

Need Help Making a Good Confession?

Guidelines for Those Who Have Been Away a *Long Time* (or for an adult making a first confession)

Going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is not difficult, but it does require preparation.

You begin with prayer, placing yourself in the presence of God, our loving Father. You want to find healing and forgiveness through being repentant (sorry for your sins) and by firmly resolving to sin no more.

Review your life since your last confession, searching your thoughts, words and actions for that which did not conform to God's command to love Him and one another through His laws and the laws of His Church. This is called an 'examination of conscience.'

Family

- Do I love the members of my family the way Jesus wants me to?
- Do I sacrifice my own desires for the good of others the way Jesus wants me to?
- Do I try to both talk *and listen* with an open heart to my family members?
- Have I paid attention to my family members' and friends' other concerns, worries, and problems?
- Do I try to live up to the Church's teaching on responsible family planning, or do I assert my own desires?
- Am I carrying on any kind of sexual relationship (real or virtual) with anyone other than my spouse?

Friends

- Am I at peace with everyone?
- Am I truly honest at work and in all I do?
- Do I try to see Christ in my family members, my friends, my colleagues, and even in strangers?

- Have I had a proper Christian concern for the poor and needy?
- Do I try to share my gifts and abundance with the less fortunate?

Faith

- Do I pray every day?
- Do I practice faith regularly and willingly?
- Do I put my faith and trust in God alone, especially in time of temptations or trouble?
- Do I use the name of Jesus with love and respect?
- Do I attend Sunday Mass, listen to the readings, and participating in the hymns and responses?
- Do I thank God often for all his gifts and blessings?
- Am I doing anything to deepen the knowledge of my faith?

General Questions

- Are there any major or serious ways that I have sinned against God or my neighbour, against the commandments or Jesus' call of love?
- Do I have any recurring attitude or fault that is continually weighing me down? If so, why? (Examples: pride, envy, selfishness, gluttony, greed, prejudice, anger, hatred of someone, pursuit of sexual pleasure, being unjust, refusing to forgive, etc.)

Helpful tips

- *Regarding the number of times I have done something:* if what we have done is something big and serious, then saying how often is important.
- *Most troublesome sin:* determine where we are having the most trouble, and ask God and the priest for special help in this area.
- *Try to tell why we act the way we do.* For example, "I use sex to fill the emptiness inside me." Figuring out the reasons will help us deepen our consciences as we grow in our faith.

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