins.

Confess all mortal sins and any significant venial sins. Do not excuse or justify them, and be sincere.

4



Receive guidance and a penance.

The priest may give you advice or a Scripture passage. He will assign a penance to help you grow.

5



Pray an Act of Contrition.

Express sorrow for your sins and resolve to avoid them with God's help.

6



Receive the Absolution.

The priest will extend his hands and pray the words of absolution. You respond, "Amen."

7



Conclude with gratitude.

Say, "Thanks be to God." Or respond, "Thanks be to the Lord, for he is good: his mercy endures forever."

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments; but I am sorry they offend you 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 occasions of sin. Amen.

